

What does it mean to teach history well? Exploring the practice architectures of exemplary history teaching.

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Statement of Originality

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

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Data collected as part of this project was used in the following publications and presentations during the period of my candidature:

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Abstract

What does it mean to teach history well? Exploring the practice architectures of exemplary history teaching.

The work of teachers is under increasing scrutiny. Regimes of teacher professional registration and accreditation have had the effect of dramatically increasing the regulation around teachers' classroom practices as they seek to codify and articulate the meaning of 'good' classroom teaching. Similarly, public and political discourse has been captivated by various discussions and concerns around the meaning and importance of 'quality teaching' in our schools. For secondary teachers of history, this scrutiny is coupled with an already acute public anxiety about the way their subject discipline is taught to school students. Partly in response to this anxiety, there has been a growing interest in researching and explaining the nature of good history teaching through describing the ways in which students engage in deep disciplinary learning in the history classroom. The development of various (but interrelated) frameworks of 'historical thinking' have sought to make explicit the concepts and questions that work to scaffold students' growing understanding of history not merely as a knowledge set, but as a suite of skills and procedures that can encourage a particular way of thinking about the past (Lévesque, 2005, 2008; Seixas, 2006a; Seixas, Morton, Colyer, & Fornazzari, 2013). In a short period of time the 'historical thinking' movement in history education has become synonymous with good history teaching – to teach history well has been seen as engaging students in this deeper disciplinary thinking.

But despite this increased interest around quality teaching and research around the nature of historical thinking, we know very little about the nature of history teaching as classroom practice. Research around historical thinking has been largely driven by the field of cognitive science and has been primarily concerned with student learning and assessment, without a similarly detailed focus on the nature of pedagogical practices that encourage deep engagement in history and historical ways of thinking. Similarly, the promotion of 'models' or 'frameworks' of historical thinking often present deep disciplinary engagement in history as a neat matrix of questions and related skills

without due acknowledgement of the way in which different learning communities in different contexts may engage in the process of learning about history.

This thesis provides insight into the nature of good history teaching as a social practice, exploring how it is constructed and encountered in the classroom by teachers and students. The research was conducted using a multiple case study methodology examining the classroom teaching practice of four history teachers, identified by their peers as exemplary practitioners. Findings were drawn from interviews with the teachers and multiple observations of their classroom teaching, as well as focus group interviews with their students. The research represents a rich portrayal of what good history teaching looks like in a practical, pedagogical sense and adds to our existing understanding of what it means to teach history well through research that is grounded in the reality of teachers' everyday work.

Using the theory of practice architectures as a framework for analysing and interpreting classroom interactions, as well as both teacher and student beliefs about history education, the research reveals the importance not only of teachers' subject expertise in defining their success as history teachers, but also their knowledge of their students and the communities in which they work. Whilst the four teachers in the study all face varying constraints on their teaching by virtue of the sites within which they practice, the relational dimension of their practice emerges as particularly significant in determining the ways in which different teachers navigate these constraints in their pursuit of praxis.

The research contributes new knowledge to the existing discourses around history teaching by highlighting the varied and complex ways in which historical thinking is enacted in different teaching contexts. Similarly, at a time when teachers are increasingly being asked to account for and describe their practice against generic criteria and descriptions of 'quality', this research represents a rich and contextualised understanding of what successful pedagogy looks like in different school communities.

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List of Major Terms and Abbreviations

ACARA: The Australian Curriculum Assessment And Reporting Authority. ACARA is the federal statutory body responsible for the Australian Curriculum, as well as the administration of national assessments (such as NAPLAN).

AITSL: The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. AITSL oversees the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and provides national guidance on teaching and school leadership.

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers: describe the knowledge, skills and attributes of teachers across different career stages (graduate teacher, proficient teacher, highly accomplished teacher and lead teacher).

ICSEA: Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) score. A school's ICSEA score represents the relative educational advantage or disadvantage of the student cohort and incorporates information from school demographic data, parents' occupation and level of education as well as the percentage of Indigenous students and students with a language background other than English enrolled in the school. A school's ICSEA score is represented against a mean score of 1000 and a standard deviation of 100, with the *My School* website also providing details about the distribution of students across four quartiles representing relative levels of advantage or disadvantage.

HSC: Higher School Certificate. The HSC is awarded to students in NSW who successfully complete Year 11 (Preliminary) and Year 12 (HSC) courses of study. The HSC year culminates in students sitting external, statewide examinations in November each year.

NAPLAN: The National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy is a national annual assessment of student literacy and numeracy undertaken by students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

NESA: The NSW Education Standards Authority (formerly the NSW Board of Studies Teaching and Education Standards). NESA is the statutory body responsible for setting NSW curriculum, teacher accreditation and administration of the Higher School Certificate (amongst other functions).

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Chapter One

Introduction

The idea for this thesis began, simply enough, from my own professional curiosity about what it means, in a practical sense, to teach history well. I became a history and humanities teacher after developing a love for history at university and studying the subject to honours level. I brought with me a passion for history, solid knowledge of my teaching topics as well as experience in the 'doing' of historical research and interpretation. I entered the classroom feeling ready, willing and capable to 'be' a history teacher. But of course, this passion, knowledge and my disciplinary skills were not necessarily equally valued by my students who seemed to care not for my expert qualifications, instead frequently asking me "can you make this more interesting Miss?" I knew history well – but that did not mean I knew how to answer this call to make history more interesting and engaging for my students.

In those first few years of teaching, whilst I found my enthusiasm for being a teacher only grew, my confidence that I knew what I was doing did not. I often wondered how it was possible to meet the complex practical demands of day-to-day teaching (assessment, planning, addressing student welfare needs, differentiating for the diversity of students in my classes) whilst also inducting students into the discipline of history in a meaningful way. It felt at times like an impossible task. And yet, my own experience had shown me that when it did happen it occurred in ways that were almost instinctive. Many times I would teach a successful lesson in history – a lesson in which I felt my students learned deeply and engaged richly with history's larger themes and issues – only to be left blank when I tried to articulate clearly what it was I had done to create such moments of engagement. What was I actually *doing* in my classroom?

This desire to better understand my practice and the anxiety about the impact (or lack thereof) I was having on my students coincided with a period of significant change in the teaching profession. I was one of the first of a new generation of teachers who would be subject to a process of profession accreditation in my first years of teaching – asked to account for my skills and practice as a teacher against externally set professional

teaching standards, and required to produce ‘evidence’ of demonstrating each of the standards in my day-to-day work. Overwhelmed with the workload of a new teacher and still finding my feet, I nevertheless approached my accreditation process earnestly – dutifully producing all the necessary evidence of my work as a teacher – cross-referencing teaching programs with lesson plans and assessment grids, photocopying student work and my comments on student assignments. By the end of my first year of teaching I was officially accredited as ‘professionally competent’. And yet both my doubts about my own teaching, and my curiosity to understand teacher practice more generally, continued to nag at me.

A breakthrough came to me some years later when I participated in a school-based research project in which I worked with two experienced history-teaching colleagues to observe and discuss each others’ practice. The impact – on my teaching, on my understanding of the profession, and of myself as a teacher – was profound. It sounds so simple now, but it was the first time I had set foot in the classrooms of other, more experienced history teachers since I had entered the profession. Observing these other history teachers at work gave me insights into the diversity of practices that supported student learning, it allowed me time to think about different ways of approaching teaching and it gave me space to reflect on the assumptions that underpinned my own pedagogical preferences. I saw with clarity that the answers to the questions I had about my practice, and to how I could better understand my students, lay within the walls of my own classroom and those of my teaching colleagues. I began to think about teaching differently, and to think about the ways in which teaching and the classroom could be considered sites of expertise in action. And so I embarked on a research project that sought to answer the question ‘*what does it mean to teach history well?*’ by looking at the classrooms of exemplary history teachers themselves.

Research aims and significance

In 1975 Dan Lortie’s influential study of teaching noted the individual and opaque nature of teaching as a profession – with so much teaching work being undertaken in isolation and without collaboration or opportunities to share practice with colleagues. Lortie was primarily concerned with the impact such segregation could have within schools and between teaching colleagues, but over 40 years later we can also reflect on the impact that this way of working has on the profession more broadly. This thesis seeks to look inside classrooms and address the need for “richer and more securely

grounded accounts of history teachers' work" (Husbands, Kitson, & Pendry, 2003, p. 143), with a view to developing vivid portraits of exemplary history pedagogy in action. Developing a stronger understanding of history teaching practice through classroom observation is particularly important because it recognises that "much knowledge about good teaching never finds its way into the professional literature, remaining in the minds of good teachers" (Wineburg & Wilson, 1991, p. 50).

Seeking to better articulate the pedagogical dimension of history teacher expertise comes at a time of great interest in the teaching of history to school students. In recent years there has been a proliferation of work coming out of the United Kingdom, Canada, United States of America and Australia aimed at understanding the discipline-specific ways of thinking and learning in history. Parallel to this has been the development of frameworks that map the development of students' 'historical thinking' (Lévesque, 2008; Seixas et al., 2013; Taylor & Young, 2003; Wineburg, 2001). As a result, history curricula, teaching materials and teacher education courses are increasingly encouraging and embracing classrooms where students have the opportunities to 'think historically' and learn about the deep disciplinary structures of history. This new research and the knowledge it has generated has not necessarily been matched by our appreciation and understanding of history *teaching*. To fully understand the experience of learning history at school level we need to consider the implications of models for historical thinking from a teaching practice perspective, something which to this point has been neglected (Pollock, 2015), particularly in the Australian context. Engaging in a study of history teaching practice adds to our understanding of the depth, variety and flexibility of teachers' own disciplinary and pedagogical approaches to classroom teaching.

This research uses practice theory to acknowledge the wider influences that frame and at times constrain the work of history teachers, and impact on the development of their teaching practice (Kemmis, 2009). Analysing the practices of history teachers can have significant advantages for the way we understand and value the subject expertise of history teachers as part of the wider discipline, dominated as it often is by the contributions of professional historians. It also has the capacity to better elevate the status of history teachers in the public discourse around the teaching of history. In the context of a debate where our political leaders and public commentators frequently claim a space at the table for discussing what and how our students should be learning

history, it is important that history teachers are given space within these discourses – not only as ‘deliverers’ of curriculum, but out of respect for their unique expertise as history educators (MacIntyre, 2006).

Seeking to capture both this nature of teaching expertise in context and to communicate something of its layered complexity also comes at a pivotal time for the teaching profession more generally. Over the last two decades, debate and discussion about what it means to be ‘good’ teacher have combined with a broader neoliberal agenda within education and schooling to dramatically impact on the positioning of teachers within the profession (Ball, 2012). In Australia, teachers have been subject to increasing requirements as part of external processes of accreditation and registration against national teaching standards, whilst simultaneously debates and discussions about ‘teacher quality’ have dominated much of the discourse around education (Mockler, 2014). Against this backdrop, this research represents an important contribution to understanding the complex and contingent work of classroom teachers, and in capturing teachers’ own voices and perspectives on their work. Similarly, by including the voices and perspectives of students on the question of how we think about and understand the meaning of good teaching, this thesis represents an opportunity to expand existing understandings and reframe the way we approach researching pedagogy.

Research questions and design

The title of this thesis, ‘*What does it mean to teach history well?*’ articulates the core question at the heart of this research. In support of this overarching question, three interrelated research questions were devised to guide the project:

1. How is history teaching practice enabled and constrained by the individuals, conditions and discourses that construct it?
2. How do experienced history teachers engage their students in historical thinking in the classroom?
3. Can existing frameworks of historical thinking inform our understanding of the features and characteristics of history teaching practice?

The research questions go to the heart of the dual purpose of this research project – to both better understand the nature of good history teaching practice, and to also better understand the broader conditions and influences that operate to construct, constrain or support such practice.

In pursuit of these research questions a multiple case study approach was used, with a strategy of collegial and peer nomination (described in more detail in chapter four) used to identify teachers who were regarded within their local communities as being exemplary in the way they engaged students in learning history. Research was conducted with four different teachers (Penny, Max, Jane and Dan – introduced in greater detail in chapter four) who all teach history in different secondary school contexts. Lesson observations of each of the participant teachers occurred over an extended period of time allowing me to develop a rich and authentic understanding of their practice. The use of practice theory to guide both research design and data analysis in this project acknowledges that teaching practice is not only constructed by the work that teachers perform in the classroom, but also by an array of contextual, extra-individual factors (Kemmis, 2005), most notably teachers' interactions and relationships with their students. The resulting analysis allows reflection not only on what it means to teach history well, but also the ways in which particular cultural, material and social influences impact on individual teachers' pursuit of praxis in the contexts in which they work.

An explanatory note on secondary History education in NSW.

The findings of this research are based on extensive fieldwork observations and interviews with secondary teachers of History in New South Wales schools. As such it is useful to briefly sketch at the outset the structure and nature of History as a subject area in NSW schools. According to the requirements of the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA), all students in Years 7 to 10 are taught History as a compulsory subject within the *Human Society and its Environment* Key Learning Area (alongside Geography). As part of this compulsory component of study, there is an exclusive focus on Australian history in Years 9 and 10. As students transition into their senior years of schooling they are given greater choice and variety as to the subjects they may wish to study. As part of their Year 11 (Preliminary) and Year 12 (Higher School Certificate) studies, students are able to elect to study either Ancient History

and/or Modern History. In addition to these senior elective courses, students with a particular passion and interest in history may choose to study History Extension in their final year of school – a course designed to extend and challenge students which has a particular focus on the way History is written and constructed. Research for this thesis was undertaken in both junior and senior history classrooms and includes observations from 7-10 history, modern history, ancient history and history extension lessons.

Thesis overview

This final section of the introduction provides an overview of the thesis structure and explains the contributions of each chapter to the broader development of the thesis.

Chapter two presents a comprehensive literature review which positions this research project within three different research themes. Firstly, I discuss research concerning teachers' classroom work and contrast approaches which offer an individualistic understanding of pedagogy to those that offer an understanding of teachers' work as a social practice. Secondly, I situate this project amongst the plethora of work on the topic of history education and history teaching – in particular exploring the nature of various, interrelated frameworks of historical thinking for how we understand both the purpose and nature of history teaching in schools. Finally, I explore research on the notion of 'good' teaching and discuss different ways in which researchers have approached and understood the idea of exemplary teaching. This thesis seeks to make a contribution to each of these three research 'threads', and also a significant contribution to knowledge in the way that these three research themes are brought together in the resulting discussion and analysis.

In chapter three I explain the theoretical orientation that has informed my approach to this project, drawing on practice theory and in particular the theory of practice architectures developed by Kemmis and colleagues (2008; 2014). Whilst there is some overlap between my discussion of teacher practice in chapter two and the elaboration on my theoretical framework in chapter three, I use this chapter to provide more detailed exploration of the nature and operation of the theory as a way of both thinking about the nature of teacher practice, as well as an analytical tool which can account for the range of influences (cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political) on teacher practice in particular contexts. Proceeding from the standpoint that teaching is a social practice requires a research approach that engages not only with teachers'

thinking and pedagogical decision making as influences on practice, but also the role of students in co-constructing that practice.

Chapter four outlines the epistemological and methodological framework employed in the study, and details more closely the decision making and rationale in relation to research design and methods. The chapter includes a close description of the processes and decision making behind key research processes such as participant identification and recruitment, and justifies key decisions regarding the design of the research. These decisions are explained with reference to both the broader aims of the project and the theoretical framework outlined in chapter three, in particular the use of the 'table of invention for the analysis of practice' (Kemmis, 2014, p.39) as an analytical tool for understanding classroom practice. This chapter also provides an initial introduction to each of the four participant teachers and their school contexts.

Chapters five through to eight all follow a distinctly similar structure and serve the purpose of allowing a close and detailed exploration of exemplary teaching practice from the perspective of each of the participant teachers. Each chapter begins with an extended 'vignette' from the classroom of one of the teachers, followed by the analysis of that vignette using the 'table of invention for analysing practices'. The use of the table in this way operates as a way of connecting the descriptions of practice to understanding the broader practice landscape and practice traditions at play within each site. Each chapter provides a close and contextualised discussion and analysis of the nature of exemplary teaching practice observed with each teacher in their school context, with particular focus on the way in which each teacher's own sense of history teaching praxis plays out in their approach to teaching. These descriptive chapters provide four distinctive portraits of history teaching and I argue that each teacher's practice is framed not only by the dispositions and experience of these individual teachers, but also the possibilities of practice as they are constructed by the practice architectures unique to each teaching context.

Having considered the nature of each teacher's practice from within their classrooms across chapters five to eight, in chapter nine I turn to consider the ways in which students understand and experience learning history with each of the participant teachers. The chapter begins with a discussion of the use of student voice in framing our understanding of 'good' teaching, before drawing on data from both lesson observations

and student focus group interviews to explore the way in which students understand and value classroom relationships, teacher knowledge, and particular pedagogical approaches as dimensions of exemplary teacher practice. The voices and perspectives of students represented in this chapter expand our understanding of how students experience 'good teaching' and represent a significant contribution to understanding the types of pedagogies that students find effective and engaging in the history classroom.

Chapter ten is the final analytical chapter of the thesis and provides a holistic, 'birds-eye' view on understanding the exemplary history teaching observed in the study. The chapter uses the lens of practice architectures to structure an analysis of the range of influences on shaping and determining the possibilities of practice for each of the participant teachers to account for the way in which the cultural-discursive (sayings), material-economic (doings) and social-political (relatings) dimensions of practice "hang together" in distinctive ways within each site, but also within the practice traditions of history teaching more broadly. The chapter goes on to consider the implications for understanding exemplary history teaching as being supported and constrained by influences and conditions that are outside of the control of individual teachers. I also consider the role and significance of models for historical thinking in light of the data and findings of the research.

Finally, chapter eleven returns to the research questions at the heart of the study and draws conclusions based on the data presented. This final chapter also considers the theoretical and methodological contributions of the thesis and proposes implications for future work.

Together, these eleven chapters represent an attempt to move past the "cellular", isolated structure of teachers' work that still persists and prevents the sharing of expertise, decades after Lortie first described teachers' work in this way. Read together they represent an opportunity to learn from the practices of teachers who know their subject and their craft and also know their students and their learning contexts well, to expand and enrich our understanding of what it means to teach history well.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review positions the research project within the context of existing research and identifies areas in which new and significant contributions can be made. This chapter is structured in three sections, with each section exploring three separate research themes relevant to contextualising and understanding the research questions at the heart of this thesis. Section one examines research around teaching practice generally, and history teaching more specifically. Section two explores in more depth the purpose of teaching history to school students and looks at the contribution of frameworks of historical thinking to shaping existing understandings of the way history is taught to school students. Section three explores what it means to teach well – both in history, and more broadly as we consider notions of ‘quality teaching’ and ‘teacher quality’ and contrast these with research on notions of pedagogies that engage and inspire students. The discussion that follows seeks to not only map the existing fields of research across each of these three threads, but to generate some scholarly conversation between these areas of inquiry, and in doing so to illustrate clearly the place of this project within the existing research landscape.

Section one: researching the practices of history teachers

This section of the literature review begins by examining existing research and theoretical perspectives on history teaching practice. In theorising how we might generate rich accounts of practice through research, Green (2009) acknowledges that we need first to understand the notion of practice in and of itself. Whilst there is a sizable work of literature that seeks to frame, describe and explain effective teaching practice and recognise the various influences on the work teachers do within their classroom, the notion of what we mean when we discuss teaching ‘practice’ remains contested. Orlando and Sawyer (2013) consider ‘pedagogy’ as synonymous with teachers’ professional practice, but pedagogy itself is subject to a range of different cultural and historical theorisations which in turn influence the way we frame and discuss teaching practice. Within European scholarship, ‘*pedagogeik*’ is framed broadly as the holistic, social process of raising a child, in contrast to Anglo-American

interpretations which cast pedagogy in technical terms as ‘classroom practice’, emphasising the role and knowledge of the teacher as paramount (Smith, Edwards-Groves, & Brennan Kemmis, 2010). Part of the difficulty in pinning down what we mean when we discuss teaching practice is the fluid and taken-for-granted nature of the term ‘practice’ itself (Green, 2009), a term which Kemmis summarises as “what people do, in a particular place and time” (2005, p. 25). Most definitions of practice, however, tend to belie a complex arrangement of influences, discourses and relationships which comprise what it is teachers in fact ‘do’ when they teach.

Another challenge in defining (and indeed researching) practice is what Lee Shulman (1987) has termed the “happening-ness” of practice. The knowledge and skills demonstrated in classroom teaching practices frequently go unacknowledged because the execution of teachers’ work occurs behind ‘closed doors’ without an audience of ‘peers’ to reflect and illuminate the work being done. While we can see evidence of intended teacher practice in curriculum documents and lesson plans, and see crude measurement of the outcomes of teacher practice in summative assessment of students, the *act* of teacher practice exists only in the moment and context of that particular lesson as experienced by the teacher and students in the class. The role of observation in capturing practice is vital here: for example, Husbands et al (2003) found that many aspects of teacher knowledge and skill are “so embedded in their practice that they do not articulate it unless specifically probed” (2003, p. 75). Practice-based research can seek to describe and articulate those aspects of teacher practice which are so intuitive that teachers themselves do not notice them.

Kemmis and McTaggart identify five different traditions in the existing research on practice (2005):

- 1) Practice as individual performances which can be ‘objectively’ observed;
- 2) The wider social and material factors and interactions which can be observed (such as patterns of interaction between teachers and students);
- 3) The intentions, meanings and values which constitute practice as it is viewed from the perspective of the individual practitioners;
- 4) The language, discourses and traditions which constitute practice as it is viewed from those within the practice community;
- 5) The historical dimension of practice which acknowledges the evolving social form of practice which reflexively changes over time.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) note that this wide variation in research traditions has similarly led to the emergence of highly variable and sometimes competing notions of practice within the literature.

Fitting firmly within the first research tradition identified above is the influential work of Shulman, who sought to observe and articulate classroom teaching practice beginning with the premise that “richly developed portrayals of expertise in teaching are rare” (1987, p. 1). Published at a time when ‘teacher effectiveness’ was largely equated to classroom management strategies, Shulman’s notion of ‘pedagogical content knowledge’ argued for the value of looking more specifically at the way in which teachers deployed their subject specific skills in the classroom through an examination of teacher practice. Shulman recognised the classroom as a site of teacher wisdom worthy of further exploration in order to confront a ‘blind spot’ in educational research that was preoccupied with the impact of pedagogical approaches on learners, at the expense of looking at the knowledge and pedagogical skills of teaching professionals (Shulman, 1987, 2005). Shulman’s model of pedagogical reasoning and action sought to codify the different types of knowledge that teachers need for successful classroom practice with his notion of ‘pedagogical content knowledge’ developed to describe the unique combination of both pedagogy and subject matter knowledge that good teachers possess in order to transform content into meaningful forms for student learners.

Shulman’s work on practice has influenced a range of researchers in the field of education research more generally and in history teaching practice more specifically, in particular the work of Wineburg and Wilson (1988; 2001) and their research on the role of history teachers’ subject matter knowledge; Stengel and her exploration of disciplinarity and teacher knowledge (1997b); and Gudmundsdottir and her further theorisation of pedagogical content knowledge in history (and other subject area) classrooms (1990). Whilst influential in shifting the focus of researchers toward the merit of examining teacher practice, Shulman’s work has drawn criticism for the way in which he characterises and frames the notion of teaching as a practice. In particular, Shulman has been critiqued for focussing primarily on the knowledge and skillset of teachers as determinant of practice, neglecting the importance of context and failing to adequately acknowledge that practice is socially constructed (Cochran, 1993; Fahey, 2007; Sockett, 1987). Significant to how we frame and understand the practices of

history teachers, Woods (1996) is sceptical of approaches to practice which place emphasis on teaching as an individualistic activity, arguing that that these frameworks (such as Shulman's) tend to celebrate individual, charismatic teachers rather than help us explore particular traits of practice more generally. Shulman's notion of pedagogical content knowledge has also been critiqued by Grant (2014) for its inability to account for why teachers with similar levels of academic credentials and beliefs about a unit of work nevertheless engage in radically different approaches to classroom practice.

More recently there has been increasing recognition that teacher knowledge comprises just one of many influences on teacher practice and that in reality, teacher practice is situated and idiosyncratic (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1996). The symbiosis between practice and context means that teaching practice as it plays out within each lesson is the result of a range of influences including teacher knowledge and beliefs, professional identity and dispositions, and wider bureaucratic influences such as curricula, department and school structures (Fahey, 2007). Of key significance in the way we frame and understand practice is the status given to students in these conceptions - rather than being seen as the *recipients* of teacher practice, there is increasing recognition of the relational, reciprocal nature of practice in which learners are at the centre of framing teachers' planning and decision making within the classroom (Sawyer, Callow, Munns, & Zammit, 2013). It is here that my research into teacher practice links with existing work on the nature of student thinking about history (discussed below) which recognises students' existing historical knowledge and frameworks as a fundamental influence on the direction and effectiveness of teacher practice (Seixas, 1993; VanSledright, 2002).

Recent developments in practice theory (which I will explore in more detail in chapter three) provide a useful counterbalance to Shulman's understanding of practice. Whilst Shulman's work argued for the primacy and significance of teacher knowledge in framing practice, Kemmis (2005) is wary of emphasising the 'knowledge in people's heads' over the wider social and discursive orders that support that knowledge. Rather than arguing in favour of one particular view of practice over another, Kemmis has developed an overarching theory that seeks to unify and synthesise the different research traditions through the lens of 'practice architectures' - the conditions that frame, enable and constrain practices as embedded in the cultural-discursive ("sayings"), material-economic ("doings") and social-political ("relatings") dimensions of

professional action (Kemmis, 2010; Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). Adopting a relational, dialectical view of practice opens a range of possibilities for research, and has interesting implications not only for how we conceive of and research teaching practice, but also for history teacher education more specifically.

The disciplinary practices of history teachers

A survey of existing literature on the state of history teaching practice provides some starkly conflicting views about the state of history teaching both globally and in Australia. Indeed, the premise for much research on history education has been to document the apparent litany of deficiencies in students' historical knowledge, and Booth (1993, 2010), Wineburg (2001), Clark (2009) and Sears (2015) have offered varying dire depictions of history classrooms, with students disengaged from learning, failing to develop an understanding of basic historical concepts and teachers restricted by curricula focussed on content transmission rather than developing historical skills and disciplinary literacy. Wineburg and Wilson (2001) make reference to Ravitch and Finn's especially depressing scene of a 'typical' history classroom characterised by students watching films, memorising information from lacklustre textbooks and seldom collaborating with one another. Wineburg goes on to further explore this crisis in both history teaching but also in approaches to history education more broadly in his influential text *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* (2001).

Amongst these depictions of the 'crisis' in history education, however, we can also discover a completely contrary view of the history teacher presented. In this contrasting view, the 'exemplary' history teacher is one who able to transform their own complex understanding of the discipline of history into forms and representations that engage, inspire and educate students, and facilitate students making connections between their own lives and the academic subject matter (Stengel, 1997a; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991). This dichotomous representation of history teaching becomes more reconcilable when we consider the varying contexts of the research undertaken and when we give full acknowledgement to the complexity of the task in which history teachers engage. Although history teaching is a feature of education systems the world over, the professional and political context of the work done varies greatly across these systems and remains heavily influenced by local discourses on curriculum, pedagogy and practice, making generic, global conclusions about the nature of history education difficult to sustain.

When Osborne identifies that “teaching history well demands not only pedagogical competence but also a reasonable familiarity with history as a form of disciplined inquiry” (2003, p. 607), he is highlighting something akin to Shulman’s pedagogical content knowledge in defining the skill of history teachers. To both Shulman and Osborne, history teachers possess both expert knowledge of the disciplinary traditions of history, and also a high degree of skill in creating meaningful and engaging learning opportunities for students in history classrooms. Part of this process involves teachers creating representations which are meaningful to “students who lack the depth of understanding that they, as teachers, possess” (Wilson & Wineburg, 1988, p. 57), but the precise features of teacher practice that engage students in that kind of disciplinary thinking have not been comprehensively explored to date.

Up until recently, research on history teaching practices were dominated by the work of Booth (1969) and Shemilt (1987; 1980) and their examination of history teaching practices in Britain, followed by Shulman with his “portraits of exemplary teaching” in the United States (1986, 1987). These depictions of teacher practice tended to focus on the knowledge background of teachers and their orientation to the discipline of history, but nevertheless encouraged a further wave of researchers who sought to examine and illuminate the practices of history teachers. Influenced by Shulman, Wilson and Wineburg (2001) argued that disciplinary knowledge and background is the key influence on the ability of teachers to engage in teaching practices which promote thinking historically with students. Their research showed that teachers with a strong undergraduate training in historical research and experience in the disciplinary nature of history were more likely to be able to engage students in ‘doing’ history, and to be able to translate complex historical concepts and notions into forms and explanations meaningful to students (Wilson & Wineburg, 1988; Wineburg, 2001, 2007; 2001). For VanSledright (2002) in his teacher-researcher project with his elementary United States history class, the capacity for a teacher to engage students in historical interpretation of source material was a key feature of effective practice, though he also emphasised the importance of the skills base of teachers in having confidence to shepherd students through this process.

Sandwell (2011) contends that to be effective a history teacher needs to involve students in the ‘doing’ of history. This view of history teaching is consistent with Lee’s

(2006), view of deep learning in history occurring when teachers expose students to the inner workings and metastructures of the discipline. For Lee, exemplary history teaching occurs by allowing students to encounter Lowenthal's (1998) 'other country' and become comfortable with history's contingency and uncertainty, and there are clear parallels here with Lévesque's (2008) imploring of teachers to engage students in 'thinking historically'. Shanahan and Shanahan (2008), in their work on disciplinary literacy, identify further aspects of the disciplinary nature of teaching history at a high school level such as the handling of primary source material, engaging in document analysis and the critical reading of historiography. Shanahan and Shanahan's research is specifically concerned with literacy instruction as distinct from, but in support of subject matter content, something which they claim is "rarely taught" explicitly by classroom teachers, contributing to a crisis in literacy comprehension amongst students in the upper years of schooling. They support this argument with data from student assessment results (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008, p. 45). For Husbands, Kitson and Pendry (2003) this idea of separating out disciplinary literacy and subject matter content is not reflective of the way in which history teachers approach their work. Husbands et al. observed the choices that one particular teacher made about source material that revealed "the richness of his thinking and how all sorts of knowledge – about history, about his [sic] pupils, about what will help them learn – are embedded within his experience" (2003, p. 67).

Of the various examinations of history teaching that have been conducted in recent decades, the exploration by Husbands et al. (2003) shares the greatest similarities with this research project. Husbands et al. undertook research in eight secondary history classrooms in the United Kingdom, engaging in classroom observation and interviews with history teachers with a view to expanding the existing research on history teaching practice. Husbands et al. focussed "on the ways in which history teachers make connections and forge relationships between their understandings of the discipline and its intellectual traditions, expectations set out in curriculum specifications, their perceptions of pupil needs and the school context" (Husbands et al., 2003, p. 41) . The result is a rich description of a wide variety of different teaching practices in history education in British classrooms and the way in which these practices are influenced by teachers' own historical knowledge and their beliefs about the role of history education as well as the unique features of the students and the classroom environment of the day. Husbands et al. focus in on particular measurable aspects of practice such as the style,

use and framing of questions during the lesson, use of source material and textbooks as well as seeking contemporaneous reflections from the teachers for explanation of their decision making in particular lessons. Husbands et al. note the importance of the spoken word to most history teachers, but instead of critiquing this as evidence of talking 'at' students rather than 'with' them (a key criticism of Booth's 1960's research), they find evidence that 'teacher talk' is used carefully and strategically to "involve and illuminate understanding" (Husbands et al., 2003, p. 41). Husbands et al. conclude that history classrooms are rich with sophisticated and perceptive practices, but that there is a lack of research examining and documenting these practices, a deficiency this project aims to address particularly in the Australian context.

The Australian context

The field of research on teaching practice generally, and history teaching practice more specifically is appropriately characterised by Lévesque as "Anglo-centrist" in its focus primarily on teaching history in North America and Great Britain (Husbands et al., 2003, p. 65). Indeed, Lévesque is critical of studies which are not only blind to educational developments in similar educational systems, but are predominantly concerned with the national history of their own countries, therefore making "the generalization of their findings to other national/cultural contexts particularly problematical" (2005, p. 356). In some respects, these are valid criticisms and a useful reminder of the value in looking broadly at the contributions of the international community to the field of research. Nevertheless, the nature of history teaching and the local and national political environments which frame the teaching of history mean that it is not only inescapable but also necessary to focus to some degree on the particularities of teaching history in local educational and political contexts. History teacher education, teacher professional development and discourses on history education differ greatly between educational systems, and one can only deduce that the impact on teacher practice is similarly diverse, highlighting the need for a more focussed treatment of the topic in the Australian context.

Anna Clark's work is the most significant research on the views of history teachers and students about the teaching and learning of history in Australia. Clark's interdisciplinary work bridges the disciplines of history and education and aims to "listen to what

[students] and teachers had to say” and give “voice to their classroom experiences” (Clark, 2006, 2008, 2009; Macintyre & Clark, 2003) whilst also situating her classroom research within the context of wider educational debates. Clark’s research illuminates the tension teachers walk between the requirements of course content and their own passion and skill for sharing a sense of the discipline of history with their students, a theme that is ripe for further exploration. Clark also insightfully explores the way in which the issue of history teaching in Australia has become entwined with wider political and ideological debates.

In her research, Clark makes substantial use of teacher and student reflections on learning which grants us valuable insights into the values and attitudes of both groups. Her research occasionally provides insights into the nature of pedagogical approaches of teachers such as their use of “mixed approaches” using a “range of strategies and resources” (Clark, 2009, p. 755). Clark’s work is primarily concerned with historical knowledge and the broader ideological tussle of what Australian children should be learning in their history classes, rather than the practice of history teaching itself, leaving much still unexplored about the nature of history teaching practice in this country.

Section two: The purpose of history teaching in schools

The work of history teachers in schools is often contentious and heavily scrutinised, characterised by conflicts between professional and ideological perspectives on the purpose of the work they do. At the heart of these conflicts are wildly differing interpretations of the rationale underpinning the teaching of history to school students. At its most simplistic, the debate about why we teach history centres upon the binary understanding of history as either a way of thinking about the past, or as a common understanding of our shared (uncontested) past – or as Lévesque articulates: “Is history the disciplinary inquiry into the past? Or is it an uncritical heritage exercise meant to enhance identity and advance political claims?” (2005, p. 350). Teachers navigate these questions every day as they implement an often heavily politically influenced curriculum whilst also adhering to their own personal and professional understandings of what it means to teach history.

Osborne proposes three different approaches to the question of why we teach history. The first is to convey a nation-building narrative; the second to analyse contemporary

problems within a historical context (an approach that Peck and Seixas (2008) identify as a 'social studies' approach); and the third to convey a sense of "history as a form of disciplined inquiry and thereby learn to think historically" (Osborne, 2006, p. 107; Peck & Seixas, 2008, p. 1017). This third approach of encouraging historical thinking has gained significant traction for teachers, education academics and professional historians and will form a key part of the discussion that follows.

With what can only be described as predictable regularity, public and political discourse in Australia frequently turns to discussions about what Australian students are learning about history in their classrooms, and how they are learning it (Clark, 2008; Macintyre & Clark, 2003). Nevertheless, Henderson (2019) notes that history education is contested around the world and as such, the nexus between the teaching of history in school and politics is neither new, nor confined to the Australian context. Wertsch contends that one reason for this contestation that the teaching of history in our schools is not only about conveying knowledge of the nation's past but is about constructing a context for how that past is remembered today (2002). In the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom there have been protracted public debates about how complex and highly contested events in these nations' histories should be remembered and taught in schools,¹ a debate that has been mirrored in Australia by the intermittent revival of the 'History Wars' (Clark, 2008; Peterson, 2016; Taylor & Collins, 2012).

In Australia, anxieties amongst our political leaders about the teaching and learning of history in the last decade have had two central but interconnected concerns. The first has been an ideological concern about the imposition of a 'black armband' view of the nation's past too heavily influenced by "political correctness", cultural studies, literary theory and postmodernism (Parkes & Donnelly, 2014). The second relates to evidence about what is said to be an alarming lack of civic knowledge and understanding on behalf of young people (Civics Expert Group, 1994; Print, 1995). A number of political leaders have connected these concerns to lament the disengagement of Australian young people with the 'story of their nation' (Howard, 2012; Pyne, 2012). By focussing on the perceived 'crisis' in civics and citizenship education in Australia, the work of history teachers and content of history curricula has been subjected to particular

¹ For example, see James Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (1995), Robert Phillips' *History teaching, nationhood and the state: A study in Educational politics*

scrutiny. Paradoxically, within this analysis, history teaching is frequently targeted as both the cause of, and the solution to, student ignorance and disengagement from political issues, with history teachers negotiating the difficult professional and ideological terrain that results.

From the perspective of our political leaders, the purposes of history education are intrinsically entwined with the need to create better informed, better engaged and potentially even 'prouder' future citizens (Clark, 2008). Correctly characterised, the kind of history teaching sought by many of our political leaders conforms to a 'Great Tradition' conception of history (Ahonen, 2001), a heritage exercise aimed at enhancing students' sense of national and cultural identity (Lowenthal, 1998; Tosh, 2008; VanSledright, 2002). Within this 'heritage' orientation of history education, emphasis is placed on the learning and retention of facts and dates by students (Kennedy, 2008; O'Loughlin, 1997). In the Australian context, concerns about Australians finishing school with an insufficient grounding in the nation's story led directly to the implementation of mandatory Australian history in the NSW History syllabus (NSW Board of Studies, 1992; Taylor, 2019).

Critiquing the nation-building approach to history

It is undoubtable that content and narrative do play a significant role in the teaching and learning of history in schools, but as O'Loughlin argues, the notion of 'citizenship' envisaged by an uncomplicated chronological learning of the nation's story achieves very little other than "regurgitation of facts" by students (1997, p. 26). Similarly, a largely content-driven curriculum without a parallel focus on disciplinary skills and structures can create pressures for teachers to adequately 'cover' material and limit their ability to excite their students in the study of history (Barton & Levstik, 2003). Research also tells us that when it comes to teaching large amounts of content about the narrative of the nation, and also engaging and inspiring students, the two can often be mutually exclusive (Barton & Levstik, 2003; Clark, 2006, 2008, 2019; VanSledright, 2002). Tosh goes one step further to fundamentally challenge the value of an approach to history which attempts to "cover all bases" arguing that "much of the knowledge of history which pupils acquire in school will prove no more durable than their knowledge of information technology or biology, it will rapidly become obsolete" (Tosh, 2008, p. 126). Here, Tosh is pointing to the transient nature of historical facts that once learnt and deployed in an exam or an essay, are often unlikely to be retained by students in the

long run without a context that allows for deeper understanding. But far from being a pessimistic view of the value of teaching history to school students, Tosh instead sees strength in an approach to history that acknowledges its capacity to promote critical thinking skills and to “pass on to students the intellectual tools they need in order to interpret the changing world around them” (Tosh, 2008, p. 126). Tosh’s plea to use history education as a vehicle for teaching broader thinking skills has received increasing attention in recent decades through the development of various models that emphasise the meta-practices at work in the doing of history, as I will go on to discuss.

Teaching the disciplinary nature of history

Within the literature on the nature and purpose of history education, a distinct shift can be noted from the debates of several decades ago which focussed primarily on issues of content, to more contemporary writing which focuses firmly on history as a discipline with its own knowledge, thinking and language structures (Lee & Ashby, 2000; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Parkes and Donnelly (2014) note that in the proliferation of research and writing on the topic of learning about the discipline of history, scholars use a range of terminology to describe similar concepts and skills including ‘historical thinking’, ‘historical understanding’, ‘historical consciousness’ and ‘historical literacy’. Parkes and Donnelly approach the term ‘historical thinking’ as:

a catholic term that embraces a range of approaches and modes of “doing history”...co-existent with “historical understanding”, and that it encompasses both acts of “historical reasoning” and engagement in “historical literacy” (2014, p. 117).

Throughout the thesis, where I refer to the concept of ‘historical thinking’ in a general sense, I am using it in the same way Parkes and Donnelly regard the term – as a catch phrase for a range of approaches to learning history underpinned by a common understanding of the discipline. I trace the development and influence of historical thinking in such detail here because it has become such a dominant feature of discussions about history education in recent decades (Levisohn, 2017).

Much of the contemporary work relating to historical thinking can be traced to the work of Denis Schemilt in his evaluation of the Schools History Project in Britain in the 1980s in which he argued for an approach to school history based on the use of evidence in the classroom and which emphasised the processes at play in historical inquiry (Schemilt &

Schools Council History Project, 1980). The Schools History project was heavily influenced by the work of Bruner (1960) who emphasised the value in teaching the fundamental structure of a discipline in order to render it more comprehensible to learners. Shemilt (1987) proposed four levels of understanding historical evidence and methodology ranging from the lowest level where students accept evidence at face value through to higher levels where students consider historical knowledge to be problematic, contingent and based on the interpretation of evidence (Barton, 2008a).

Shemilt, along with Lee and Ashby (1987; 2000) were pivotal in changing understandings of student cognition in history, which until that point had put abstract historical concepts beyond the grasp of adolescents, and in doing so perpetuated the belief that the 'serious' work in history had to wait until university study (Von Heyking, 2004; Wineburg, 2001). Lee and Ashby, in their study of students' progression in historical understanding distinguish between *substantive* history on the one hand and *second-order* or *procedural* history on the other. The former consists of the content of history, whilst the latter involves "ideas that provide our understanding of history as a discipline or form of knowledge" such as *evidence, explanation, change* and *accounts* (Lee & Ashby, 2000, p. 199). Research demonstrates that students are capable of complex and abstract historical reasoning, as long as they have been sufficiently supported in understanding the second order, or procedural processes at play in this process of reasoning (Ashby & Lee, 1987; Lévesque, 2008). Lee's research demonstrated that although two students may have similar levels of content knowledge in history, those with a clear orientation in the discipline through skills in engaging with sources and historical reasoning will have the capacity to think about historical issues and events in much more powerful ways (Lee, 2006).

Historical thinking and historical consciousness

The term 'historical thinking' developed its contemporary significance to history education with the publication of Sam Wineburg's *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (2001). For Wineburg, historical thinking is 'a way of knowing' that underpins the discipline of history and relies upon the use of evidence viewed in context. Wineburg's work posed a significant challenge to history education in North America which was at the time heavily reliant on textbooks that presented highly simplified histories that erased the wider historical metadiscourse. Wineburg's response was to look at how historians 'read' historical

documents in a way that considers context, sourcing and corroboration in order to bring these skills into the high school history classroom with a view to inducting students in the methods and procedures of historians (Wineburg, 2001). Wilson and Wineburg suggest four different dimensions of history which need to be considered by teachers wishing to engage their students in historical thinking: (1) a depth of factual knowledge that acknowledges the complexity of historical events; (2) understanding the role of interpretation in the generation of these historical 'facts'; (3) a sense of the significance of chronology and continuity and; (4) the meaning and significance of causation (Wilson & Wineburg, 1988).

Wineburg's empirical work mapped the often wide disparity in the differing ways that historians and history students approach a reading of historical material, his point being that engaging in historical thinking is an "unnatural" way of thinking which in many cases involves disciplinary habits of mind that are deeply counterintuitive (Lévesque, 2015; Wineburg, 2001). The Canadian-based researcher Peter Seixas has been especially concerned with the development of students' historical habits of mind in his work relating to historical consciousness. For Seixas, historical consciousness concerns how representations of the past are constructed in a way that implicates historiography, collective memory and history education (Seixas, 2006b). In teaching the skills of the historian we are aiming to develop students' historical consciousness, that being their awareness of the nature of history as a discipline, the role played by evidence, historiography and the role of the students themselves as readers of history. Historical consciousness is also connected to the citizenship-building purpose of history education. But rather than emerging out of a memory-history built on 'nation-building narratives' (Osborne, 2003), it is instead formed on the premise that "citizenship is best cultivated when students learn the critical skills of historical investigation and draw their own conclusions" (Cuban, 2002, p. viii). Here, the value of teaching history within a participatory democracy comes from learning the "disciplinary practices by which historians interpret evidence within meaningful narratives" (Sandwell, 2015, p. 83).

It is of course important to acknowledge that young people's historical consciousness does not spontaneously form within the history classroom. By the time students begin to formally learn the subject of history, all students will have encountered (to varying degrees and in varying ways) 'the past' as a dimension of their every day lives – through their own personal and family histories, within their communities, through encounters

with history at a primary school level and through popular culture and the media. Seixas' research revealed that these early cultural and family influences play a significant role in shaping the historical thinking of adolescents and, by implication, teachers needed to acknowledge and incorporate this prior learning within the history classroom (1993). Seixas argued for the development of "common ground rules, rules of evidence, of interpretation" (1993, pp. 321-322) to assist in the teaching and learning of historical understanding – a project which he himself saw to fruition in the development of the *Historical Thinking Project* with the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness in Canada. Once research had established that it was possible for students to engage meaningfully with second-order disciplinary notions of history, the question then became how best to support students in doing this and we see the development of a number of different frameworks and taxonomies aimed at scaffolding students' understanding of the nature of history as a discipline.

Frameworks for historical thinking

The pairing of new understandings of what the purpose of history teaching in schools should be with growing research on students' capabilities in history have led to the development of a number of different models for the teaching and learning of history. Lee notes that most models of historical thinking should not be read as 'ladders' or conventional progressive models because of the complex way in which students' understanding of the procedural aspect of history might develop across and within these frameworks (Lee, 2006). The value in these models to date has largely been to demonstrate to teachers and teacher educators ways in which they might approach the teaching of the deep, disciplinary structures of history. For the purposes of my research such frameworks can offer an insightful, discipline-specific descriptive language to describe and discuss pedagogical practices teachers engage in when they 'do' history with their students.

Historical literacy

Taylor and Young (Fahey) developed an index of twelve items that cut across historical concepts and procedures, which blend principles of both academic and public history to define 'historical literacy' for teachers (Fahey, 2007; Taylor & Young, 2003). Within this framework historical literacy is taken to mean "a systemic process with particular sets

of skills, attitudes and conceptual understandings that mediate and develop historical consciousness” (Taylor & Young, 2003, p. 29), and in this sense shares much with later definitions of ‘historical thinking’ (Bailey & Hughes-Warrington, 2009). The index suggested by Taylor and Young provides a common language and benchmarks for the discussion surrounding the issue of historical literacy in curriculum development and reform in both Australia and overseas, paired with specific, practical suggestions for pedagogical approaches to teachers wishing to develop their students’ historical literacy.

Seixas’ ‘Historical Thinking’ and ‘The Big Six’

Seixas has elaborated on the notion of historical thinking through the developing a “set of underlying concepts that guide and shape the practice of history” (Seixas, 2006a) which form his ‘Benchmarks of Historical Thinking’. In seeking a “robust, research-based conception of historical cognition” (Peck & Seixas, 2008, p. 1020), Seixas’ framework for historical thinking has undergone various revisions and developments until its publication as ‘The Big Six’ in 2013 (Seixas et al., 2013). In that publication, Seixas elaborates on six benchmarks for approaching the structural and procedural domains of history which have since been translated into curriculum and teaching materials across Canada. According to Seixas, historical thinking in the classroom can be approached through the following elements:

- Historical significance: helping students to understand that historical significance is a judgment we reach based on an evaluation of both historical impact and also our own contemporary values.
- Evidence: supporting students in finding, selecting, interpreting and contextualizing historical evidence.
- Continuity and change: assisting students to appreciate change over time and overcome simplistic, linear understandings of historical progression and development
- Cause and consequence: developing students’ understanding of the role of groups and individuals in shaping ideas and events, and the complex notion of intended and unintended consequences.

- Historical perspectives: developing in students a sense of the different social, cultural, political and economic forces that shape historical events and our reading of them.
- The ethical dimension: recognition of the common humanity at play in historical studies and the capacity of historical issues to provide insight into contemporary moral and ethical issues (Seixas et al., 2013).

Seixas' Benchmarks of Historical Thinking have been highly influential, and have been adapted into teaching and learning frameworks that scaffold students' comprehension of history by breaking down the six key concepts of historical thinking into cognitive 'guideposts' for students (Seixas et al., 2013, p. 4).

Lévesque's 'Thinking Historically'

Almost simultaneous to the development of Seixas' 'Big Six' benchmarks, Stéphane Lévesque published his own discussion on the idea of 'Thinking Historically' (2008). In the foreword to that volume Seixas himself notes the similarities between his own Benchmarks of Historical Thinking and Lévesque's notion of Thinking Historically, characterizing them as "the same concepts, in a slightly different configuration" (2008, p. ix). Lévesque's research returns to Bruner's notion of the value of teaching students about the structure of the discipline in order to foster genuine understanding beyond transitory knowledge of historical facts. For the purposes of this project, the particular strength of the framework suggested by Lévesque is his recognition of the shortcomings of previous research that has remained very nation-centric in its audience. Lévesque builds on the work of British scholars Lee and Ashby and Shemilt, along with key authors from North America (Wineburg, vanSeldright and Seixas), Australia (Taylor) and Germany (von Borries). The resulting framework elaborates on five procedural concepts that Lévesque contends are at the heart of the disciplinary practice of history, and each concept has paired with it an 'essential question' which "is framed to uncover a certain procedural concept that will lead to a better understanding of, and potentially a better use of, that concept in history education" (Lévesque, 2008, p. 37):

- Historical significance: What is important in the past?
- Continuity and change: What changed and what remained the same?
- Progress and decline: Did things change for better or worse?

- Evidence: How do we make sense of the raw materials of the past?
- Historical empathy: How can we understand predecessors who had different moral frameworks?

Lévesque's framework of concepts and questions establishes very clearly the procedural dimensions of disciplinary thinking in history and shares similarities with the 'Reading Like a Historian' curriculum developed by the Stanford History Education Group (Stanford History Education Group, 2019).

Implications for understanding history teaching

Despite the proliferation of these models and frameworks that elaborate on the nature of historical thinking, the pedagogical implications of these models, and in particular their relationship to history teacher practice, remain undeveloped in the literature. More recent work has sought to extend the application of historical thinking to assessing students' work in the history classroom. Seixas and Morton's framework for historical thinking (2013) continues to be adapted and developed to provide guidance regarding both teaching and assessing historical thinking (Denos & Case, 2006; Ercikan & Seixas, 2015), providing more insight into how historical thinking might be encouraged through teaching practice. Denos and Case (2006) suggest a range of strategies for assessing students' historical thinking, and in doing so highlight the key challenges for teachers in:

- Making history problematic for students
- Assembling and making use of varied resources
- Accepting alternative interpretations
- Using history to inform the present
- Teaching the tools of historical thinking
- Shifting the focus of assessment to historical thinking (Denos & Case, 2006, p. 6)

Amongst these broad descriptions of what teachers need to do in order to develop students' historical thinking, the specific practices or approaches that might lend themselves to these kind of learning opportunities are not made clear. Denos and Case's list is similar in this regard to Barton and Levstik's (2004) exploration of the 'cultural tools' students need in order to grapple with historical thinking. They argue that students need cultural tools in:

- The narrative structure of history

- Inquiry as reflective thought
- Historical empathy as perspective recognition
- Empathy as caring

Whilst again not specifically concerned with articulating the pedagogical practices of history teachers, Barton and Levstik's exploration of the 'cultural tools' required for history hint at the complexity of the task history teachers are presented with if they want to engage their students in historical thinking. Having students engage intellectually with the 'doings' of history means more than simply exposing them to historiography or primary source material. Implied through these 'cultural tools' is a range of intellectual, moral and emotional skills to the learning of history. Considering how teachers generate and extend students across this complex spectrum of skills is a pressing question at the heart of this research project.

Historical Thinking in the curriculum

For teachers to implement disciplinary practices in their classroom they need to be supported through opportunities to do so within the curriculum. The jurisdictional nature of teaching curricula not only in Australia but also internationally means that the level of curriculum support for teachers wishing to engage in thinking historically varies widely between states and provinces. In the Australian context, both Taylor (2019) and Parkes and Donnelly (2014) document the healthy tradition of historical thinking within history curricula, in particular in New South Wales. During the 1990s whilst other states in Australia moved to a more generic social studies curriculum (in which History and Geography were both subsumed into 'Studies of Societies and the Environment' or SOSE), New South Wales retained History as a distinct subject and mandated its study until Year 10. From 1992 the NSW History Syllabus has supported teachers exploring historical events from a variety of perspectives and embedded skills such as source analysis and empathetic understanding. In later incarnations, the NSW Syllabus made provision for students to learn about "working historically" which essentially involves teachers inducting students into the skills of the historian. So too the new Australian Curriculum has quite obviously been developed with an awareness of the growing research related to thinking historically. Henderson notes the explicit alignment between historical thinking and reasoning and *The Australian Curriculum: History 7-10* in its "emphasis on inquiry, interpretation and engaging with thinking about different values and perspectives" (2019, p. 105). Indeed the core 'historical understandings'

expressed in *The Australian Curriculum: History 7-10* of evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, significance, perspectives, empathy and contestability echo strongly the language and approach of frameworks for historical thinking preferred by North American scholars (ACARA, 2010).

Parkes and Donnelly single out the NSW History Extension course as a particularly strong example of how historical thinking is embedded in curricula in the Australian context. As part of this course, students have the opportunity to engage deeply with a case study to examine how history is produced, disseminated and debated and as such the course aims to develop a “meta-historical understanding” on behalf of students (Parkes & Donnelly, 2014, p. 126). This singling out of the History Extension course is particularly pertinent as three out of four of the participant teachers in the study taught history at Extension level during my fieldwork observations, and data from some of these lessons has been included in the project.

Section three: exemplary teaching as professional practice

For Wineburg, the value of Shulman’s (1987) call for more ‘portraits of exemplary teaching’ has been double-edged. Whilst he sees value in developing these “finely etched accounts of knowledge use in action”, they ultimately raise more questions about how teacher knowledge is developed and “how, exactly, do we turn portraits of excellence into programs that develop it?” (2001, p. 50). Indeed, the prevailing concern with much practice-based research to date has been how to identify an ‘ideal’ form of instruction and practice, and then to consider what reforms need to be made to university and teacher education programs in order for beginning teachers to replicate this practice. When viewed this way, these become ‘deficit’ models of teaching which seek to critique where teachers are ‘failing’ rather than recognising the diverse ways in which teachers use and deploy their professional knowledge and skills (Husbands et al., 2003, p. 144).

A practice view of history teaching raises important questions about how teachers develop their disciplinary teaching skills and the role of university teaching, professional development and teaching experience in shaping and refining teacher practice. Research shows us that many teacher attitudes and dispositions toward the purpose and nature of history as a discipline are developed well before they enter teacher education courses, and are shaped by their encounters with history at school and in popular culture (Lévesque, 2015). Difficulties in educating history teachers come

when pre-service teachers have not been asked to, or given the opportunity to, 'do' history and instead "have been relatively passive observers of others' attempts to do so" (Sears, 2015, p. 12). The notion that teachers frame their own understanding of the discipline at an early age, and the persistence of these pre-tertiary frameworks of thinking is problematic for history teacher educators who seek to develop disciplinary ways of thinking in their undergraduate students. McDiamond (1994) and Seixas' (1998) work demonstrated that despite specific instruction in historical thinking, beginning teachers still struggled to actually 'do' this with their own students once in the classroom, something which Pollock argues "raised serious questions about the ability of teacher education programs, or at least the ability of a single course, to challenge student teachers' existing beliefs about history" (Pollock, 2015, p. 66).

There is obvious value in practice-based research feeding back into teacher education programs to assist beginning teachers in anticipating the nature of their working life in the classroom, but there are also considerable pitfalls if researchers conflate these 'portraits of exemplary teaching' with prescribed ideals of what ideal teaching practice should look like. Sockett (1987) highlighted these concerns in his critique of Shulman when he warned against the codification of teacher practice and the separation of teacher practice from the context of teachers' work more generally. Identifying those aspects of history teachers' work that often remain unarticulated, as this project aims to do, can enrich our sense of the ongoing nature of teachers' growth and development throughout their career, rather than placing emphasis and indeed pressure on new teaching graduates to meet potentially unrealistic standards.

Pedagogies for engagement

More recently, research and literature on teachers' professional practice has sought to analyse and describe teachers' expertise with reference not only to their content knowledge and their pedagogical decision-making, but also their capacity to "motivate, engage and commit students to learning" (Orlando & Sawyer, 2013, p. 10). Research points to the diversity of teaching practices which can be successful in contributing to this task and the required flexibility and creativity of teachers in developing a repertoire of pedagogies that engage the diversity of students they teach (Zammit et al., 2007). Key to teachers developing this repertoire of pedagogies is teachers' own beliefs about their knowledge and capacity to impact on the learning of their students (Griffiths, Gore, & Ladwig, 2006). Other researchers have explored teachers' responsiveness to student

contexts and communities as a further dimension to teachers' pedagogical expertise (Blackmore, 2004). In part as an attempt to reconcile the diversity of research around pedagogy, whilst also recognising the complexity of teachers' work, the productive pedagogies framework seeks to provide a "common language to describe classroom practices and to develop a shared understanding between teachers of their professional practice" (Hayes, Mills, Christie, & Lingard, 2006). The framework describes teacher professional practice across the four domains of intellectual quality; connectedness; supportive classroom environments; and working with and valuing difference and went on to become the basis of the NSW Quality Teaching Framework (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2008). It is a model that incorporates ways of understanding the intellectual dimension to teachers' work, whilst also recognising the important role of understanding students as individuals and the 'virtual schoolbags' (Thomson, 2002) they bring to their learning. The practices of teachers who make a difference to students, particularly those from disadvantaged contexts, are regarded by Hayes et al. to be the result of both professional knowledge and, importantly, "a set of dispositions towards students and their local communities" (2017, p. 93). The way in which this combination of professional knowledge and disposition and understanding of local context plays out with regard to history teachers is a central question of this study.

As part of their work undertaken in the *Teachers for a Fair Go* project, Munns, Sawyer and Cole (2013) explore the dimensions of teacher expertise from the perspective of student engagement. In recognising that exemplary practices are as diverse as the contexts in which teachers work, Munns et al. nevertheless see value in pivoting conversations about teacher practice and professionalism to focus on the way in which teachers work to engage students in classroom experiences. Munns et al. further theorise an additional dimension to student engagement - beyond their substantive engagement in classroom experiences to their engagement in the broader project of education more generally. Similar to the dimensions of productive pedagogies, the *Fair Go Project* theorised exemplary teaching practice as that which offered high cognitive, high affective as well as high operative classroom experiences. The notion of valuing student engagement as a marker of pedagogical quality - both in the deep and authentic participation of students in classroom learning, but also more broadly in students being oriented towards learning, forms an important lens through which I approach my lesson observations with the participant teachers and students in this study as I consider what it means for teachers to engage students in the learning of history.

Discourses of 'quality teaching' and 'teacher quality'

The value of developing rich and contextualised understandings of teacher practice is particularly worthy at this juncture given the dominance of concerns about 'teacher quality' in discourses around education and teaching in Australia, and the efforts to establish standards for prospective and existing teachers. As Connell (2010) notes, the construction of an apparatus for the certification and regulation of the teaching profession (which has occurred in recent years in Australia as well as other nations), has meant that how we understand and measure 'good' teaching is now a pressing practical question with real consequences for teachers' working lives. All teachers working in Australian schools must be registered to teach by their local accreditation authority, and since 2012 that process of registration has been linked to the accreditation of teachers against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2019). Teachers must demonstrate their proficiency against seven standards (each with a number of subset descriptors, which are differentiated according to a teacher's career stage). Although the notion of 'professional knowledge' is a dominant discourse within the standards, the true meaning of 'knowledge' in the context of the accreditation process is not clearly articulated with reference to teachers' expert disciplinary knowledge. Bourke, Ryan and Lloyd (2016) highlight the internal contradiction within the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) accreditation and procedures document which on the one hand makes significant reference to "discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies" but on the other hand only ever requires low levels of thinking and knowledge from graduating teachers (Bourke, Ryan, & Lloyd, 2016, p. 6). Similarly, they locate an underlying anti-intellectualism within the accreditation material that focuses "on the behavioural component of professionalism, rather than the more important intellectual components" (Bourke et al., 2016, p. 6). For subject specialist teachers it can be particularly problematic that their disciplinary knowledge is not recognised in any specific way by the standards as they are currently constructed.

Alongside the development of teaching standards, it has been noted that the tone and content of contemporary public conversations and policy constructions of the 'good' teacher have operated to limit rather than expand possibilities for our understanding of good teaching (Mockler, 2018b; Talbot, 2016) and instead represent further examples of what Larsen (2010) identifies as the centrality of teachers in framing both the 'causes'

and 'solutions' to contemporary educational 'problems'. Mockler (2014) explores the way in which discourses about 'teacher quality' have worked in tandem with moral panics about school improvement and threats to the education system to dominate public and political discourse around education in Australia in recent years. As noted above, history teaching too is subject to similar 'moral panics' around issues of effectiveness, purpose and impact. The cumulative effect of this discursive positioning of teachers' professional practice generally, and history teaching more specifically, operates as a broader frame and rationale for this research project. Because despite the scrutiny that comes with such moral panics around the work teachers do, we nevertheless do not have a well developed, nuanced and contextualised understanding of what our most effective and engaging history teachers do in their classrooms.

Conclusion

This literature review has positioned this research project within three broad schools of research – those relating to teacher practice, the nature and purpose of teaching history to school students and various ways of thinking about exemplary teaching. In positioning this project within and amongst these research threads, this chapter has highlighted significant gaps and opportunities to improve the way we think about and understand the work of history teachers, and in particular the way in which existing understandings can be enriched and expanded through the close and contextualised study of history teachers working in different contexts. I return to these three broad research threads throughout later chapters in the thesis as I seek to make sense of, and learn from, the teaching practices I observe during my research for this thesis. This thesis also seeks to interact and engage with existing research through an understanding of teachers' work as a fundamentally social and relational practice. Practice theory and in particular the theory of practice architectures operates as the key theoretical frame which drives my understanding of teacher practice and informs key methodological choices in the design of this research, which I explore in more detail in the following two chapters.

Chapter Three

Theorising Teacher Practice

Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical approach used in both the research design and the analysis of data. Situating this research within the existing literature on history education and teaching in chapter two, I touched on the way in which teaching has traditionally been conceptualised as an individual pursuit – a largely technical expression of a teacher’s own disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge practised inside classrooms in the absence of an audience of peers (Shulman, 1986,1987). This thesis challenges this individualistic way of conceiving of teachers’ work through the use of practice theory as a framework that guides both the framing of the research methodology and the analysis of data collected. Practice theory allows for a more holistic, contextual understanding of the influences that shape and construct professional practice. Importantly for the discussion of teaching, practice theory sees teachers’ work as social and relational – allowing for a view of practice which is framed by teacher-centred factors (such as knowledge, disposition, professional identity, biography and experience) but also extra-individual factors (in the case of teaching we can also consider the students, the context of individual lessons, curricula, and school environment amongst others) (Green, 2009; Kemmis, 2005). Recent developments in practice theory, in particular Stephen Kemmis and colleagues’ conceptualisation of praxis and the theory of practice architectures, have informed my research approach to understanding history teaching as a practice.

Teaching as a social practice

Although I speak generally about the notion of ‘practice theory’, this is not to suggest a cohesive, settled body of theoretical work in this field which draws together many different research traditions (Mahon, Kemmis, Franciso, & Lloyd, 2017). The practice theory considered here draws on Schatzki’s notion of practice as the ‘site of the social’ (2002). Schatzki conceives of practices as fundamentally social in nature and sees education as just one example of what he would term an ‘integrative practice’, practices linked by overarching structures (or nexuses of actions), which ‘hang together’ in particular characteristic ways (2002). Schatzki theorised that, as social phenomena,

practices are always located within 'sites' and that particular practices can serve as sites for other practices to occur (which can be useful for thinking about the multiple practices occurring within educational sites at any one point in time). Schatzki also theorised the relationship between sites and practices – conceiving of them as 'bundled' into particular arrangements (Schatzki, 2012) and his conceptualisation allows us to understand particular teaching practices as *prefigured* by the sites in which they occur – a theoretical foundation which proved pivotal for my making sense of the practices observed across the sites of research in this project.

Kemmis and colleagues (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008; Kemmis et al., 2014) further theorise that practices (in a general sense) are the 'living out' of traditions and theory through communication and relations with others. This approach to theorising about education and teaching allows us to move away from binary perceptions of practice which seek to illuminate the dominance of either the individual/social, or the objective/subjective, and instead sees the possibility for an understanding teaching as relational, reflexive and dialectical (Kemmis, 2009). By taking this 'practice turn' (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina & Savigny, 2001) in the way we frame our understanding and research around what we mean by good teaching, we expand our understanding of the "distinctive architectures" (Edward-Groves & Grootenboer, 2015 p. 151) that constitute teacher practice and in doing so create space for recognising the significance of a range of influences on teachers' work. This theoretical approach has both analytical and methodological consequences for how we approach research in education and create greater space for encountering teachers' and students' own voices and experiences in particular educational sites. It is a theoretical position with significant implications for the way in which we discuss and categorise the nature of good teaching as it recognises teaching as a reciprocal and dynamic experience in which teachers, working collaboratively with colleagues and students, co-construct practice through the lived experience of the classroom.

A praxis view of history practice

In arguing for the notion of praxis as a deeply relevant concept for contemporary education, Kemmis et al. (2014) acknowledge the varied meanings and connotations that can be ascribed to praxis in scholarly work generated from different research traditions. In much of the Anglo-Australian-American usage the concept of praxis is referred to in the Aristotelian sense of being "action which is morally-committed and oriented and informed by traditions in a field" (Kemmis, 2012, p. 895; Kemmis & Smith, 2008, p. 4). In much of Europe, praxis is understood in a post-Marxian sense to mean

“‘history making action’, that is, as action with moral, social and political consequences” (Kemmis, 2012, p. 895). Kemmis reconciles these two understandings of praxis in his suggestion of the double purpose of education to be that of “living well (in the sense of living appropriately) and helping to create ‘a world worth living in’” (2012, p. 895). Viewed in this way, educational praxis has at its core the project of not only enriching individual students but is also acknowledgement of a much larger, societal purpose to education.

This way of thinking about praxis is useful in considering the actions and decisions of teachers within particular practice settings. In particular it can help us understand each participant teacher’s approach to teaching history – operating as they do within and amongst other discourses about both the purpose of education generally and the purpose of teaching history to school students (which was explored in chapter two). A *praxis* view of history teaching practice allows for a stance in which we see the object of history education as not only the communication of historical knowledge and development of historical skills in the classroom, but also a broader awareness of the moral purpose of history education and the complexities of teacher practice more generally. A praxis approach also recognises the complexity of teachers’ decision making as part of their practice, and highlights the role of praxis in weighing and guiding how teachers respond to these demands, as Dunne has noted:

In education, for example, a practitioner or policy-maker may face a situation where academic standards, considerations of safety, psychological needs and the demands of social equity, in relation to a diverse set of students and their parents, pull in contrary directions where *some* decision needs to be made. (2005, p. 381)

As part of my reflective conversations with each participant teacher, I asked them what they saw as the purpose of history teaching in schools. The answers each teacher gave went to the heart of their sense of history teaching praxis – a reflection not only of their own professional disposition but also of their reconciling of varying (sometimes competing) discourses about why it is we teach history to school students. Importantly, teacher practice cannot be assumed to be coupled to teachers’ disciplinary expertise, and whilst there might certainly be synergy between notions of history teaching praxis and the objective of teaching students to think historically, the notion of praxis frames the purpose of education as more broad than mere competence in one subject area (Kemmis & Smith, 2008). Taking a praxis stance on history education allows us to see

the depth in the work of history teachers and evaluate their work beyond the technical appreciation of their pedagogy to appreciating their broader project of practice, especially when considering the role of history teachers in the context of civics and citizenship education within democratic societies.

The theory of practice architectures

The theory of practice architectures builds on Schatzki’s understanding of practice to render more explicitly the characteristic features that *prefigure* and shape particular practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). It is an approach that:

offers a way to theorise practices and the interconnectedness between the *cultural-discursive*, *material-economic* and *social-political* arrangements which embody the types of practices (or actions comprised of interconnected ‘sayings’, ‘doings’ and ‘relatings’) that happen in schools and classrooms (Edwards-Groves & Grootenboer, 2015, p. 153).

Kemmis sees the circumstances of professional practice as being framed (and at times constrained) by these cultural-discursive, material economic and social political structures which comprise them. These structures operate as ‘practice architectures’, or the mediating preconditions for practice to occur (see figure 1).

<i>The Dialectic (Mutual Constitution) of Action/Praxis and Practice Architectures</i>		
Action and praxis	Dimension/medium	Practice architectures (mediating preconditions)
“Sayings” (and thinking)	The cultural-discursive dimension (in the medium of language)	Cultural-discursive structures, practices and relationships
“Doings” (and ‘set-ups’)	The material-economic dimension (in the medium of work)	Material-economic structures, practices and relationships
“Relatings”	The social-political dimension (in the medium of power)	Social-political structures, practices and relationships

Figure 1: The Dialectic (Mutual Constitution) of Action/Praxis and Practice Architectures (Kemmis, 2008, p. 21)

The theory of practice architectures recognises the complexity of practice and the range of personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural influences on practice to allow us to come to a more holistic understanding of practice than that afforded by other theoretical stances. As Kemmis notes:

Practice is always simultaneously formed and conducted in related or bundled sayings, doings, set ups and relatings; practices cannot be adequately understood if they are treated solely in terms of what people do (as behaviourist psychology

might try to do) or in terms of what objects and set ups are involved (as some kinds of systems theorists might want to say) or solely in terms of what social connections and relationships are involved (as some kinds of systems theorists might want to suggest). None of these can be privileged above all the others; they are all implicated and imbricated in the construction and conduct of social practices including professional practices (2009, p. 30).

This simultaneous forming and playing out of practices occurs across the three dimensions illustrated in the diagram above – the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political dimensions of practice. Viewed collectively these dimensions are in constant interplay and determine the way practices unfold in particular contexts, and in this thesis they are used as an analytical lens for understanding the way in which practices are formed in different sites.

The cultural-discursive arrangements of practice are expressed in the “medium of language and in the dimension of *semantic space*” (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 32) and concern the way in which language and discourses operate to enable and constrain the particular *sayings* of a practice. In the context of high school history teaching, this could relate to the ways in which the language used in the classroom is determined by the discourses of history, or by other cultural-discursive influences particular to school communities or areas of study.

The material-economic arrangements of practice are expressed in the “medium of *activity and work*, in the dimension of *physical space –time*” (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 32) and concern the resources that enable and constrain the *doings* of practice. In the context of high school history teaching, this could relate to the physical arrangement of learning spaces, which may support or distract from the project of history teaching, or more broadly refer to issues of resourcing and labour within and across school contexts.

Whereas Schatzki conceives of practices as a nexus of just these “doings and sayings” (2012, p. 16), Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) added the additional dimension of “relatings” to their development of the theory as a way of explaining the social-political dimension of practices as they play out in particular sites. The social-political arrangements of practice are expressed in the “medium of *power and solidarity* and in the dimension of *social space*” (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 32) and concern the way in which such arrangements enable and constrain the *relatings* of practice. In a school context this social-political dimension plays out including in the nature of teacher-student

relationships, as well as teachers' relationships to others within the school community. The recognition and inclusion of the social-political dimension of practice has been further theorised by Edwards-Groves and Grootenboer in their discussion of 'relational architectures' where they argue that:

understanding educational practice is largely, but not only, a matter of understanding the relationships formed among people in educational settings (2010, p. 45).

This theorising about the importance of relationships to the framing of possibilities of practice in schools has been critical to understanding and interpreting the work of the teachers in this study. The notion of relational architectures also represents a way of knitting together existing research around the nature of successful and engaging classroom pedagogies (Hayes et al., 2006; Lingard, Hayes, & Mills, 2003; Mills et al., 2009; Munns et al., 2013) which similarly highlight the central role of authentic teacher-student relationships to student success, as well as literature around the nature of teaching as a caring profession (Noddings, 2003).

Approaching an understanding of teacher practice this way shifts our research interest from a focus on the knowledge or skills of individual teachers to understanding teachers' work in the context of educational "meta-practices" (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008, p. 58), and can turn our attention to how the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' of particular practices 'hang together' in ways that enable and/or constrain certain educational possibilities. Considering the participant teachers' practice through the lens of practice architectures illuminates not only aspects of their own skills and abilities as exemplary teachers of history, but also allows consideration of the arrangements that operate upon and within these sites of practice. This theoretical position regards history teaching practice as constructed not only by the knowledge, capabilities and values internal to traditions in the discipline of history and history education, and not only by the skills and capabilities of individual teachers, but also by meta-practices external to those traditions. These include educational administration, curriculum development policy making, initial and continuing teacher education, educational research and evaluation, as well as the situational features of history teaching as lived-out in the classroom experience of the history lesson.

Influence of theory on methodological approach

My orientation to research (discussed in detail in chapter four) has been developed in response to this theoretical approach that understands teachers' work as a

fundamentally social practice. Theorising teacher practice in this way recognises it as both situated and embodied work that plays out through the intersubjective space in which teacher and students encounter one another (Kemmis et al., 2014). In recognising teaching as a reciprocal and dynamic experience in which teachers, working collaboratively with colleagues and students, co-construct practice through the lived experience of the classroom, I have sought methodological approaches that allow me to directly encounter and observe teacher practice within these spaces. The theory of practice architectures has provided a theoretically-informed analytical framework through which I was able to consider and make sense of the practices I observed, in particular through the use of the ‘table of invention for analysing practices’ as a way of mapping observed practice across the different arrangements of practice (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 32).

The theory of practice architectures also directed key decisions about data sources and informed my decision to engage not only in research with participant teachers, but also with their students. The theory of practice architectures understands teacher practice as co-constructed by both teachers and students interacting and relating with each other in particular sites. This understanding of teacher practice recognises students as active participants not only in their learning but also in shaping the possibilities of teacher practice. Similarly, it is a theoretical position that accepts students as being knowledgeable on issues that relate to their learning, as Kemmis et. al note:

students’ voices, observations and insights are especially valuable in throwing light on how educational practices ‘work’ and how [students] learn” (2014, p.9).

In chapter nine I consider the voices and insights offered by students about their experience of learning with these teachers, and in so doing offer a way we might more intricately map the practice architectures of teachers’ classroom practice by including students and teachers as participants in that practice.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced and explained practice theory and the theory of practice architectures as the key theoretical lens applied in this research project. It has offered an insight into the strengths of the theory of practice architectures as a way of not only understanding the nature of educational practices as they exist in particular site arrangements, but in drawing broader analytical conclusions about the way in which

teacher practice is a reflection of the complex interplay of arrangements which operate to prefigure the possibilities of practice in these sites. The theory of practice architectures is the key theoretical tool used to understand the work of each teacher in the study (chapters five to eight) but also guides my analysis of student voice (chapter nine) and allows me to draw broader, more holistic observations about the conditions that enable and constrain the possibilities for exemplary history teaching practice within schools (in chapter ten).

Chapter Four

Research Design and Methods

Introduction

The aim of this project was to develop a rich and contextualised understanding of exemplary history teachers' classroom practices. In approaching the design of the research I sought a methodological approach that would allow both access to teachers' authentic classroom work as well as direct insights from teachers and students. This chapter explores the epistemological and methodological framework that guided the inception and design of the study to meet these goals. It also details my decision making and processes in relation to research design and methods, exploring how and why a qualitative multiple case study approach was employed, and how this approach aligns with the theoretical framing of the research discussed in the previous chapter.

Approach to research

Although it is possible to position a discussion of the methods used in this project as merely a set of practical decisions relating to the process of research undertaken, such a discussion would belie the complexity of arrangements and beliefs about knowledge that underpin research methodology, and which deserve some consideration at the outset of this chapter. From its earliest inception as the kernel of an idea for a PhD research project, this study has been characterised and framed by an approach to research which seeks to understand and describe rather than "map and conquer" (Stake, 1995, p. 43) the area of inquiry. The goal of this research is therefore neither to uncover a particular 'type' of exemplary teacher nor to provide the single definitive answer to the research questions. Instead it is research informed by an interpretivist and constructivist paradigm described by Lincoln, Lynham and Guba as one that concedes "we construct knowledge through our lived experiences" (2011, p. 103). The study thus seeks to improve our understanding of the phenomenon of exemplary school teaching through a naturalistic, descriptive approach.

Merriam illuminates how the adoption of a qualitative approach in this project is in keeping with my own ontological and epistemological worldview, as well as the research aims of the project:

Qualitative research assumes that reality is constructed, multidimensional, and ever-changing; there is no such thing as a single, immutable reality waiting to be observed and measured. (Merriam, 1995b, p. 54).

Freebody provides a full and detailed account of the varying meanings and implications that can be ascribed to educational research categorised as 'qualitative' in nature as opposed to 'quantitative' (Freebody, 2003). At a time when quantitative methodologies and data appear to have increasing traction in the educational research and policy space, it is worthwhile to consider the limitations of such approaches for understanding the features and characteristics of teachers' practice. Freebody (2003) further warns that quantitative approaches to researching teacher practice can reduce our understanding of teachers' work and interactions to a set of abstracted 'variables' which provide us with limited insight into teaching and learning as a lived experience. It is very much through the ability of qualitative approaches to probe the "mundane, thoroughly recognisable but unremarked daily practices" (Freebody, 2003, p. 38) of classroom teaching that we are able to develop research that is rich in the description and detail that can be missed in purely quantitative inquiries.

In this study a qualitative, multiple case study approach using a range of different methods has been used because of the capacity of such an approach to provide opportunities to develop rich and contextualised descriptions of different teachers at work, and account for some of the influences on that work. Consistent with the theoretical framework for the study that views teacher practice as contextual and contingent (Kemmis, 2009), the methodological approach selected for this project has been chosen to allow for multiple perspectives and varying contexts to be accounted for (Stake, 1995), but in holistic ways that result in description, understanding and interpretation rather than breaking down the component variables of the different case studies (Merriam, 2009).

Researcher reflexivity

As much as the notion of objectivity is valued when we talk about research there is no such thing as a genuinely objective piece of research. Maxwell contends that "*any view is a view from some perspective, and is therefore shaped by the location (social and theoretical) and lens of the observer*" (2013, p. 46). My own background as a secondary school teacher of history was a major impetus to undertaking PhD research on the topic of history teaching, and the knowledge and experience I carry with me as a result of this

professional background has been highly influential to the way in which the research was carried out for this project.

Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011) note that in studies involving ethnographic methodologies there involves a balancing of orientations whereby “a sensitive ethnographer draws upon her own reactions to identify issues of possible importance to people in the outside setting but privileges their ‘insider’ descriptions and categories over her own ‘outsider views’” (p. 3). In the case of this research project my role has not fitted neatly into the binary conception of being an ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ – I have at various points straddled both identities. By engaging in a critical self-reflection of my own role as “instrument” in this study I hope to transparently account for some of the ways in which my own professional experience and personal orientations have shaped the course of this research and the quality and nature of insights gained.

I came to this research, and indeed arrived at the research questions at the heart of this project as an ‘insider’, through my experience as a teacher of history in secondary schools. Once inside schools as a researcher, I was both ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’. The world of secondary schools, and history classrooms within them, is very familiar to me. The language of school history, from syllabus terminology to knowledge specific to particular areas of historical study, constitute an example of what Giddens identified as “mutual knowledge” shared between observer and participants (1982, p. 15). My background knowledge rendered the observations and conversations I engaged in over the course of my research more accessible to me than they would be to someone without such professional experience. Similarly, my experience in teaching secondary students meant that during lesson observations I was able to instinctively ‘read’ a student group for (often quite subtle) indications of engagement in ways that someone without a similar level of familiarity with high school classrooms might not be able to do. In this case my insider knowledge and experience is an example of what Glesne and Peshkin termed “virtuous” subjectivity (1992, p. 104) – whereby my own experience put me at such an advantage to understanding the environment I was researching that it should be regarded as a strength of the research. Nevertheless, despite the benefits that my experience as a teacher provided in helping me navigate my attendance in schools and classrooms, I was still very much an ‘outsider’ in these particular environments, a temporary visitor to classrooms and an unfamiliar face to staff and students. I remain conscious of the way in which my role as ‘outsider’ may impact on issues such as the validity of observations (which I discuss in more detail below).

Throughout the project I have tried to be alert to the ways in which I have ebbed and flowed between this insider/outsider role and made use of strategies such as self-conscious recording of my analytic processes, as suggested by Freebody (2003), so that many of my observational or interview notes were also accompanied by memos which expand on aspects of my own personal understanding or experience of the research. Ultimately, I hope the insights and access afforded to me by virtue of my professional knowledge and background have enriched the trustworthiness of the research findings that follow.

Research design

Four case studies consisting of individual teachers were conducted to generate rich and detailed descriptions of teacher practice from which broader understandings could be developed. Merriam defines a case study as “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (2009, p. 40) and notes that it is the unit of analysis that frames and characterises the study being undertaken. In this case, the selection of four case study teachers allowed the research questions to be explored and analysed across four different contexts. Yin notes that case study research is an optimal choice of research method when we are unable to separate the variables within a phenomenon from the context in which it operates (Yin, 2014), which makes it a natural choice to examine the situated nature of teaching and learning. A case study approach allows us to consider the ‘case’ a natural setting (in this instance the teacher within the classroom) in full recognition of the complexity and context that flows from this (Punch & Oancea, 2014).

Consistent with seeking to understand the diverse ways in which teachers demonstrate their disciplinary skills in the classroom, it followed that a multi-case design was appropriate in allowing the possibilities for that diversity to emerge through different case study teachers. Stake (2006) notes that although the first objective of case study research is to understand the case, in multiple case study research the target is what he terms the “quintain”, which he explains as being the “arena or holding company or umbrella for the cases we will study” (2006, p. 6). For this study, the whole or ‘umbrella’ is the concept of exemplary history teaching practice.

The value of the case to the quintain is the way it allows us to look for similarities and differences across cases to inform our understanding of this broader question. Merriam notes that this greater variation offered across cases results in more compelling interpretations being reached through cross-case analysis (Merriam, 2009). My original research design involved recruiting eight exemplary teachers to my study. In the

planning phase, that number was halved to the final four participants through the realisation of the need to strike a balance between this variation that Merriam speaks of and the depth, richness and thus reliability generated through conducting fewer but more in-depth case studies.

Case studies were conducted sequentially beginning in May of 2017 and concluding with the final case study in April of 2018. The exact timing of observations and interviews was determined in negotiation with teachers and schools, in recognition that workload and the nature of teaching differs across the course of the school year. Additionally, the structuring of case studies sequentially rather than concurrently was necessary in order to allow for a large number of lessons to be observed over a period of time, consistent with advice of Bogdan and Bilken (2007), who recommend this approach to avoid the confusion of handling data from more than one case at a time. In the case of teachers Dan, Max and Penny whose schools were located within the broader Sydney metropolitan area, observations were conducted intensely over a three-week period, and this allowed me to experience the iterative nature of their classroom teaching. In the case of Jane, whose school was located in a regional area of NSW and required lengthy travel to the research site, observations were conducted once a week across a whole school term. Whilst I was unable to observe the same iterative teaching practice with Jane as I did with other teachers, this was compensated for by lengthy orientating conversations held with Jane at the start of each day of observation to discuss the placement of the lessons within their broader sequence. Similarly, the drawback of not being able to observe Jane's lessons in the same pattern as other participants was offset by the diversity that Jane's experience and teaching context brought to the project.

Case selection

Flyvbjerg notes that in research design such as this where the purpose of case selection is to inform our understanding of a phenomenon, there exists no 'standard' as to how to recruit participants, because it is the cases themselves that 'set the standard' for what is being studied (2004, p. 229). This absence of clear standards and criteria presented particular challenges for establishing a transparent, robust process for case selection in this project. How to go about the process of selecting teachers for the case study who would provide data and knowledge about 'exemplary' teaching practice, without limiting the scope and nature of cases captured in the way we define the parameters of said practice? Guidance was sought from a number of similar studies of teacher practice including Daniels-Mayes' (2016) study of culturally responsive pedagogies and the *Teachers for a Fair Go* project (Munns et al., 2013), both of which were interested in

understanding the qualities of exceptional teachers without pre-determining what those qualities might be. These studies discussed similar concerns that guided my decision-making in relation to case selection including the desire to avoid a narrow 'checklist' approach to identifying participants; the deficiencies of using data (such as student results) as criteria for identifying good teaching practice; and the need for recruitment strategies that acknowledged the emic perspective (Daniels-Mayes, 2016; Munns et al., 2013).

Daniels-Mayes resolved this tension by adopting a process of community nomination for teachers in her study, a process that recognised "students, parents and community leaders as insiders or expert knowers in their own education" (2016, p. 92). This echoed an approach adopted by Munns, Sawyer and Cole in identifying 28 case study teachers who were considered highly effective in engaging students from disadvantaged backgrounds (2013). In that study, a process of peer and self-nomination was seen as yielding a more valuable and diverse range of case studies than an earlier attempt to identify exemplary teachers from student data. This approach also meant that the criteria for selection, rather than being developed by the researchers at the outset of the project, were allowed to develop themselves in line with the principle that "local knowledge was good knowledge" and that people 'on the ground' would recognize strong engagement when they saw it. This turned out to be a correct assumption" (Munns et al., 2013).

In the case of my study I used the social media platforms of both Facebook and Twitter to call for nominations of good history teachers. The post was shared through my own professional learning network of teachers and educators and reposted by organisations such as the NSW History Teachers Association (NSW HTA). The post linked to an online survey form where people could share the names of a teacher they wished to nominate with a brief explanation for their nomination. Importantly, to comply with ethics and privacy requirements, the nomination form sought only the name and school of the nominee and no further contact details were sought at that stage. Twenty-five nominations were received using the online form. Of the nominations received, nine were for teachers at NSW Department of Education (Government) schools, twelve were from non-Government schools and four were from schools outside of NSW. Nominations from outside of NSW were immediately removed from consideration because of the practical concerns of travelling to the research site. I then considered the remaining list of 21 nominees and wrote to five NSW Department of Education school teachers and four teachers in non-government schools to ask them to express interest in participating

in the study. I also sought further information regarding potential participants including their years of teaching experience and information about the subjects they were teaching in 2017.

Of the nine teachers who were invited to express interest in participating in the study, five teachers responded positively. Of the remaining four invited teachers, two were not teaching history in the 2017 school year, one declined to participate and one did not respond. Information regarding the location, school context and experience of the five teachers who expressed interest in participating in the study were considered carefully with a view to maximising the diversity of teaching contexts across the cases in the study. From the list of those expressed interest in participating in the study, four teachers (two from the public school sector and two from the independent sector) and their principals were formally invited to participate in the study with all four consenting to participate. Those participants and their schools are identified in this thesis by the following pseudonyms:

Case	Teacher	School	School context	Nominated for study by:
1	Penny	Greenview College	Independent, metropolitan	Nominated by colleague
3	Max	Churchill College	Elite Independent metropolitan	Nominated by colleague
2	Jane	Bayview High School	Public, Regional disadvantaged	Nominated by head of department
4	Dan	Jacaranda High School	Public, outer metropolitan, disadvantaged	Nominated by former student - teacher

Table 1: List of case study participant and school pseudonyms

The strength of this process of case selection was that it used local knowledge to identify teachers who were known in their local school communities as being good teachers of history. It was also a process that allows this thesis to more confidently make broader claims about the nature of history teaching as I have explored the nature of 'good' teaching across a breadth of school types and contexts. In the case of all four participants, the person nominating the teacher had direct experience of that teacher's practice as well as specific knowledge of the context in which they were working. As a strategy for case selection it enabled me to identify teachers who would otherwise never have been made known to me using other strategies such as use of student results (as both participants Jane and Dan were not teaching in traditionally academically

successful schools with students on academic merit lists), or measures such as years of experience or levels of accreditation (of which there was again great diversity across the four participants). In this case purposeful sampling through the use of community and peer nomination enhanced the validity of some of the latter findings of the study as from the outset the design prioritised the identification of rich, atypical cases which I could reliably say were examples of good teaching in that context (Flyvbjerg, 2004).

Teacher participants and context

A note on school context and ICSEA data

Participant schools in this study have been de-identified. Nevertheless, details about the nature of the school and its students are highly relevant to understanding the context within which the participant teachers work, and the conditions that operate to frame aspects of their teaching practice. One tool available to researchers to understand the relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage of particular schools and their student cohorts is the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) score, provided on the *My School* website. A school's ICSEA score represents the relative educational advantage or disadvantage of the student cohort and incorporates information from school demographic data, parents' occupation and level of education as well as the percentage of Indigenous students and students with a language background other than English enrolled in the school (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2018). A school's ICSEA score is represented against a mean score of 1000 and a standard deviation of 100, with the *My School* site also providing details about the distribution of students across four quartiles representing relative levels of advantage or disadvantage. In the overview of the school contexts provided below I provide an indication of both the school's ICSEA value (although I refrain from providing the exact score to avoid the possibility of identifying the school) alongside details *about* the distribution of students at the school across the quartiles. These data sit alongside other details including insights from participant teachers, students and my own observations to provide the richest possible portrayal of the participant teachers' school communities.

Period of observation	Number of history lessons observed	Student focus group participants	Class groups observed
Term 2, 2017	19	9 Students from Year 11 and Year 12 classes.	12 Extension History 12 Ancient History 11 Ancient History 11 Modern History

Table 2: Summary of data collection with participant teacher Penny

Penny has been teaching history in both government and independent schools for 25 years and is now in a leadership position in her current school, Greenview College. She was nominated for the study by a history-teaching colleague who said:

[Her] creative and knowledgeable approach to History teaching has not only been an inspiration to students but a guide for best practice amongst her colleagues.

Like other teachers in the study, Penny has always enjoyed learning about history, and as a teacher she particularly enjoys sharing the stories and narratives of history with her students and seeing them become engaged and passionate about the subject. When I ask her what she enjoys most about teaching history, she shares “it's always about the students and when you just see that little light come on, you know, it just makes such a difference”.

Penny has been teaching in her current position at Greenview College since 2014. Greenview is an independent (private) boys school in Sydney teaching students from Year 5 to Year 12. It has an ICSEA score above 1100 (approximately one standard deviation above the mean) with 90% of students in the top two quartiles. 11% of students at the school are from language backgrounds other than English and 1% of students identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2018). Penny makes particular mention of the value the school places on academic achievement as a factor she negotiates in her practice telling me:

...look, it's tricky because the school where I am at is very conservative, and they just want students to get good results, and we talk about learning, but really that's code word for results.

Penny describes the students at Greenview as being very “compliant” and says she needs to actively question her practice, often asking “is that actually true engagement or is that just compliance?”

Period of observation	Number of history lessons observed	Student focus group participants	Class groups observed
Term 2, 2017	18	9 students from Year 11 and Year 12 classes.	12 Ancient History 11 Ancient History 10 History

Table 3: Summary of data collection with participant teacher Max

Max was nominated for participation in the study by two different colleagues including his Head of Department, with one nominee commenting:

[He] is always looking to improve his teaching skills through research into best practice, to fulfil a constant desire for a deeper awareness of history and current pedagogy. He is also very innovative with generating his own pedagogical ideas. He makes learning fun and interesting with depth and detail.

The second nominee remarked that Max was:

A passionate History teacher who enjoys research and challenging current pedagogical methods and typical classroom layouts. [He] is progressive in his use of technology to engage students and to ensure differentiation in the classroom.

Max has been a teacher in independent secondary schools for ten years and has been in his current position as a history teacher at Churchill College for the last four years. Max says he was drawn to history teaching as a career because it combined his love of history developed during his Bachelor of Arts and also his enjoyment of mentoring young people developed through years in coaching sport and youth group leadership. Similar to other participants in the study, Max feels that his obvious enthusiasm and joy for history shines through in his teaching practice:

The reason why they say that I'm an exemplary teacher is because more than anything I genuinely love what I do. I feel like I hit the jackpot... and it's just like, if I can go in there and tell a story... and history is cool for me, I'm just a little kid, like at the end of the day I'm probably like a 12 year old kid! [laughs]

Max sees his role as a history teacher as to help his students make sense of the modern world through looking at the past, telling me:

I say that to the kids all the time, if you don't understand how the world has worked you don't understand how it will work...kids need to know, and I think all people need to know the constructs that make up this world.

I observe Max teaching four different class groups at Churchill College, an elite independent (private) boys school in Sydney with students from Kindergarten to Year 12. Churchill College is a large and well-resourced school with an ICSEA score close to 1200 (approximately two standard deviations above the mean) and 95% of the student cohort in the top two quartiles of socio-educational advantage. 6% of students at the school are from a language background other than English and 2% identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2018).² In describing his students at Churchill College Max remarks that they are “pretty Anglo affluent, they are so sheltered here. They are lovely kids but they are so sheltered”. Max sees the role of history teaching at the College to challenge some of the ways in which his students are ‘sheltered’ but also admits that the primary expectation on him as a teacher of senior students at Churchill College is to get his students the best possible result for their Higher School Certificate. For Max, this tension between fostering a love of history in his students with the expectations of the school to maximise academic achievement is a constant negotiation of his practice.

Jane, Bayview College

Period of observation	Number of history lessons observed	Student focus group participants	Class groups observed
Term 3, 2017	16	6 students from Year 12 classes	12 History Extension 12 Modern History 12 Ancient History 11 Ancient History

Table 3: Summary of data collection with participant teacher Jane

² Relying solely on ICSEA data Churchill College represents as being similar to Greenview College, which belies some important differences between the two schools. Although both are single-sex non-Government (private) fee-paying schools, the fees charged at Churchill far exceed those charged by Greenview (the cost of enrolment for a Year 12 student at Churchill is approximately \$30,000 per year as opposed to approximately \$10,000 at Greenview). Alongside the expense of a Churchill education, the school exists as one of a handful of ‘elite’ independent schools with a long history of educating some of the most privileged families in Australia. My discussion of Max’s teaching practice in chapter 6 will explore the implications of this unique context in more detail.

Jane is a history teacher at Bayview High School, a Department of Education (public) high school in a regional area of NSW, Australia. She has been teaching history in NSW public schools for 30 years and was nominated to participate in the study by her Head of Department who justified his nomination by saying: “Jane is the ultimate professional and has dedicated her whole life to educating the youth of Australia”. Jane has been teaching at Bayview High School for nearly twelve years and has spent her whole professional life as a teacher in regional public schools. Jane identifies as Aboriginal and in addition to history also teaches Aboriginal Studies and is involved in Aboriginal education programs at Bayview High School. Jane’s identity as an Aboriginal woman and her belief in education as a social justice project infuse all aspects of her practice and are a key way in which she frames her personal understanding of history teaching praxis. I observe Jane’s teaching over an eight-week term.

Bayview’s ICSEA score is below 950 with over 80% of school enrolments coming from the bottom two quartiles of socio-educational advantage, and 12% of students at the school identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2018). Jane talks about Bayview High School with deep commitment and affection, but also with honesty about the challenges of teaching in this context. She nominates low attendance and retention rates, problems with violence and anti-social behaviour, a generally poor commitment to academic achievement and the low expectations of her students for their post-school opportunities as some of challenges presented to classroom teachers at the school.

Dan, Jacaranda High School

Period of observation	Number of history lessons observed	Student focus group participants	Class groups observed
Term 1, 2018	21	6 student participants from Year 11 Ancient History class	12 Ancient History 11 Ancient History 9 History 7 History

Table 5: Summary of data collection with participant teacher Dan

Dan has been teaching history since he graduated from his Bachelor of Education degree six years ago. Dan was nominated for participation in the study by a former student-teacher he had supervised. The nomination made particular mention of Dan’s use of

technology and the way in which he has transformed his classroom into an interactive space with museum-like displays around the room for his students to engage with while they learn. Dan also attended Jacaranda High school as a student and credits his Year 9 history teacher with giving him a passion for the subject and a desire to become a teacher himself. Dan tells me that after leaving school he briefly considered becoming a lawyer before realising that “money isn’t everything”.

Dan sees his personal love and passion for history as a key driver of his enthusiasm and energy in the classroom:

I’ve got the passion for it. I think that comes across in my teaching. I’m excited about it and I go home at night and plan lessons. But I let my students know that...that I am a history nerd...If you let the students know you think something is boring or dry, they will pick up on that and disengage. You need to hope that it’s contagious.

Dan combines this passion for history with a willingness to experiment with new technology with his students, which has led him to be considered a leading figure in educational technology and innovation at his school. Dan’s interest in technology comes from a desire to seek new ways to engage students in the stories of history through the use of visual material that can engage students with low literacy levels saying: “typically my lessons are full of visuals, bringing in and incorporating as many visuals to give them an understanding that will engage those students”.

I observed Dan teaching four different class groups at Jacaranda High School, a Department of Education (public) school in the outer metropolitan area of Sydney Australia. Jacaranda is a large co-educational comprehensive high school catering for students from Years 7 to 12. Jacaranda is rated below the national average on the ICSEA (with a score below 950) and 80% of enrolments at the school come from the bottom two quartiles of socio-educational advantage (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2018). Jacaranda has a diverse student population with 4% of students identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and 71% of students from a language background other than English. In our initial interview Dan nominates the range of student abilities and the needs of students with low literacy as a particular challenge to his day-to-day teaching at Jacaranda. In relation to difficult student behaviour in the classroom Dan tells me at the beginning of the school year “I’ve looked at my class list and I am definitely going to be challenged this year. I’ve had challenging classes in the past”. It is after our interview, which took place at the start of the school

year, that Dan decides not to proceed with me observing one particular class group because of concerns about managing student behaviour with an observer present.

Research methods

Finding and engaging with 'data' that adequately represent the complexity of teacher practice as it plays out in the classroom is a challenging and imperfect process. In reflecting on the data to collect for this research project, I sought to use research methods that would provide a multilayered and multidimensional view of teacher practice. Maxwell (2013) notes that the strength of using multiple strategies of data collection can both enhance reliability of research conclusions through the triangulation of data, but also provide a broader and more expansive understanding of a phenomenon by examining it from different angles. In this case my data collection has sought to capture the notion of teacher practice through interviews with teachers, observations of classroom practice and focus group interviews with students about their learning in those lessons.

Semi-structured interviews

Initial semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the participants that covered a standard stem question sequence (Appendix D), with opportunities for probing and expanding on responses (Merriam, 2009). These interviews allowed participant teachers to discuss their teaching practice and share aspects of their professional background and their approach to teaching history. The interviews proved vital for contextualising, highlighting and foreshadowing certain aspects of teacher practice that I observed in each teacher's lessons and also for establishing rapport with each participant at the outset of their involvement in the research (Freebody, 2003). In addition to these semi-structured interviews, an additional less structured interview was conducted with each teacher toward the end of my period of observation with them. This interview operated as a reflective conversation (Lincoln et al., 2011) and allowed me to probe into aspects of teacher practice that I had observed and for the teachers to share with me their experience of their involvement in the research. Interviews were audio recorded with the consent of participants and transcribed by me verbatim, before being sent back to teachers for checking. Occasionally, references made during interviews to other people, places or organisations have been removed or altered so as to protect the anonymity of the participant teachers and schools involved in the research.

Observations

In documenting each participant teacher's classroom practice, I undertook a sequence of observations of their history teaching over a period of weeks – with the goal of observing their 'everyday' teaching practice with a range of class groups. The number of lessons observed for each teacher varied between 16 lessons for participant teacher Jane up to 21 lessons for Dan, and was largely contingent on the length of lessons at the school and each teacher's timetable and other commitments. Each teacher was asked to nominate a number of class groups that they were comfortable having me observe over a period of time and teachers were able to negotiate the suitability of particular times, classes and lessons for observation. Planning for observations needed to remain sensitive to the day-to-day realities of each teacher's work. Originally, observations were planned with Dan's classes for Term 4 of 2017, but, with the absence of Year 12 lessons³ his reduced teaching load meant that Term 1 2018 would provide many more lessons appropriate to observation. A delayed start to research was thus negotiated for that case study. Much of the data and the resulting analysis relate specifically to the teaching of senior history classes, and is a reflection of the teaching loads of the participant teachers rather than a concerted decision by me to focus on history teaching in the senior years.

'Borrowing' from aspects of ethnography (Punch & Oancea, 2014), I sought to observe teaching as the teachers and students experience it every day. During lesson observations I sat in the classroom – sometimes amongst the students, sometimes just to one side or at the back of the classroom – my physical placement in the classroom allowing me to sit amongst the students and be attuned to their experience of learning history (Lichtman, 2010). Different participant teachers handled my presence in the classroom in different ways – for example, Dan chose to teach his class without mentioning or explaining my presence to students (who he says would presume I was a student teacher as he supervises many of these), whereas Jane introduced me one by one to each of her students by name.

During lessons I took field notes in which I attempted as far as possible to capture as much detail about each teacher's practice as I observed it. I began my first observations with Penny using an observational 'instrument' I had designed in the early stages of my research where I sought to classify the teaching I observed according to the observable aspects of historical thinking being taught. This instrument proved limiting in the way it

³ In NSW, Year 12 students conclude their formal schooling and lessons at the end of Term 3, returning to school in Term 4 only to attend their Higher School Certificate Examinations.

framed my view of teachers practice – there was so much going on in the classroom that did not ‘fit’ neatly into the categories I had constructed, and so I abandoned its use after a handful of lessons. I proceeded to pursue a more intuitive approach to field notes as described by Emerson et al. (2011). In these notes I sought to systematically record aspects of classroom talk, details about the teaching and learning occurring, information about the use of physical classroom space and resources as well as my own contemporaneous reflections and memos relating to what I saw. This less structured approach to writing field notes allowed me to approach each observation with a much more open mind about the data, and proved more suitable to producing “lush” (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 58) and “highly descriptive” (Merriam, 2009, p. 130) records upon which to make reliable claims.

Student focus group interviews

The third element of data collection for this project has been the use of student focus group interviews at each of the four schools. For a project which is primarily concerned with documenting, describing and understanding teacher practice, the importance of including student perspectives and student voices in the data collected could be easily overlooked. And yet if we accept the ontological and theoretical position that students are participatory agents in co-constructing their learning experiences in the classroom, it is not only consistent with this view but I would argue a methodological necessity that the experiences and voices of students be factored into the research design (Groundwater-Smith, 2011). My interest in including the voices of students in this project was to get a sense of the way they experienced learning history with the participant teachers, to test the framing of their teachers as ‘exemplary’ against students’ own understandings of what good teaching is, and to enrich the way we characterise good teaching practice with the insights of young people. After all, the students’ perception of what constitutes good teaching may be purely intuitive, but it is an intuition honed through years of experience in a multitude of classrooms and contexts.

For this project, the student perspective on practice was incorporated through conducting one focus group interview with a selection of students taught by each of the participant teachers. Students were randomly selected and invited to be part of the focus group interview from classes identified by the participating teachers. The focus group interviews conducted comprised of students in their senior years of schooling (Years 11 and 12), as these were the class groups that each participant teacher identified as most appropriate to invite to participate. Focus group interviews were held

during lunchtime on school premises using a clear set of stem questions that sought student reflection and responses to how they experienced learning in the participant teacher’s classroom (Appendix B). I also sought specific examples from the students of engaging teaching they had experienced in the classroom of their participant teacher. Focus group interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Individual students are identified by pseudonyms in the excerpts used in this thesis.

Data analysis

Merriam discusses the process of data analysis as a method of “making sense” out of the data so that we are able to answer our research questions. My process of data analysis for this project was conducted in the two phases of multiple case study analysis described by Merriam (2009) beginning with within-case and then followed by cross-case analysis. Additionally, the cross-case analysis phase applied Braun and Clarke’s “theoretically informed thematic analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2006) seeking to draw together data from across the case studies in ways that interacted with the literature and theories relating to history teaching, teaching practice and the theory of practice architectures. My process is represented in the table below:

Phase	Process
1. Concurrent data collection and analysis	Taking field notes and associated memos. Noting initial ideas relating to themes and codes
2. Within case analysis	Manual open coding of data across discreet case studies – categories and themes emerge unique to each case.
3. Initial cross case analysis	Use of NVIVO to assist with re-coding of data across cases and grouping into broader categories. Categories and themes emerge across cases.
4. Reviewing and defining cross-case themes	Ongoing refining and defining of themes in relation to the data and underlying theoretical framework, including the use of the ‘table of invention for the analysis of practice’ (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 39).

Table 6: Summary of phases of data analysis undertaken

Eisenhart (2002) notes that in case study research the process of analysis frequently overlaps with data collection, and this was the case with my project. The early phase of analysis began concurrently with the collection of data with my field notes and associated memos beginning the process of framing my understanding of what I was observing, and informing future observations and data collected. These memos and early developments of codes and categories for my research have been visited and

revisited many times over the course of the four case studies, and had the effect of refining and focussing each subsequent case study (Stake, 2010).

The initial stages of within-case analysis consisted of all interview, observational and focus group data for each site being grouped together as a “comprehensive case” (Merriam, 2009, p. 203) allowing for initial thematic analysis of the case as a discreet entity. Initial ‘open’ codes were allocated to data at this stage, to be further revised with later readings of the data in light of later cases. Once this within-case analysis had been conducted for each case, a process of cross-case analysis was undertaken, examining the codes and categories allocated to individual cases and data sets and looking for patterns, differences and notable themes that emerge from a bird’s eye view of the data giving key priority to a focus on the objective of the research, or the ‘quintain’ (Stake, 2006).

It is in this second phase of Merriam’s approach to analysis that I also applied what Braun and Clarke (2006) describe as “theoretically-informed thematic analysis” looking for ways in which the data and themes that have emerged from my reading of that data worked (or differed) from the key themes that emerged from my study of the literature surrounding history education, teaching practice and practice architectures. This process involved using Kemmis et.al.’s ‘table of invention for analysing practices’ (2014, p. 39) to explore the way in which particular components of the sayings, doings and relatings I observed at each site were indicative of, or relate more broadly to, the practice architectures of history teaching. There are very few published applications of table of inventions and thus I was guided by the extended examples of analysis using this tool provided by Kemmis et al. (2014) as to how to best categorise and describe each dimension of practice observed. This categorisation of particular aspects of practice into their corresponding arrangements should not be interpreted as being a clear and neat process. In reality, the use of the table of invention, whilst providing a vital additional layer of analysis to the data, also represented a challenging process of decision-making about the data I had gathered and the ability to draw wider inferences, as Kemmis et al. note in their explanation of the table:

It is always a matter of judgement about whether we now have sufficiently compelling and sufficiently rich understanding of how a particular practice is held in place and made possible by practice architectures, a practice landscape or a practice tradition (2014, pp. 226-227)

I have used the 'table of invention' to analyse a vignette of practice for each of the participant teachers in chapters five to eight to highlight how this process of analysis occurred. In this way the table acts as both an analytical and theoretical tool for what Nicolini (2012) terms 'zooming in' on the relationship between observed practices and the arrangements that variously enable and constrain such practices, and allows the drawing of conclusions both about the practice arrangements in each site of practice, as well as for exemplary history teaching more generally (which is explored in the discussion in chapter ten).

Research design strengths and limitations

Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) address arguments about the limitations of case study research by reasoning that we need to aim for both methodological and interpretive rigour as researchers. This need for interpretive rigour in some respects challenges notions of reliability and validity of research data as "social scientists concerned with the expansion of what counts as social data rely increasingly on the experiential, the embodied, the emotive qualities of human experience, which contribute the narrative quality to life" (Lincoln et al., 2011, pp. 120-121). Merriam notes the particular strengths of case study research as a strategy that "offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers' experiences" (2009, p. 51). As an objective of research, description might easily present as less compelling or persuasive than other ways of presenting research findings in generating theory or explanations. Nevertheless, Punch and Oancea note that description is a first, pivotal step in generating meaningful explanations and understanding and distinguishes the nature of description that case study research yields as being "a particular type of rich, dense description that is infused with meaning and interpretation" (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p. 23).

The validity of the conclusions reached in this study come from the depth and richness of the depictions of each teacher's practice, and what Merriam (2009) discusses as the coherence between the nature of the descriptions of that practice and the conclusions and analysis reached. In this sense, Merriam is not discussing validity and reliability in the same way as quantitative researchers might do, but in a way characteristic of qualitative approaches to research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) find it constructive to frame this as a question of the 'dependability', 'consistency' and 'trustworthiness' of the research findings rather than a question of its 'validity' in same way that scientific researchers use the term. In this project, the trustworthiness of the research findings were bolstered by aspects of research design such as the large number of observations conducted with each teacher over an extended period of time – a process which allowed

me to experience their classroom practice more authentically than one-off lesson observations would allow. The research design used here also enhances my claims that I observed and documented these teachers' authentic, everyday classroom practice, with many of the teachers commenting that I became "part of the furniture" (Penny, reflective conversation) and was therefore able to observe lessons without interfering with the conduct of those lessons. Coming to know these teachers' practice so well and being able to communicate the complexity of that practice from a place of familiarity enhances the validity of the insights I am able to offer the reader.

Similarly, the triangulation of data across each site reinforces the reliability and trustworthiness of the interpretations I offer (Merriam, 1995b). Interviews and conversations with the participant teachers enabled me to check and clarify my interpretation of events and interactions observed in the classroom so that I did not misinterpret or misrepresent the teachers' intentions. Interviews were also subjected to member checks to ensure the reliability and faithfulness of the written record to the conversation that occurred (Flyvbjerg, 2004). The use of student focus group interviews not only provided an important insight into the teachers' practice from a student's point of view, but also acted as a tool of verification about the way in which that teacher's practice had been characterised. The students consulted in this study were able to verify that the nature of the teaching practice I had observed during my time in the class as a researcher was indeed reflective of that teacher's usual practice and indeed they enriched what I had observed with their own stories and insights. Trustworthiness has also been a key consideration in the way in which data and analysis have been presented in the following chapters with each teacher introduced through an extended 'thick' description of their classroom practice. This presentation of practice is contextualised using the teachers' own insights and reflections.

Another common concern when undertaking case study research is the capacity to generalise from the insights gained in the case study (Yin, 2014), although Flyvbjerg (2004) contends that a phenomenological case study provides valuable knowledge and insight without the need to necessarily generalise from it. Whilst I offer here four discrete case studies of teachers and their work, the goal is clearly to offer broader more holistic insights into the nature of history teaching and teacher practice more generally, and this has been reflected in key aspects of the research design. The strength of case study research is enhanced through the strategic selection of cases (Flyvbjerg, 2011), which for this project can be seen in the use of peer nomination combined with a deliberate selection of four teachers working in very different contexts. Stake (1995)

and Merriam (1995a) both note that although it is possible to generalise from a single case study, a multi-case design improves the ability to generalise through providing both depth and variety to analysis.

Drawing on Merriam and Tisdell's strategies for promoting validity and reliability in research (2015, p. 217) I can thus summarise my own claim to the validity and reliability of this study on the grounds that:

- Data has been triangulated from a range of sources and using a range of different methods.
- Participant member checks have been included at various stages of the study, including checking of interview transcripts and readings of draft analysis chapters.
- Data collection occurred over an extended period of time, including lengthy periods of observation with each participant teacher.
- I have sought to declare and critically self-reflect on my own position as researcher and the knowledge and experience I bring to the project as an experienced teacher of history myself, as well as the epistemological and ontological world view that frames and informs my approach to research.
- There is a clear audit trail of my decision making in relation to the study – most clearly documented in this chapter and my explanations around case selection and the manner in which fieldwork was conducted.

Ethical considerations

This project received ethics approval from the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee and also approval through the NSW Department of Education State Education Research Applications Process (SERAP). During the research, one amendment was sought from the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee to allow the taking of photographs of the teacher participants' classrooms (as an aide memoire for my own analysis), and this approval was granted. Copies of the participant information and consent documentation provided to both teacher and student participants is provided in Appendix C.

Merriam notes the synergy between issues of reliability, validity and ethics in case study research. A large part of the rigour required to produce reliable research depends on the professionalism and integrity of the researcher and the awareness and adherence to ethical conduct at each stage of the research process (Merriam, 2009). Key ethical considerations particular to this research concerned managing confidentiality and

anonymity of teacher participants; the concept of informed consent in a long term project; and managing the participation of students in research about their teachers.

All four teachers and their schools who participated in this study have been de-identified. Whilst it is true to say that in some respects the nature of this research means that there are in fact low risks (and indeed possible rewards) for teachers in this study to be known more widely in their profession as 'exemplary', the presumption in favour of de-identifying research participants exists for sound ethical reasons and should only be breached in very rare circumstances (Kelly, 2009). In this case, although it was known within the school community that teachers were participating in the study, the process of de-identifying teachers and schools in the final report allowed teachers to speak frankly about the conditions of their work without concern of repercussions. Similarly, a balance was sought between de-identifying schools whilst still providing enough detail about the location and characteristics of each school to assist some of my analytical arguments relating to the importance of teaching context (Kelly, 2009).

Careful attention was paid to the notion of informed consent from the start of the nomination process and as it operates in a longer-term project such as this where teachers are consenting to be interviewed and observed over a number of weeks. The nomination form used to recruit participants included the ability to include the name but not the contact details of potential participants, and also required the nominee to attest that they were making the nomination with the consent of the nominated teacher. Once research commenced, observations were always conducted by a process of negotiation with teachers who were regularly reminded that they could opt out of an observation at any stage. Ongoing reflective conversations about the course of the research and teacher participants being aware of protocols and processes regarding issues of consent were communicated clearly both in the participant information statements and also verbally.

The process of negotiating to conduct research with students about their teachers is a delicate one that Mockler and Groundwater-Smith have characterised as "risky business" (2014, p. 59). Whilst seeking student feedback on teaching has the capacity for huge rewards, it is a process that many teachers can no doubt feel nervous about. Important to the ethical conduct of my focus group interviews with students was a very clear set of stem questions which sought to keep the focus of the conversations firmly on students discussing specific examples of their learning, rather than reflecting on their personal feelings about a particular teacher. The notion of student anonymity in the

focus group interviews was also important, so that students felt they could speak honestly and openly about their experiences of learning in that classroom without fear of identification by their teacher or others in the school. One unforeseen ethical challenge that emerged during the conduct of the student interviews was that students frequently wanted to discuss other (non-participant) teachers often by way of comparison to the participant teacher. When these comparisons emerged in the discussion, I sought to redirect the students to discuss the characteristics of teaching or specific examples of what they saw as positive classroom practices, rather than the characteristics or habits of particular teachers. Where the names of other teachers were mentioned by students in the focus group, these names were redacted from the final transcript.

Explanatory note on the presentation of case study data

As noted in chapter two the majority of research concerning history education and history teaching has been approached from what Kemmis et al. (2014) would term an epistemological perspective – concerned as it is with teachers’ disciplinary knowledge and skill in the history classroom. This project seeks to add to this literature through an ontological approach to understanding history teaching as a practice that occurs in particular sites. As Kemmis et al. describe:

...the ontological view insists that we attend to the *actuality* and *materiality* of educational practices, not just practitioners’ or researchers’ or curriculum developers’ *knowledge* about education (2014, p. 218)

As a result, I have chosen to represent and communicate the data from my four case study participants in ways that are consistent with this theoretical approach and account for this *actuality* and *materiality* of practice. In the chapters that follow I introduce each of the four participant teachers in more detail, beginning with an extended ‘vignette’ from their classroom, before going on to analyse and discuss each teacher’s practice with reference to both observational data as well as the teacher’s own reflections. I have made use of the narrative strategy of vignettes for their ability to “place a question in the reader’s mind and to set an emotional tone over the material that is to come” (Gullion, 2016, p. 90). The use of vignettes also reflects the richness and complexity of classroom interactions between teachers and students, and my efforts to come to terms with, and effectively represent the experience of learning with the teachers in the study. The vignette lessons presented here were chosen after thematic analysis of all lessons observed – as described above, between 16 and 21 lessons were observed for each

participant teacher – and capture a particularly salient example of their approach to history teaching, which provides a meaningful entry point to further discussion and analysis of their praxis in practice. In keeping with the goal of this research being to primarily use the classroom as a site of learning about history teaching practice, the vignettes work to introduce each teacher through an extended insight into their interactions and provide a basis for rich description of that practice with regard to a particular class group at a particular moment in time.

A similar approach to understanding teachers' classroom work was used by Wineburg and Wilson (2001) in their rich and close description of two remarkable history teachers at work, and the chapters that follow are built around the premise that we can learn much from these rich and well observed descriptions of practice. Similar to Wineburg and Wilson, I am interested in capturing the skill and uniqueness of each teacher's own approach to encouraging engagement and deep learning in history with their students. However, unlike Wineburg and Wilson's chapter, which focuses almost solely on what it is that Mr Price and Ms Jenkins say and do with their students, my analysis seeks to place the work of the four participant teachers in this study within the broader context within which they work.

A key analytical tool used to guide and inform my observations and the resultant insights into practice is the 'table of invention for analysing practices' (Kemmis et al., 2014) which allows descriptions of practice to be developed alongside observations and insights about the broader practice architectures that prefigure, frame, shape and at times limit that practice. In the chapters that follow the table of invention sits beneath each lesson vignette to both further develop the key areas of observation and to link these more explicitly to the theory of practice architectures.

Presenting the classroom data in this way seeks to take the analysis of teacher practice a step further than existing portraits of exemplary history teaching by providing discussion and consideration of the role of teacher praxis in influencing and shaping the way in which teacher practices play out in each of these contexts, using the framework of practice architectures as a guiding understanding for the ways in which practice is formed and shaped in particular sites. It is an approach to analysing teachers' classroom work that looks both at the nature of teachers' pedagogy but also at the relationship between the way they teach history and their own orientation to education and history education more specifically. It is also a frame that allows us to account for the way in

which these practices are in turn a reflection of other arrangements that create certain possibilities of practice.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to explain the processes and methods employed in my research with reference to the broader influences and traditions that have framed the project. The research design has sought to be responsive to the scope and needs of the project, my own beliefs and understandings about the nature of knowledge and the purpose of research as well as the contexts in which my research was conducted (Maxwell, 2013). I have aimed in this chapter to provide a clear sense of the alignment sought between the goals of the research and the methods employed in the study – with a key consideration being the way in which I developed a rich, multilayered and multi-perspective data set around each of the participant teachers which would then allow meaningful cross-case analysis to be undertaken. I have also sought to transparently present the conceptual and methodological challenges of working as both a teacher and a researcher and the ways in which this has worked to both complicate but, I hope, ultimately enhance the quality of the analysis that follows.

The chapters that follow present the data gathered for each case study teacher with chapters five to eight presenting a close study of each teacher's practice. Chapter nine presents analysis of data gathered using student focus group interviews and chapter ten concludes the data analysis by using the theoretical lens of practice architectures as a discursive framework for understanding history teaching in these various contexts.

Chapter Five

Penny's Classroom

A vignette of practice

It is 7.30am on a cold winter's morning. I meet Penny in her staffroom and we walk together across the deserted playground to her classroom where her Year 12 History Extension students meet before the start of the official school day for their lessons. The History Extension course, designed for history students in their final year of school, has an explicit focus on the study of historiography, and the lesson I observe this morning occurs as part of a sequence of lessons about 'the historians'. As we walk to class, Penny mentions to me that today's lesson will start by talking about the historian Marc Bloch and trying to teach students the idea of 'history from below'. She expresses concern that the students are not really engaged in this topic and confides "I just don't know how interesting I can make Marc Bloch". As we arrive at the classroom, a few students are waiting outside, and a few more straggle in over the next five minutes as Penny sets up her computer and gets ready to teach. The lesson starts informally, with Penny asking after a student who has been absent, and chatting to others about how they are going with their work. Then the low murmur of chatter peters out and the lesson begins.

Penny begins with some revision of the last lesson, reminding students that they were reading excerpts from Marc Bloch's 'The Historians' Craft': "I will give you a minute to go back and read over that paragraph...take a moment to read and think about what he is saying". The room is silent while students read. A student arrives to the class late, stopping just inside the room and looking around. After a moment he says "I thought you were all in prayer, it was so quiet and intense in here".

Penny then directs students to read another paragraph of Bloch's work and asks them to consider what the key idea in the paragraph might be. She waits in silence for a long time as the students consider, before one student tentatively contributes:

Shane: The need for history to work with other disciplines?

Penny: Ok. Why do we need to work with other disciplines?

Shane: Because history alone can't give us all the answers.

Penny: Hmmmmm, ok. [Moving to her computer at the front of the room] Today we are going to have a look at Bloch and see how much he uses other disciplines.

Penny turns on the AV projector and displays a PowerPoint slide showing a collection of screen shots of headlines and Tweets relating to an event that has been in the news that week. A few days prior to this lesson speculation had broken out online and in social media about the possible death of the Duke of Edinburgh. Whilst showing students the Tweets, social media posts and examples of online reporting for this event, Penny explains that when Buckingham Palace scheduled a public announcement, the public (through social media) went into overdrive speculating and then (wrongly) claiming that the Duke of Edinburgh had died. Penny's students all seem to show some level of awareness of the event and are particularly engaged in the story – some laughing and joking as the discussion occurs. Penny concludes the story by showing students the official statement from Buckingham Palace confirming that the Duke of Edinburgh was indeed alive, and was only announcing his retirement from public engagements. The social media hysteria had been over nothing.

Penny: I wonder...who would be the object of history in this story?

Buckingham Palace? Or the public response?

Students: The response.

Penny: Why do you say that?

James: The actual story wasn't very important but what will go down in history is the overreaction to it.

Penny: But who decides what will go down in history?

William: [Jokingly, referencing an earlier lesson] Let Von Ranke decide! (laughter).

Penny: Nice, ok then I'll ask you – if Von Ranke was writing about this event, what would he write?

James: He would say it is about the Duke of Edinburgh. About the Royals.

Penny: I think you're right. Because for Von Ranke, history is about the King, it's about the leaders. But what about Bloch....who would Bloch write about? Have a think.

Standing at the side of the room facing the board, Penny changes the slide to show a picture of the Duke of Edinburgh side by side with a picture of a contestant from a reality TV cooking show.

Penny: Does anyone know who these people are?

Hugh: That chick is from [TV cooking show] My Kitchen Rules!

Penny: Yep, that's 'Betty' from MKR. Do you know what her job is?

She's a 'social media influencer'. I don't think Bloch is interested in the Duke of Edinburgh over her is he? He's going to write about Betty from MKR. Why?

James: Because it's about the social media?

William: Because history is about people, not about the leaders.

Penny: Yes! Bloch would have loved social media! He wants to know about how the people are thinking and feeling. But I wonder why Bloch has this approach. Where does he develop it? Remember what we have learnt about Bloch's life – there are clues to his approach in his background, in his biography.

Liam: He is Jewish.

Penny: Ok. Why is that a factor? What's happening in Europe during Bloch's lifetime?

Liam: An arms race? (Penny ignores this response)

James: Anti-Semitism.

Penny: Yes, ok. Europe is facing growing anti-Semitism. It's been 100 years since the Revolution and little bits of the old regime are creeping back in. Even though the Jewish people have lived in France for centuries, they are being treated as outsiders. Then, while Bloch was a young man, the Dreyfus affair happened....

At this point in the lesson, Penny tells students the story of the Dreyfus affair. The students are transfixed by the story, which Penny recounts without reference to notes or use of any images or multi-media – just her own verbal storytelling skills. Students face Penny and follow the story with great focus – no one moves or speaks. At the conclusion of the story Penny pauses and there are a few moments of silence.

Penny: Imagine being a 10 year old, a young Jewish boy in France at this time. What are you seeing? What are you hearing? How is this trickling into your family and your life? Historians are divided about how much the Dreyfus affair impacts Bloch, but there was not a Jewish person in France at the time who was not aware of this.

Penny goes on to recount other aspects of Bloch's biography including his involvement in World War One and his early work on scrofula which she explains to students as "like a

sick person walking down the street and thinking that being touched by [then Australian Prime Minister] Malcolm Turnbull would make them better” which results in much laughter from the class.

Penny: It does sound funny, but this work was revolutionary. Rather than writing about these Kings, Bloch was actually drawing on other academic disciplines to write about the peasants. This was radical. Using psychology, anthropology – that multidisciplinary thing. It was ground-breaking work because he was looking at the King through the people’s eyes.

Penny then points back to the screen at the front of the room where there is again a collection of tweets and media reports relating to the Buckingham Palace announcement of a few days ago.

Penny: So, thinking about this supposed ‘death’ of Prince Phillip – the people went hysterical and Bloch would tell us there is something very interesting, very valid, very important in how people responded to that event. And what would Bloch do? What questions would he ask? What tools would he use? Let’s think some more about this.

James: He’d be interested in the hysteria – like with the scro...I don’t know how to say it...

Penny: The scrofula...yes. Exactly – and where would he look for answers?

Richard: He’d look at all that social media – not just at what the official palace statement said – he’d look at what the people said and what the people did.

Penny: Yes fantastic. Now let’s look at some of the titles of Bloch’s other work and think some more about the kind of history he was writing....

In what remains of this lesson, Penny goes on to discuss Bloch’s biography in more detail and has her students draw connections between his personal life and development of his world view, and historical events that he was witness to.

An analysis of Penny's practice using the table of invention for analysing practices

Elements of practices	Practice architectures found in or brought to the site
<p>Project</p> <p>This lesson is a continuation of students' study of 'The Historians' as part of the final year History Extension course. Penny's objective in the lesson is to have students engage with, and show understanding of, Bloch's historiographical approach of 'history from below'.</p> <p>It is a lesson that is representative of Penny's history teaching practice more broadly – both in History Extension but also with the other class groups with which I observe her. Penny's practice is driven by her strong focus on student engagement and is supported by her genuine and authentic efforts to establish meaningful relationships with all the students she teaches. Her understanding of her students and her consideration of how they might best experience and understand history leads her to reflect and consider new ways of engaging students with historical material. The use of contemporary issues to pursue an understanding of history and historiography reflects Penny's sense of history teaching praxis more broadly. Penny considers history as about teaching students to be endlessly curious and to seek to understand the world around them through the tools that the study of history can offer.</p> <p>The lesson is teacher directed, with Penny pacing students' progress through a range of activities including student reading, teacher-led questioning, teacher-led narrative as well as whole class discussion around the nature of 'history from below.'</p> <p>Students contribute enthusiastically to the discussion generated by Penny's questioning and are able to volunteer their own insights and interpretations based on the stimulus she presents. Conversation is shared broadly across all students and through this conversation they make spontaneous connections between the material in this lesson and other prior lessons as well as showing an understanding of the way in which historian's own life experiences inform their historiographical approach.</p>	<p>Practice landscape</p> <p>The lesson occurs in a classroom in the secondary school before the start of the school day – it is silent and there are no other lessons occurring or indeed any other staff or students around.</p> <p>The room is very much a traditional secondary classroom with an array of forward facing individual desks facing the front of the room. Nothing about the classroom arrangement or design hints that this is a history lesson- it is a classroom used by a range of different class groups for different subjects. The space becomes Penny's Extension History classroom when she arrives to teach bringing with her resources such as her laptop computer and printed materials for the students to use in this lesson.</p> <p>There are many taken-for-granted components <i>enmeshed</i> in the activity timespace of the lesson. For example, the material Penny brings to the lesson – drawing variously from historical texts, media reports and social media all hint at a degree of not only English language proficiency amongst the class group, but also a familiarity with aspects of popular culture and current affairs, as well as a high degree of literacy around the language and conventions of academic history. Being an extension class available only to senior students who have a passionate interest in history, Penny is able to presume a range of knowledge and awareness on behalf of her students and this is reflected in the way the practice arrangements operate in the lesson.</p>
<p>Sayings</p> <p>Whilst the learning in the lesson is very reliant on teacher and student dialogue, the use of written text – both the printed work of Bloch that students read and also the material in Penny's presentation- provides necessary background and context to support the sayings of the lesson.</p>	<p>Cultural-discursive arrangements</p> <p>The lesson is dominated by terminology and language specific to the study of history, whilst also engaging with contemporary discourses that operate to engage students and encourage their application of historical ideas. The students' previous grounding in these makes possible the 'sayings' that dominate the lesson, as well as the open-ended, discursive approach that</p>

<p>Penny guides students through the lesson using teacher-directed dialogue and strategic verbal questioning. She makes extensive use of open-ended prompts to students such as (“<i>I wonder</i>”) and similarly makes use of questions that encourage students to not only make observations but also support these with evidence (“<i>Why do you say that?</i>”)</p> <p>The use of social media as a teaching prompt means the language of the lesson happens in two distinct registers - one quite informal, where students discuss and make (at times colloquial) observations in response to Penny’s prompts (“<i>That chick is from MKR!</i>”). However, Penny’s use of historical narrative and guided questioning also leads to dialogue and contributions that draw heavily on the deeper academic and analytical core of historical study (“<i>Because history is about people, not about the leaders</i>”).</p> <p>Aside from Penny’s guided questioning, there is very little other direction or instruction provided to students – Penny doesn’t have to tell them to settle, or to take out their books or to write notes. The sayings of the lesson are almost entirely connected to the themes and content of the teaching rather than any other procedures or issues of student behaviour or lesson organisation.</p>	<p>characterises this and many of Penny’s other interactions with this class.</p> <p>Penny’s choice to ‘hang’ the discussion about Marc Bloch and ‘history from below’ using discourses of social media is largely successful because there is a high degree of assumed knowledge and understanding amongst her students not only about the content of that discourse but the manner in which Twitter operates as a social media tool.</p>
<p>Doings</p> <p>The ‘doings’ of the lesson play out in three distinct stages or pedagogical ‘acts’ consisting of students’ initial reading of Bloch’s work, the class discussion facilitated by the use of social media as a prompt and then the engagement and discussion around the relationship between Bloch’s life and historiography. Penny manages the transitions between these activities through the use of the PowerPoint presentation as a prompt to both herself and students and as a catalyst for conversation, and also through the use of the printed resources students have in front of them, which act to tether students to the words and ideas of the historian they are discussing.</p> <p>There is very little movement in the lesson, students remain seated and contribute to the lesson verbally from their seats, often without raising their hand. Penny moves around the room while she facilitates discussion. Students engage to varying degrees with the printed material Penny has provided them and their own written notes – and at no time does Penny explicitly instruct students to write down particular ideas or take notes. The discussion is the main activity and product of learning for the lesson.</p>	<p>Material-economic arrangements</p> <p>Although the room is sparsely decorated and the lesson is largely directed through teacher-led questioning, this is nevertheless a reflection of a resource-rich teaching context. The room is oriented so that the attention of students is automatically directed to the front of the room, and Penny makes the most of this orientation in her use of a PowerPoint presentation to prompt student discussion. However, her decision to also print out the materials from this presentation for her students to have in hard copy tells us that Greenview College is well resourced in the teaching and learning materials available for teachers and students.</p> <p>There are also other, less visible material-economic forces at work behind this lesson such as the ability of Greenview (and indeed Penny herself) to offer this extension course outside of the usual school timetable.</p>

<p>Relatings</p> <p>As noted above, the lesson is teacher-led, but with a strong focus on probing questions. Penny's particular use of questioning hints at her high level of engagement with students – in particular with student James who is highly vocal and curious throughout the lesson. Penny's responses to questions almost always involve both acknowledgement of the students' contribution but also a building on their responses either through further questioning and challenge or exposition.</p> <p>Penny relates warmly to students throughout the lesson, and with very little need to provide specific instructions or guidance to students as to classroom procedures or behaviour.</p>	<p>Social-political arrangements</p> <p>The social-political arrangements of the lesson are reflective of the long-standing relationship Penny has with this class of students – many of whom she also teaches in her Year 12 ancient history class.</p> <p>The arrangements are also reflective of both the year level and high academic motivation of the students in the class – as a group of senior students who have elected to study history at this extension level, there is a degree of engagement and commitment which is presumed and understood by all participants in the lesson. Penny's choice of highly engaging and yet also challenging pedagogical strategies is a reflection of how well she knows these students as learners as well as individuals.</p>
<p>Dispositions</p> <p>Penny's disposition in this lesson is reflective of the complex interplay of her knowledge, skills and values as a history teacher. Her historical knowledge is expressed through her expert storytelling about the Dreyfus affair, as well as her understanding of how history is constructed by historians. Penny demonstrates skills in the way she scaffolds the learning for these particular students in this extension course, and her capacity to draw links between contemporary events and Bloch's writing. Her decision to use social media as a mechanism for explaining different historical perspectives demonstrates her particular understanding of her students and skill in structuring learning in ways that make sense to them. Finally the lesson is demonstrative of Penny's values as a history teacher – exhibited not only in the way she plans and shapes student learning experiences but also in the way she represents a diversity of approaches to history and in particular her inclusion and valuing of social history.</p>	<p>Practice traditions</p> <p>This lesson weaves together traditional teacher-led strategies to encourage student engagement with thoroughly contemporary ideas and issues which work to engage and provide intellectual challenge to students. The effect of Penny's pedagogical choices in this lesson is to deeply engage students' historical perspective-taking and in doing so create a lesson that is almost entirely focussed around the development of historical ways of thinking. Facilitated by the Extension History curriculum which focuses more on historical analysis and skills rather than content knowledge acquisition, Penny's practice is concerned with helping her students understand historiography as a process rather than as a body of knowledge within itself.</p> <p>Hidden within the dynamics of the back-and-forth questioning and the ease with which students engage in the activities provided by Penny is evidence of long standing practice traditions Penny has established through her relationship with her students – traditions around ways of relating and communicating with one another as well as expectations around the high level of intellectual rigour and application she expects of them as students. The ultimate effect is a classroom environment entirely focussed around the discussion and consideration of history's deeper structures and meanings.</p>

Table 7: An analysis of Penny's practice using the table of invention for analysing practices

What's going on in Penny's classroom: situating praxis in practice

This vignette of Penny's teaching is a particularly rich demonstration of Penny's approach to teaching history – typified by a strong drive towards student engagement

and underpinned by a well-developed personal sense of her praxis of history teaching more broadly. A highly knowledgeable and experienced teacher of history, Penny sees the role of historical thinking as forming the 'backdrop' to the way in which she teaches, telling me it is about helping her students "time travel" and understand how other people think throughout history. But Penny's sense of history teaching praxis goes beyond just fostering students' historical thinking. When I ask her what her 'mission statement' as a history teacher would be if she had one, she quotes the author Antoine de Saint-Exupery:

He said, if you want to teach people to sail, you don't just teach them how to collect wood and build stuff. You teach them to yearn for the unending sea. Teaching skills is part of it...but they will only engage with the skills if you give them a purpose. So I think it's about creating that desire for learning and creating that curiosity.

Although she is a passionate subject specialist in history, it is not the subject that drives Penny's approach to teaching, but her students. She regards her role first and foremost as one of generating student interest and engagement and creating a willingness to learn – which then creates possibilities for engagement in historical thinking as a consequence. A highly reflective teacher, Penny tells me she often thinks about how her students experience being a learner in her classroom:

I think a lot of teachers forget that students have five other classes to go to that day, they have people talking at them all day, they are sitting down all day, and that's exhausting. And so, I just keep in mind what the students' experiences are, and I try to make my lesson stand out a little bit more for whatever reason.

As I go on to analyse in more detail below, this orientation of Penny's teaching practice toward experiences that engage students results in a diverse and creative repertoire of practices which she deploys in ways that are responsive to the needs of different class groups. Importantly, Penny fundamentally believes in consulting and including her students in as much decision making in the classroom as she can and she regularly surveys them about what they are learning and the teaching and learning strategies she is using. She tells me:

At the beginning of the year I get all my students to write a letter to me, and then I use that to build a little outline of issues they have raised and I

try to focus on those issues in my teaching. And then we review them, I ask 'now what do you want to focus on next term?' The students really like seeing their answers up there [on the board]. I think they find it quite empowering, the fact that they have a say in what they are doing.

Asked about the role of teaching history more broadly, Penny, like many of the participant teachers, immediately makes a connection between her students' understanding the past and being able to participate in and make sense of contemporary social and political issues:

You hope to convey to them some understanding of why the world is so screwed up [laughs]. You know, it is so important to equip them with skills, particularly in the light now of 'fake news' and 'alternative facts'. They are drowning in social media but they don't have the skills to interpret it properly.

Penny's framing of the role of history education in this way demonstrates the value she places on teaching the second order or procedural skills in history such as the consideration of evidence (Ashby & Lee, 1987). Penny not only understands the connection between history and the contemporary world, but more importantly she shows a keen understanding of how these historical skills are relevant and meaningful in the lives of her adolescent students, saturated as they are by social media. In this way we can understand Penny's praxis as a meeting point between her disciplinary expertise and the priority she places on her students and their engagement in historical learning.

Engagement

The vignette lesson represented above is particularly illustrative of Penny's conscious planning to engage her students in disciplinary thinking, a kind of pedagogical decision making that is both deliberate in her approach to the subject matter but also specific in her understanding of the context in which she is teaching. In the example above, Penny displays knowledge of how students learn and how to keep students engaged as well as a discipline-specific awareness of how these particular students might best encounter and understand historiography. It is a complex interplay of knowledge and skill that is difficult to separate out into component influences (Husbands et al., 2003).

Penny's conversation with me on the way to her classroom that morning revealed that despite her confidence in teaching this subject matter, she was concerned about how

these *particular* students were encountering and understanding these *specific* ideas. Her planning for this lesson centred around how to tailor her knowledge and understanding of Bloch's ideas through an approach that would speak to this particular group of students. Given that the key event used to 'hook' students into learning about Marc Bloch occurred just days before she taught this lesson, I was curious about how and when she planned her approach. Penny told me:

The Powerpoint was one I created a few years ago and then I just change from year to year. I knew that this class...they needed concrete examples. For them to understand the contrast between top down and bottom up history, I thought of that. I saw the thing [about the Duke of Edinburgh] and it just coincided nicely with where we were up **to**. The Palace was clueless. They think they are the centre of attention but really there's this other narrative happening. When those things occur, your brain clicks into overdrive and you think 'what can I do with this'?

Implicit in Penny's reflection on this lesson is an understanding that different students and different class groups will engage with historical material in different ways. The choice to anchor students' understanding of Bloch's historiography through reference to the contemporary 'Twitter-storm' over the Duke of Edinburgh acts as a hook that both captures students' attention and imagination, and provides an accessible entry point from which students can build their understanding of Bloch's historiographical approach. By forcing her students to only to consider Bloch's approach, but then apply that thinking to a new scenario grounded in a contemporary example, Penny lays bare the "disciplinary practices by which historians interpret evidence" (Sandwell, 2015, p. 81) which reinforces the interpretive and ever evolving nature of historical inquiry. For Penny's media savvy students, the familiarity of the world of social media and 'influencers' was secure ground for Penny to introduce the notion of historiography. Her planning for this lesson not only met the goal of explaining Bloch's approach to history, but it simultaneously engaged students in the underlying idea of history being a discipline of interpretation of evidence. Connecting the act of historical interpretation to the modern world through her contemporary examples is also a strategy that makes the skills and methods of history relevant not only to students understanding the past, but also the world they live in, part of what Tosh sees as instilling "a mode of thinking which can be applied and adapted without limit" (Tosh, 2008, p. 128).

Evident in Penny's teaching practice is a finely-tuned effort to engage students in the learning of history in ways that show fidelity to the deeper disciplinary demands of the subject, but that are also lively, entertaining and memorable for students. Across the board, Penny's lessons involve high and sustained levels of student engagement – she very rarely has to deal with students who are 'off task' or distracted, and from my vantage point at the back or side of the classroom, it is rare to see a student who is not absorbed in listening, writing or discussing history. Reflecting on these levels of engagement, Penny tells me she considers it a type of "alchemy" that she finds hard to account for, that it's always about what's going on "for that student, in that moment, in that particular context, in that particular moment in time". Significantly, Penny does not make use of textbooks in her teaching – instead drawing on a wide array of different sources and texts to suit each lesson's particular purpose. This is an approach she has developed over years of prioritising student engagement and enjoyment in her classroom, as she says "how can you make reading and answering questions from a textbook exciting?".

Although she claims to have difficulty articulating the unique 'alchemy' of how she achieves high levels of engagement in her classroom, I find Penny to be a reflective and astute practitioner with a high degree of insight into her pedagogy and her classroom. Interestingly, Penny describes these moments of deep engagement from her students as far more frequent now that she is an experienced teacher who is relaxed and confident about the way she interacts with students. Penny's experience in her classroom has also given her a high level of critical insight into her own practice and she tells me that she actively questions whether what she is seeing in students is "genuine engagement" or "just compliance". It is this critical stance about her own practice and a constant striving for genuine engagement from her students that results in Penny seeking out new and rich ways of teaching historical events and ideas, and is a distinguishing feature that sets her apart as an exemplary educator.

When considering Penny's skill as a disciplinary expert in history, it is important to note that her efforts to foster engagement operate to create possibilities for rich and challenging disciplinary learning in her classroom. In Penny's lesson on Marc Bloch, her choice to tell the narrative of the Dreyfus affair is pivotal to developing this necessary contextual understanding in her students – as Penny herself tells me - "sometimes a story just needs to be told". Allender (2019) notes that the use of narrative is a powerful and deliberate feature of experienced history teachers' practice that operates to develop students' contextual understanding and sense of historical empathy. From the stillness

and concentration in the room while Penny was recounting the Dreyfus affair, it was clear this was a particularly engaging strategy for these students. Penny then harnessed this engagement by asking “Imagine being a 10 year old, a young Jewish boy in France at this time”. When teaching her Year 11 students about the Easter Irish Rebellion, Penny uses a similar strategy, pacing around her classroom and retelling the narrative of the days leading up to the Rebellion – pausing at various points in the story to highlight pivotal turning points and asking students “could things have been different here?” Lévesque is wary of teachers’ efforts to engage students in this kind of approach to historical empathy as they are so frequently done without the necessary contextualisation for students to move beyond what he considers to be “blind feeling for past actors” (Lévesque, 2008, p. 152). Penny’s use of storytelling works to avoid this common pitfall and provides students with the necessary context and background to engage in the deeper, analytical work of interpreting historiography and thinking about issues of cause and consequence.

Historical knowledge

The day before I commenced my observations with Penny, I exchanged emails with her to organise some of the logistics around my first day at her school. At the end of her email to me, Penny wrote: “FYI The first lesson you see is going to be super boring, as they have an assessment due on Friday. Sorry!” I reassured Penny that my research was very much about observing her typical, day-to-day teaching, and that she should try to resist being concerned that lessons would be ‘boring’ for me, but it was clear from her email that Penny was worried I wouldn’t be observing a particularly ‘impressive’ lesson that day.

When the first day of my fieldwork at Greenview College arrived, I took my place at a table at the side of Penny’s classroom in a near window-less nondescript classroom, as she welcomed her Year 11 modern history students to the lesson. As part of a historical investigation assessment task, students had been asked to select and research an historical topic of interest to them and Penny was requiring all her students to submit a research proposal to her by the end of the week. This lesson was devoted to Penny explaining what a research proposal is (and talking through an ‘exemplar’ proposal with students) and providing them with a scaffold for their own writing. Penny then set aside the remainder of the lesson (about 30 minutes) for students to work on their proposal, and during this time Penny walked around the classroom and spoke to each student in turn about their ideas for historical research. The students’ interests were diverse and at varying levels of development, and yet Penny found something to offer each of them by way of guidance, refinement of topic or particular research strategy. It is in these

conversations that Penny demonstrated a remarkable depth and breadth of historical understanding and awareness as she responded with knowledge and enthusiasm to students' areas of interest and did so in a manner that challenged them to think in new ways. In the space of half an hour she deftly and confidently discussed military history, art history, social history, the Cold War, Hitler's drug use, the Battle of Stalingrad, and aspects of Asian, European, Australian and American history. She made reference to recent debates and articles, contemporary films and ongoing controversies. Every student in the room was given meaningful feedback and encouragement specific to their research idea, including one particularly lengthy discussion with a student about issues of accuracy and empathy in the gaming world. This was Penny's 'boring' lesson.

It is a lesson that reminds me very much of the teacher, Elizabeth Jensen, profiled by Wineburg and Wilson (2001) in their close study of two experienced history teachers. Like Jensen, Penny performs the role of "walking encyclopedia, card catalog and archive, issuing suggestions and hints at a dizzying pace" (Wineburg & Wilson, 2001, p. 162). When I later tell Penny that far from being boring, I thought that the lesson was particularly rich with historical knowledge presented in ways that were relevant and meaningful to each student, she laughs:

That's hilarious. You know, I've been doing this so long it just becomes second nature to me. I worry though about early career teachers, are they going to think they need to have the same breadth of knowledge?

Barton (2008b) notes that expert history teachers possess both content and strategic knowledge that sets them apart from 'novice' practitioners. It is knowledge not only about history itself but also a substantial general knowledge (and in Penny's case a deliberate effort to know about aspects of contemporary culture and society relevant to her students) that allows her to provide structure and context to her historical knowledge. Penny feels that it is her years of experience as a history teacher that provide her with both the historical knowledge and the confidence necessary to make a lesson like this one work in practice.

With some stuff, I'm two lessons ahead of the boys. This is new to me too...it's important for them to see us as a learner as well, that we don't know everything; model that it's alright to be vulnerable. It's a maturity thing being able to take that position.

This confident ‘vulnerability’ is demonstrated when Penny, despite being so incredibly knowledgeable about both modern and ancient history, freely admits to students there is much about history she does not know. When a Year 12 student in her ancient history class answers a question in an unexpected way, Penny responds by saying “I’ve been teaching Egypt since I started teaching and that is new to me. I’m still learning, thanks for that”. Later in the same lesson when a student disputes something in the lesson, she says to them “go and check. I’d love you to prove me wrong”. The impact of this approach in the classroom is multifaceted. Penny’s students are resoundingly positive about the impact of her positioning herself as being on a learning journey with her students (evident in student feedback explored in chapter nine). But Penny’s openness to learning, to new ideas, to being presented with new perspectives and interpretations is also about fostering a particular understanding about the discipline of history in her students – one that responds to new evidence, that is open to shifting meanings and interpretations. It is a highly sophisticated pedagogy that both overtly and implicitly demonstrates and fosters historical thinking skills around evidence, significance and perspective.

The role of questioning

In nearly every lesson I observe with Penny, her use of questioning stands out as an aspect of her practice. She frequently asks challenging questions of her students and often frames whole lessons, or sequences of lessons around particular ‘controversies’ in history – such as “is this a turning point?” for the Irish Easter Rebellion or “is this revolutionary?” in the case of Akhenaten. The effect of these questions is to raise the expectation that students will be able to take a position and support their judgement with reference to historical evidence, and Penny supports students in these controversies with close analysis of a range of source material.

Husbands et al. (2003) note that the skilful use of questions forms a critical part of good pedagogy for history teachers, and Penny similarly nominates her use of questioning as a key strategy to encourage this deeper level of historical thinking amongst her students. She says:

I know there is all that stuff around ‘cultures of thinking’ and ‘thinking routines’ but to me there are only six routines: who, what, when, where, why, how.

Penny’s use of verbal questions in her classroom lends her lessons a real energy and sense of activity with students clearly attentive and aware that they might be called on to

contribute. The style of questioning Penny uses also demonstrates the high expectations she has of her students and her desire to push their understanding of history to a new level. She sees the role of her questioning as “sparking the students to ask their own questions, and that’s important that they should ask questions”.

The example of Penny’s lesson on Marc Bloch is a particularly good demonstration of her use of simple and yet carefully deployed questions. In this exchange, Penny’s back and forth with James both forces him to think more deeply and justify his response, but also allows Penny to arrive at what is ultimately the central question for the lesson:

Penny: I wonder...who would be the object of history in this story?

Buckingham Palace? Or the public response?

Students: The response.

Penny: Why do you say that?

James: The actual story wasn’t very important but what will go down in history is the overreaction to it.

Penny: *But who decides what will go down in history?* (my emphasis)

Penny’s questions are responsive and clearly not scripted, and yet the rhythm of question and answer she develops in her lesson is a strong illustration of her real-time thinking in which she strategises her way toward the goal of the lesson, leap-frogging off student responses. In the situation where students try to make a joke about a previous historian they had discussed (Von Ranke), Penny isn’t fazed, and instead sees an opportunity to make a broader point about historiography:

Penny: Nice, ok then I’ll ask you - if Von Ranke was writing about this event, what would he write?

This careful use of questioning encourages students to explore the role of differing perspectives and interpretations in history. In teaching her Year 11 students about the Irish Easter Rebellion, Penny uses a scaffold of questions to guide students to analyse primary source material relating to the rebellion.

I want you to think – who wrote this? When? Why? Who were they writing for? You might not understand everything about it until you have the full context of the uprising, but each source will give you a piece of the puzzle *from one point of view* (my emphasis).

Seixas describes the process of encouraging students in perspective-taking to be “the impossibly difficult question of how we can understand the mind of peoples who lived in world so different from our own” (2017, p. 601). Students’ awareness of different perspectives of historical individuals and groups in society is a fundamental component of students developing a sense of historical empathy, the ability to mentally time travel to different times and places, and in doing so avoid shallow or simplistic moral judgements about people in the past. Penny tackles this challenge of history teaching through efforts to help contextualise the sources she explores with students – from written sources to maps and cartoons. At other times she uses her own stories from places she has travelled, and includes things like food and culture from places students are learning about to develop their cultural awareness alongside their historical knowledge. For Penny, the role of encouraging historical empathy relates back to her objective of engaging students in history in powerful ways – to have them go back in time and think “what is really going on here?”

The role of students

Husbands et al. note that a range of diverse factors impact on teachers’ decision making in the classroom and that “knowledge of their pupils, their interests, capacities and needs” were just as significant in guiding pedagogy as “historical goals and intentions” (2003, p. 64).

This finely tuned awareness of students’ experiences is evident in many lessons I observe with Penny – where she tunes in to the ‘mood’ of the students and amends planned activities accordingly, or uses her knowledge of contemporary society and pop culture (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Star Wars* both feature prominently in a sequence of lessons about the Irish Easter Rebellion) to capture students’ interest in history.

About half way through my period of observation with Penny I observe her teaching her Year 12 ancient history class in the last period of the day on a Wednesday. Penny had planned a rich source-based lesson with students working with a series of ‘mysteries’ requiring them to sift through a variety of source material and come to a judgement about Amenhotep’s foreign policy.

The lesson begins late after a room change because of NAPLAN examinations happening in another part of the school and the students appear unsettled by this disruption. After several minutes of getting students calm, Penny hands out worksheets and points to

different sources she has placed around the room, explains the task and lesson goals and sets students to work. After about 10 minutes of students wandering around the room with only a handful of students obviously engaged with the task, Penny stops the whole class to re-explain the activity and attempt to get them to refocus. There's a lot of chatter in the room, some students sitting at the back talking, some on their phones or laptops. One student has his head on the desk. With 10 minutes to go in the lesson Penny stands at the front of the class and says:

This is the point where I realise that your brains are done for today. I am going to give you a few moments to relax and chat. I do want you to finish question 2 for tomorrow but I can see you're already mentally out the door.

Later, I ask Penny about this decision to essentially abandon the lesson that she had planned so carefully.

Well, there's no lesson if they are not there. They have to be present and it's not just physically. It was a hard lesson, much harder than I anticipated. It was going to be a mystery and they were going to crawl through the sources....and instead they just looked at me like lost puppies. When we actually started talking about it, it only just hit me now how conceptually difficult it was, and it was last period and they were just gone. I would rather go back and spend some time on it next lesson than to try and force it. I need them there with me.

Echoing her commitment to having students who are genuinely engaged in learning history, Penny's decision-making shows she is adaptive and responsive to the needs of her students during class. It is an approach that helps foster a relationship of trust, rapport and good will with students, who return the next day and complete the task with energy and application.

It is not by accident that Penny is able to develop these productive relationships with students, and simultaneously deploy pedagogies that work for them as individuals. Penny's use of regular and extensive informal student surveys and feedback mechanisms means that her knowledge of her students, their experiences as learners in school, their preferences for subject matter and learning activities and their interests and passions

outside of school all form part of a complex foundation of decision-making that drive pedagogy that is so powerfully student focussed.

Conclusion

Analysing Penny's classroom practice provides rich insight into the nature of good history teaching in one context. Examining Penny's planning for historical thinking and her pedagogical decision-making during lessons, and talking with her about her choices and motivations in teaching this way demonstrates the complex interplay of Penny's disciplinary and pedagogical expertise and the difficulty (and I would also argue futility) of trying to separate out these influences in any analysis of practice. It is an analysis that highlights the role of Penny's experience in providing clarity and confidence in her teaching practice. But as the less experienced teacher participants in this study demonstrate, experience alone does not explain a teacher's success in engaging students in rich disciplinary learning in history. Rather, we need to look closely at what Husbands et al. describe as an amalgam of "all sorts of knowledge – about history, about [her] pupils, about what will help them to learn, are embedded in [her] experience" (2003, p. 67). Perhaps most significantly, as with the other teachers in the study, Penny's success in engaging her students in historical thinking is predicated on her skill in developing positive relationships with her students who in turn trust in her expertise and are genuinely engaged in the learning opportunities she creates.

Much of the research around improving the quality of history teaching centres on teachers' disciplinary knowledge and the need for history teachers to be subject experts in their field, and Penny certainly meets the criteria of being a highly knowledgeable, expert history teacher. What is evident in Penny's practice however is that her knowledge is equally matched by skill in deploying her sophisticated substantive knowledge of history in ways that induct and assist students in grasping the underlying procedural dimensions of history (Lee & Ashby, 2000; Lévesque, 2008). We see this through the way she embeds disciplinary notions of perspectives and interpretation in her choice of pedagogical strategies – strategies that emphasise student thinking, questioning, analysis and interpretation. In Penny's classroom, historical thinking is not treated as an adjunct skill attached to the learning of historical content, but is a bedrock of Penny's teaching practice and her orientation to and understanding of the goal of history education. It offers us a powerful insight into how, in a practical sense, we might encourage more of this disciplinary thinking in our classrooms.

Chapter Six

Max's Classroom

A vignette of practice

It is late in the day and Max is teaching his Year 12 ancient history class; the topic they are learning about is Ancient Rome. As students arrive to class he asks them to settle down and talks to some of them about a weekend football match. The classroom we are in is not in any way a recognisable history classroom, although it is the classroom Max teaches in most of the time. The walls are bare and the room is laid out in the same way as other classrooms at Churchill College – with clusters of student desks, and a teacher's desk at the front of the room. It is a cold day, but despite the weather there is no heating of any kind in the classroom and the students arrive to class wearing layers of jumpers and blazers and blow into their hands to try and warm them up. All the students at Churchill College have personal laptops, which they duly get out and start using while they wait for the lesson to begin.

As soon as all students are in the room Max calls the class to attention and explains that today's lesson "is all about the Death of Claudius. We are going to get stuck into some Tacitus as a fun way to pass the afternoon". Max directs students to their online learning system where he has already uploaded notes and materials for the lesson for student use – he does not use the screen at the front of the room.

Max: The background to this is the promotion of Nero as heir

Rick: (A student who has done additional reading over the weekend.) There is a lot in [historian] Barrett on the promotion of Nero.

Max: Excellent, I will be wanting to hear more from you on that. Let's go – we are going to look at the process, quickly, you should already know about how Agrippina promotes Nero as a power. At the end of her promoting Nero as a power you already know that Claudius is then assassinated. Agrippina marries Claudius in what year?

Peter: 49

Max: She quickly sets to work on ensuring the formal adoption of

Nero. She had two jobs when she came to power – work on getting Nero to be heir and exercise her power the way she could. Let's read about how she works it out.

Max directs the students to close their laptop screens and tells them to “listen up” as he begins to tell the story surrounding the death of Claudius. He has some notes and books with him, but does not glance at them while he speaks. He talks to students about the way the Julians and Claudians were joined through the marriage of Octavia and Nero, and at various points he pauses and invites the students into the narrative with some brief questioning.

- Max: What's the problem with Nero being adopted by Claudius?
Ned: He's married to his sister (laughter)
Max: Why is this a problem? (more laughter)
Paul: By law Nero was his biological son, and Octavia is the biological daughter.
Max: So what has he actually taken on?
Ned: His name?
Max: I'm wondering if it's more than that?
Rick: Family honours, titles, position....?
Max: Yes, all of these.

Max takes off his jacket and strolls around the room. The eyes of students follow him as he moves. He occasionally leans on a desk or pauses for effect to punctuate an aspect of the story. He seems comfortable using Latin phrases whilst describing Nero to the class. In another pause in the story Max asks the class:

- Max: When it looks like Nero is certain to be the heir, where does that leave Britannicus?
Declan: Totally screwed
Max: Yep, pretty much.
Peter: Even more so – because the only support he has is from Narcissus, who realises he can't pledge support to Nero.
Max: You're 100% right. Remember Nero is always the champion – what's the reason?
Jeremy: Agrippina?
Max: No!

Declan: Germanicus?

Max: (smiling broadly at this) Yes, always think of Germanicus!

As he continues to tell the story, Max has not explicitly asked the students to take notes and there is a variety of activity amongst the class. Some students sit still and listen whilst others have opened their computers and are typing furiously while he talks. Max becomes especially animated in his delivery of the story when he arrives at the point in the narrative that describes the death of Claudius.

Max: The ancient sources suggest that Agrippina was involved in Claudius' death. It is highly likely that she was the key figure....we know it was likely that she put the events into place.

Ned: Didn't she try to poison him a couple of times?

Max: Hmmmm. By this stage of Claudius' reign, what is the key characteristic of his habits....what's he doing?

Henry: Drinking excessively?

Max: Yep, he's drinking. He vomits up the poison because he's so inebriated and so they stick a feather down his throat. There's something so disgustingly beautiful about that story isn't there? What is suggested from the historiography of the 1970s to the 1990s was that Claudius was trying to reconcile the relationship with Britannicus – and I think this speaks to our humanity doesn't it? We have complex relationships with our families but as we get older we seek to reconcile. Maybe you lads aren't quite at an age where you understand that, but you will get there.

Max then reads aloud from Tacitus for several minutes regarding the death of Claudius. Standing front and centre in the room, with one foot elevated on a school chair, his delivery is fluent and flowing. It is a very enthusiastic rendering of the ancient text with careful attention to emphasis and animation to help develop students' comprehension. Max pauses his reading occasionally to offer some commentary or brief translation to guide students through the text and make connections with more recent historiography. For example, on the issue of the death of Claudius and the role of Agrippina, he pauses mid-sentence to offer students this insight:

Max: Now you need to know here that some people consider alcohol as bringing out the deeper desires of people, bringing out their true emotions. So when Tacitus here is suggesting that Claudius is running off his mouth a little there might just be something in that. He might be drunk and talking all sorts of crap. What do we think about that suggestion?

Rick: Barrett suggests that due to the popularity of Nero any desire to change heir would create terrible instability in Rome.

Max: That's a great insight - remember that before Agrippina was his wife, he was well loved as the grandson of Germanicus.

Rick: Barrett talks about it a lot - the argument that the ancient sources are trying to smear her because she is a woman. But it's so confusing because you can't deny that there is evidence of her hiring Xenophon because he was going to reconcile with Britannicus. Who do we believe?

Max: Are the ancient sources seeking to slander Agrippina?

Rick: Absolutely they are.

Max: Undisputedly - she is a woman going against the natural order. This is about how you think about these ancient sources - they are the closest thing we have to eyewitness reports, but I want you to be historians here. Remember to be critical about Tacitus and his own skin in the game when you read about Agrippina - he's got a problem with women doesn't he? Some of the more recent sources are pretty blunt about that and would even call him a misogynist.

Max moves around the classroom as he talks and briefly gestures to a student whom he spies playing a video game and stops when he is noticed. After he finishes reading Tacitus' account of Claudius' death, he then gets students to read and consider a passage of Tacitus themselves, and moves around the room as they read. Max pauses to talk to a table of students about coaching sport, and some other students about a trip to the ski fields. The conversation is jovial and then Max claps his hands and says "alright now get back to work you lot". Max takes time to talk one on one with student Rick, who has done more reading than the other students in the class and shows a particular interest in the topic. Rick makes a comparison between the death of Claudius and the TV show 'Game of Thrones.' Max and Rick talk at length about the historian Barrett and his assessment of Agrippina.

Towards the end of the lesson, Max announces, “ok, now we are going to work on a 10 marker” [a 10 mark practice exam question].⁴ Students groan in response and Max says:

I know I know. This is not what I studied history for four years to teach you, but at the end of the day we have an exam at the end of this process. I’ve gone back and looked at the HSC data from last year and the 25 marker [question] is not our strong suit. We probably average 15 to 16 out of 25. That’s massive when you consider how many marks can be made up there. That’s potentially 10 marks lost in one section. That’s why you guys are doing practice essay after practice essay. You guys need to start aiming a bit higher, none of you are stupid kids and you can do this. I don’t want you over complicating this. No synonyms please, be clear with your language.

For the remainder of the lesson, the classroom is quiet apart from an occasional whisper of students talking to one another. Max offers advice to students about how to make their exam response ‘stand out’ by using quotes and having a clear structure. He occasionally chats to them about things unrelated to the course – usually sport or movies. As the lesson concludes Max tells students he wants to see them finish their practice paper and hand it in to him in tomorrow’s lesson. A number of students stay behind after the bell has rung to talk to Max about their rankings. Max explains that they are doing well, but that he is tough on them for a reason. He says:

You might remember [student name] from last year, and he handed some work in to me that I totally destroyed. But guess what, that kid totally blitzed the exam. This is all part of the process.

Each of the students say “thanks Sir” as they head off to their next class.

⁴ The Higher School Certificate examinations for ancient and modern history are developed using the subject syllabus and a common structure and format for questions from year to year. Whilst the exact content of HSC questions is not known before students sit the exam, students can practise their skills in writing responses for different styles of questions (short answer, longer answer and extended responses).

An analysis of Max's practice using the table of invention for analysing practices

Elements of practices	Practice architectures found in or brought to the site
<p>Project</p> <p>This lesson sits in a unit of work that is part of the students' Higher School Certificate course in ancient history. The objective of the lesson is to develop student knowledge around the events leading up to the death of the Roman Emperor Claudius, and to have them encounter and consider the way in which the Ancient historians wrote about that event. The lesson culminates in students applying their knowledge and understanding to a practice Higher School Certificate examination question.</p> <p>This lesson, as with most of those I observe with Max is dominated by teacher talk and instruction. Max's practice relies heavily on his own knowledge and passion for history, and he operates as the key source of historical learning for students.</p> <p>Max openly shares with students his enthusiasm for history and the value he places on history in the broader project of their school learning. Observing Max I also note a tension in his practice as he seeks to develop this engagement and commitment to history in his students, whilst also having high expectations of students' academic performance in formal assessment tasks.</p>	<p>Practice landscape</p> <p>The lesson occurs in the classroom in which Max teaches all of his senior classes. The room is laid out in clusters of desks which seat between 4 to 6 students in a group. There is a teacher's desk, a whiteboard and a large TV screen at the front of the classroom. Whilst the College itself is known for its large and impressive building and grounds, this classroom is very modestly furnished and plainly decorated. The walls of the classroom are bare – as with Penny's classroom there is nothing to indicate this is a history classroom and no student work or material is on display.</p> <p>The use of technology forms a key part of the mutually understood practice landscape for this lesson, with the lesson being structured around the assumption that all students will have the means and capacity to access the learning materials housed online in real-time during the lesson. Student attention is also focussed on their computers except for when Max instructs them to close them in order to concentrate on his re-telling of the narrative of the death of Claudius.</p> <p>There is also appears to be an understanding from students about where the lesson sits within the unit of work they are completing – Max's lessons are sequenced according to the order in which the Syllabus documents address them, and references to 'practice papers' and examination questions are part of the common and accepted practice landscape of this classroom.</p>
<p>Sayings</p> <p>Teacher-led dialogue and questioning is a notable aspect of the sayings of this lesson, and the conversation around the death of Claudius is heavily concentrated amongst a small group of students – in particular student Rick.</p> <p>The nature of the conversation in the classroom flows between a focus on the subject matter for the lesson (language and discussion about the death of Claudius and</p>	<p>Cultural-discursive arrangements</p> <p>The confidence with which Max engages students in the narrative around the death of Claudius, and also his reading of Tacitus demonstrates both a confidence and an enjoyment of the language and discourses of ancient history. Max clearly wants students to not only know about how the Ancient sources discuss Claudius and Agrippina, he also wants them to encounter and consider the original language and discourses of that source material. Max 'performs' the death of Claudius</p>

<p>the reading of the Ancient historian Tacitus), and Max discussing students' academic performance in examination questions – talking about student data and exam strategy.</p> <p>Sandwiched in and around this conversation is Max's 'banter' with his students, in which he speaks (sometimes to the whole class, sometimes to individual students) about sport and films.</p>	<p>for students using the language of Tacitus and the impact brings meaning and understanding to that source material.</p> <p>The Higher School Certificate also has its own discourse around achievement, marks and rankings, which is evident in Max's conversation with his students at the end of the lesson, and which operate as a way of framing and prioritising the content learned in terms of how this knowledge is useful to students in their exam.</p>
<p>Doings</p> <p>Max is very much at the centre of the pedagogical 'doings' of this lesson, which is representative of his teaching style in almost all the lessons I observe. Max does not teach from the front of the room, as he doesn't make use of the screen or whiteboard during his teaching. Max makes use of the whole of the classroom as he lectures, questions and reads to students.</p> <p>Students remain seated, with their attention on either Max or on their laptop computer screens. In this lesson there is very little conversation between students – the discussions that occur are moderated by Max for the whole of the class.</p> <p>When discussing the death of Claudius, Max does not specifically instruct his students to take notes – although the majority of students appear to do this without being asked.</p> <p>Students groan when instructed to apply their learning to an HSC question – hinting that this is a regular (if not well liked) part of their learning with Max.</p>	<p>Material-economic arrangements</p> <p>Max's ability to run the class in a lecture style is facilitated by the broader material-economic arrangements and resourcing of Churchill, such as the online learning platform and universal student access to reliable and up to date laptop computers. It is also indicative of other less visible arrangements – such as the lack of any obvious diverse learning needs in the classroom which might require Max to modify his teaching or the learning materials for particular students.</p> <p>The ability for Max to dedicate time during his lessons to discussing not only syllabus content but exam questions and strategy presents a material advantage to the students of Churchill in their preparation for that assessment.</p> <p>Similarly, students' motivation to want to do well in their Higher School Certificate is an unspoken, taken for granted aspect of the arrangements for this lesson. Having the lesson culminate in applying their learning to an exam question situates the historical learning as a means to academic achievement. Achieving a high HSC mark and obtaining entry into university is the presumed desired post-school pathway for all students in the room and speaks to the broader socio-economic advantage of the students Max is teaching.</p>
<p>Relatings</p> <p>Max orchestrates the lesson, controlling the activities and pace of learning for the students and engaging one on one with students through questions and conversation. There are varying degrees of engagement and interest in the different learning activities of the lesson – some students do not answer questions or obviously engage in the learning, whereas</p>	<p>Social-political arrangements</p> <p>These arrangements reflect the strong relationship Max has developed with this class group that he has taught for over 12 months, as well as the expectations and assumptions around learning in Year 12 at Churchill College. Student engagement is mostly presumed by Max, although with students largely focussed on their laptop computers it is difficult to accurately gauge</p>

<p>student Rick is particularly engaged and animated throughout the lesson, and Max is reciprocally attentive to and supportive of Rick.</p> <p>Max uses a warm and relaxed style of ‘banter’ with students throughout the lesson based on some of his shared interests with students, in particular sport.</p>	<p>the level of attention and compliance of students during the lesson.</p> <p>Sport plays an important role in helping Max relate to his students – much of the knowledge he displays about particular students relates to their interest or performance in particular school sports, and this flows to the way in which he ‘coaches’ them towards achievement in the HSC.</p>
<p>Dispositions</p> <p>Max is a passionate and knowledgeable teacher of history – he performs his teaching of history in the lesson in ways that make the subject matter lively and engaging for students. He brings to his teaching of history both the knowledge and skills of an expert practitioner in History as a subject discipline – demonstrated through his intimate knowledge of the ancient sources, and the depth of both his general historical knowledge and awareness of historiography. Whilst there is an obvious tension Max feels between his love and passion for history and his ‘obligation’ to prepare students for success in the HSC, he is nevertheless clearly at home in the classrooms of Churchill College. Max’s scholarly approach to teaching and his own personal values around the meaning and nature of success are aligned with the expectations placed upon him as an educator in this school context.</p>	<p>Practice traditions</p> <p>The lesson demonstrates a traditional teacher-centred style of pedagogy, where Max is both imparting content knowledge and closely guiding students in their exploration of subject matter through strategic questions. In this lesson Max is able to not only support students’ acquisition of knowledge around a particular area in the ancient history syllabus, but he also has ability (through time, resources and the cooperation of students) to reflect on and work with students about how this knowledge will be useful to them in their formal assessment. In Max’s classroom, the learning of history sits in lock step with students’ preparation for assessment in history – an arrangement which no doubt places students at particular advantages in some regards but may limit or restrict their learning of history in other key ways.</p>

Table 8: An analysis of Max’s practice using the table of invention for analysing practices

What’s going on in Max’s classroom: situating praxis in practice

Max’s decision to become a history teacher was driven by his two passions of history and sport, and his commitment to both is evident in his approach to practice and his underlying understanding of the purpose of history education. His own experience of studying history to Master’s degree level has had a big influence in framing the way in which he conceives of the purpose of history, telling me that he sees history as primarily being about “research, not exams”. Aware that the majority of his students at Churchill College will go on to some form of tertiary study, Max talks a lot about the application and relevance of learning history as a discipline about research and evaluation and ways in which students will benefit from a historical education in the future.

Max’s sense of teaching praxis weaves together this understanding of history primarily as a discipline of research, and also one which has the opportunity to help foster

students' developing sense of citizenship through their knowledge of both past and present society. Like the other teachers in the study he sees clear connections between teaching history and understanding contemporary society:

at the end of the day, there is so much value in the cliché if you don't understand the past, you don't understand yourself....if you don't understand how the world has worked in the past you don't understand how it will work in the future.

Max evaluates his own success as a teacher by the way in which he is retaining and engaging students in history and when his students are able to "connect the dots....see the relevance of what's going on and have organic interesting discussion". Max also tells me that at Churchill College his other role as a history teacher is "getting the students to where they should be, it's always ten marks above where they think they can be". There is an obvious contrast here between Max's own personal sense of history teaching praxis and the goals and expectations placed upon him by the context in which he's working, highlighting a tension Kemmis (2018) identifies between the concepts of education, on the one hand, and schooling on the other. Max's practice is more than just a reflection of his own knowledge and understanding of the discipline of history, it is also a negotiation of these influences within and against the broader arrangements and conditions that pre-figure practices at Churchill College.

The 'visible' teacher

The vignette of Max's classroom in many respects highlights a lesson in which we can identify two different registers in the rhythm and focus of Max's pedagogy as he shifts from a rich and passionate exploration of the ancient sources to preparation for the Higher School Certificate. It is a lesson representative of the way I see Max teach in most of his senior classes, his practice very distinctly divided between engaging students in the narrative of history and teaching focussed on preparing students for the external Higher School Certificate examination. This distinction is not nearly as evident in the practices of other teachers in the study and points to the way in which much of teachers' classroom practice is shaped by the possibilities and limitations of the contexts in which they work. The nature of these possibilities and constraints are given closer examination in chapter ten.

When I commence my observations in Max's classroom, he is struggling with a head cold and a sore throat. At the end of a day of teaching, he barely has any voice left and

becomes obviously frustrated as he tries to get through the lessons he had planned which almost without exception rely on his voice as the key driver of student learning. Max is very much the “visible teacher” that Wineburg and Wilson (2001) describe in their close examination of history teacher practice. As with the protagonist of Wineburg and Wilson’s study, John Price, Max’s classroom is dominated by teacher talk and instruction, with Max addressing the whole class and using questions and answers to drive the lesson. Also similar to Price, there is a quality to his practice that allows Max to harness the imagination and attention of his students to engage them in learning about the past. Indeed, the features that mark Max’s practice as being exemplary are very similar to those more ephemeral qualities that Wineburg and Wilson see in Price:

There is electricity in the air...Price is pure energy – laughing, pacing, bantering with students, gesturing excitedly. No ordinary teacher, John Price is a master performer who has seized the collective imagination of 35 adolescents and has led them on an expedition into the past (Wineburg & Wilson, 2001, p. 165).

In Max’s classroom this ‘electricity’ is certainly evident in the first part of this lesson on the death of Claudius – where Max presents a passionate performance of Tacitus’ Annals in a way that both captivates students and renders this ancient source material more comprehensible to them. Max feels that the teacher-driven nature of his practice allows him to be responsive to topics and areas of interest to the students and to be ‘loose’ in the way he plans his lessons and allows him to follow areas of interest to him and the students:

Sometimes it can just be an hour of talking. Give me a question and I’ll just go with it...it’s always loose. If I’ve read something the night before that somehow connects to this then we’re going to follow that.

Much of Max’s teacher-driven practice involves providing necessary foundational narrative exposition needed for students to engage in the deeper work of historical analysis and discussion (Barton, 2008c). Max tells me that he has tried to make his lessons less teacher-focussed by setting a range of reading for students to do outside of class time that covers some of this narrative exposition, but says that the students of Churchill College tend to ignore homework that is based around reading:

You've got to understand your audience first and foremost. When I arrived at [Churchill] I asked them to do pre-reading and then asked them the next day 'what do we think of this?' No one had read it. A Year 12 boy came up to me and said 'give us a hundred questions and we will do them, but tell us to read...that's not going to happen'. And so it changed....it negatively changed my practice, going against my beliefs about what works in history to tweak it towards the mentality of the kids more. That's the learning culture.

Despite the difficulty in engaging students in reading history, Max sees it as fundamental to have students encounter and grapple with original source material and a variety of historiography. As an ancient history specialist, Max brings to his teaching a particular understanding of the place of such source material in both learning the narrative of ancient history, but also teaching students about the ways in which ancient societies have been understood over time. In this lesson about the death of Claudius, Max is comfortable and confident in reading to students directly from Tacitus in a way that both absorbs them in the drama and intrigue of the story, but that also helps to generate discussion and awareness about broader historiographical issues. The choice to spend extended periods of time with the original text of the ancient sources is a deliberate one, and one that harks back to Max's own experiences of learning ancient history at school. Max tells me "I read Tacitus when I was in Year 12. I read it and loved it. I am of the view that we need the primary sources to play more of a role in our teaching".

When Max and the students are absorbed in the narrative around the death of Claudius, there is very little else occurring in the classroom. Despite his obvious concern about students being adequately prepared for the exam, Max does not direct them to take notes or pay special attention to what he is saying. His rendering of the story is detailed and animated – almost to the point of being theatrical - and he reads directly to students from Tacitus in a way that demonstrates his deep familiarity and understanding of the text. The effect is that in this part of the lesson, the historical narrative drives the lesson and Max seems comfortable to let it wash over students with each taking from it what they will. This is driven by Max's own desire for his students to see, experience and enjoy history the way that he did as a student, telling me:

I had an amazing teacher in Year 9, and all I remember is him telling us war stories. And we had the best year. I don't remember

writing anything down. I don't remember my marks or anything like that, but it was just awesome.

But Max's interaction with historical source material does more than just engage students in the narrative of history. As with Penny's practice and her treatment of historiography, deeper disciplinary instruction is embedded in Max's practice through his use of subtle language cues and careful questioning of students. Max's use of both paraphrasing and questioning throughout his retelling of the historical narrative act as guidance which leads students to "generate evidence-based interpretations of ...a specific historical context" (Reisman & Wineburg, 2008). In discussing different constructions on the role of Agrippina, Max is careful to use contingent language to glean from the source material what was "likely", signalling to students that the contestation and constant re-interpretation around Agrippina's role in the death of Claudius. Similarly, Max's own expert knowledge of both ancient and modern historiography of ancient Rome allows him to draw students into a conversation about the way in which those sources might be read collectively to try and provide an understanding of the past. This is particularly evident when he talks students through Tacitus' interpretation and more recent re-readings in the light of feminist history and his instruction that he wants the students to "be historians" in the way they read and treat conflicting accounts of ancient historical events.

Max's ability to engage students so deeply and directly in the historical narrative in this way is enhanced by the fact that he deals directly with the historiography and very rarely makes use of textbooks in his teaching. Max admits that he remains highly engaged with the discipline of history, particularly through social media, and he brings this into his classroom by sharing with students new and interesting things he has learnt from articles. In teaching his Year 11 class about Tutankhamen, Max eschews the plethora of text book material available on the topic in preference for having students read and discuss a recent article from a magazine about the use of modern technology at ancient archaeological sites, which then precipitates a lively class discussion around the ethics of ownership and treatment of historical sites. Similarly, teaching his Year 12 students about the role of Seneca in ancient Rome, Max tells his students that the textbook is "just so flat" with the way it discusses Seneca, and instead provides them with a recent article from the New Yorker Magazine discussing modern interpretations of his role and influence in Rome. It is clear that Max's passion and commitment to history extends beyond the classroom and features strongly in his leisure time – with his reading, film viewing and travel focussed the places and issues he is teaching about. This passion and

general interest in history has allowed Max to develop an extraordinary breadth and depth to his historical knowledge that he shares readily with students. When a student asks Max a question about the Roman economy he provides an enthusiastic and detailed answer about the operation of the Roman taxation system – drawing parallels to the modern Australian economy to illustrate his point, ending his explanation by saying to the students “isn’t that fascinating? I love talking about this stuff!”

The role of the Higher School Certificate (HSC)

Husbands et al. (2003) note the increasing influence of external examination reports on shaping the nature and focus of history teacher practice in the United Kingdom, and an examination of Max’s practice points to the applicability of much of their research in the Australian context. Similarly, van Hover and Heinecke (2005) note the correlation between a higher reliance on teacher-centred learning activities in high-stakes social science classrooms. Whilst there is no doubt that Max’s knowledge and passion drive his classroom practice, the other key influence on the way he teaches his senior history classes is the Higher School Certificate examination. As with the research that Husbands et al. conducted, part of Max’s reliance on a strongly teacher focussed, didactic pedagogical style can be attributed to the strong emphasis on formal assessment outcomes for students. In Max’s lesson on the death of Claudius, the transition from reading and discussing Tacitus and interpretations of Agrippina, to (in Max’s words) “drilling them” for the HSC, is abrupt and a little jarring. The contrast between the two parts of the lesson is made more obvious by Max openly telling students “this is not what I studied history for four years to teach”, and hints at some deeper turmoil in Max’s practice.

Max’s sense of the praxis of history teaching relates strongly to his understanding of history as a discipline of research, inquiry and evidence. He frequently talks with pride about being one of the only teachers at Churchill College who explicitly teaches his students about research and academic referencing, a skill which he sees as a pivotal part of history as a research-based discipline. For Max, the way in which he teaches history in the senior years – driven by an explicit syllabus and assessed partly through an external examination is “not a good education. It’s not history. History is research. An exam is not history”. It’s interesting to reflect that whilst Penny noted a similar tension in her teaching of history to senior students and the role of the HSC, the way this tension played out was far less evident in the nature of her practice than it was with Max. This is perhaps partly explained by Penny being more experienced in teaching students at HSC level and navigating these tensions. In Max’s case it is also

very much about the broader context of teaching at Churchill College and the expectations placed on Max which he admits have the effect of “stifling” the way he would prefer to teach. At various points in our interviews and conversation Max refers to explicit examples of the pressure on him as a teacher to get students the best HSC examination result possible. He tells me:

I know I will have a conversation [with the school leadership] at the start of next year about my results. Why did that kid get those results? I had a kid last year who got band sixes in four out of six subjects. Why didn't he get one in ancient history? Why didn't he get over the line? I get it. It's hard for parents to say they are going to invest up to \$30,000 a year and not going to get anywhere near that end goal.

When I ask Max what his teaching practice might look like without the pressure of an external examination shaping his pedagogical choices, Max says it would resemble more closely his teaching in junior classes. Indeed, Max seems far more comfortable and his practice far less divided in the handful of junior classes I observe him teaching in which students are self-directed and engaged in project-based research. In Year 10 students at Churchill can choose to study History Elective – an additional course in History that allows students to develop deeper knowledge and skills around historical inquiry than are covered in the mandatory syllabus. Max and his colleagues at Churchill have used the History Elective course as a way of designing history programs that enable students to focus on skills in historical research and writing around topics of interest to them, such as writing and critiquing historical fiction. Max feels there is a real contrast in the energy and engagement in these lessons to those in his senior classes telling me “They actually get to do history there... compare that to senior classes at a sandstone college like this where you have to do X, Y and Z”. The distinction Max is articulating here between ‘knowing’ and ‘doing’ history is one also noted in research around history education – with Havekes et al. (2017) noting that a focus on content knowledge in history can sometimes operate to limit student engagement in deeper historical thinking. For Max, it is a compromise he consciously tries to navigate telling me that although his classes are dominated by discussion about and preparation for examinations, his students are still learning lifelong academic skills like composing an argument and writing essays, particularly as the vast majority of the students in these classes are likely go on to further study at university.

Engaging 'Churchill boys' in history

As with all the participant teachers in the study, Max's relationship with his students is a vital aspect of the success of his practice in engaging students and creating meaningful representations of history in the novice minds of his students (Wineburg & Wilson, 2001). Observing Max's way of relating to his students over a long period of time reveals the way in which both Max's own academic and life background and the environment of the all-male Churchill College have come to frame his pedagogy in particular ways – most especially through the dominance of sport as a cultural and relational touch-stone in the classroom. In telling me about his own journey to become a history teacher, Max explains that history and sport were his key passions at school, and he came to teaching after first gaining experience as a sporting coach. Max's own background as a coach, and the role of sport are a dominant feature of his practice and the way in which he creates and sustains relationships with his students at Churchill College.

Proctor (2011) notes the centrality and significance of sport as a distinguishing feature of elite boys' education in Australia, and there is a significant body of sociological research around the role of sports such as rugby and rowing as a dominant feature of these schools' cultural identities and in reinforcing and reproducing class and gender norms within these institutions. What was interesting to observe in seeing Max teach was the way in which the cultural influence of sport was similarly dominant in his classroom teaching of history. Like Penny, Max makes use of historical analogies as a way of making historical terms and concepts accessible to students, although in his classroom these are almost always related to sports. In explaining the escalation of the Vietnam War to Year 10 students Max describes:

Let's say you're playing footy and your mate's gone into the ruck and the opposing flanker has come and just deliberately swung and knocked him out. What's going to happen next? It's going to be one hell of a melee isn't it? That's the situation we've got here...

When I ask Max about sport being his preferred way of framing historical analogies, Max explains

I suppose it's part of my identity. And here, well, all the students play sport even if they aren't overly good at it. All the boys here can at some level relate to that analogy. They have all been forced to see a rowing

crew. In this context it's what I know that the majority of them will get.
At a different school it would be horses for courses.

It is interesting to note here that Max is admitting the key influence that the school culture has on the way he frames and presents history to students. In an effort to render history engaging and meaningful to the students of Churchill College it is accepted by Max that sport provides a common language and culture to which all students are implicitly expected to relate. The ease with which Max is able to use this common cultural language is assisted by him being an insider in that process – having attended a school similar to Churchill himself.

The significance of sport extends beyond the way Max helps his students make meaning of historical ideas. Max's whole demeanour and way of relating to his students draws heavily on the language and conventions of male sport in particular through to the tone and nature of his 'banter' with students. Max tells me:

I try and craft and develop a relationship with them, especially with the seniors because you spend so much time with them. I can call them an idiot or a pack of morons, to be a good teacher full stop is to create a sense of community in those four walls. Obviously at a girls' school I wouldn't do the same thing.

It strikes me about halfway into my time observing Max that his way of relating to students is very similar to that of a sporting coach with a team. Max lapses in to 'coach' role most frequently with his final year students when he gives them rousing lectures about applying themselves to study, or when he makes a point of shaking the hand and congratulating each of the top performers in an assessment task. In this way, the culture of sporting competitiveness and the expectation of success which is a feature of the College also pervades the classroom, with Max talking openly to students about their ranking and frequently referring to students by the performance band he expects them to achieve in their final exams, singling out particular students as his top performers. Max describes the nature of this 'coach' role when he talks about the way he guides students through their senior years of school.

Nine out of ten of them can learn the content without me, maybe they can do better without me (laughs). But what I am there to do is show them how to look at the content and analyse it and whether to write

it, speak it, they need to be able to communicate that. It's not something they are naturally good at.

By adopting the role of 'coach', Max appears to not only reconcile the tensions around teaching 'real' history and teaching for an external examination but to also enjoy the competitive and high pressure environment of the final years of schooling. Clearly committed as he is to pushing and extending his students academically, and fascinated by marks and rankings, Max is able to 'coach' his students for the examination much in the same way he would prepare a team for an important sporting match.

Conclusion

Spending time in Max's classroom reveals the complex interplay of his expert knowledge of history and pedagogy with the dominant contextual influences of being a teacher at Churchill College. Despite being able to thoughtfully reflect on the constraints on his practice of history teaching in the light of external assessment procedures and internal school cultures surrounding student academic achievement, Max is still grappling with how to navigate these pressures in ways that reflect his underlying sense of praxis for history education. Evident in Max's classroom practice is a desire to try and reconcile the varying and at times conflicting purposes of school history and the system within which it is taught – which aims on the one hand to teach students a large amount of historical content knowledge, and yet on the other hand to “pass on to students the intellectual tools they need in order to interpret the changing world around them” (Tosh, 2008, p. 126). Despite being a disciplinary expert with an obvious passion and skill for teaching and learning history, Max clearly at times struggles to smoothly integrate history praxis oriented towards historical thinking with how Max interprets the practical realities of current history curriculum and assessment framework and the emphasis placed on the latter by Churchill College. A view into his classroom provides insight not only into how a good teacher communicates historical knowledge in ways specific to school contexts, but also how sometimes the context can have a prevailing influence in driving pedagogy and practice.

Chapter Seven

Jane's Classroom

A vignette of practice

Most of Jane's classes take place in the one classroom at Bayview High School. It is a busy and colourful room within a brick building typical of post World War Two New South Wales public school architecture. The room is full of school desks, with a number of old cupboards and cabinets cluttered around the perimeter of the room. In the centre of the room there is a large low desk with an old arm chair behind it – Jane tells me the armchair was a gift from a departing group of students a few years ago – and she often sits in the armchair at the start and end of lessons to chat with students. From the moment I walk into the room my attention is drawn to the classroom walls - nearly every spare inch of wall space is taken up with pictures and posters including photos of Jane with current and former students, as well as dozens of history 'memes' that play on particular topics or issues the students have studied. Jane tells me the decision to decorate her classroom in this way was a deliberate one – she says it helps her students approach learning with a sense of fun, and that it reflects her attitude to teaching which is to always do things with a sense of humour.

When I first arrive in Jane's classroom, the single student desks are pushed together to make five larger tables allowing students to sit together in groups. On each of the tables is a document box labelled with the name of a different University: ANU, Cambridge, Yale, Harvard and Oxford. Inside each box is notepaper, pens and pencils, some photocopied pages from a textbook and some worksheets. As the bell rings to mark the first lesson of the day, Jane's Year 12 modern history students begin to trickle in to the classroom. A number of other students come and go from the room on their way to other classes, seemingly just to say good morning to Jane. There are hugs and high fives as she greets various students and talks to them about their weekend. After a few minutes she hustles them out of the room, telling them to "get a wriggle on" and "get to class on time".

As Jane's students arrive, one looks at the 'university' boxes, flicks through the material in them and says to her "what are you on about now?" Jane ignores the comment, glances at an empty desk and asks, "where is Harvard? Are they all away?" Other

students in the room just shrug. The 'Harvard' students are running late and arrive over the course of the first lesson of the day.

Before she begins teaching, Jane introduces me to her class as a researcher from Sydney University, telling the students to call me "nearly Dr Claire" and then goes around the room and introduces each of the twelve students in this class to me by name, sharing a small detail about them with me – telling me about how long she has taught them, or that she has taught siblings and cousins of particular students. It is not something Jane repeats with other class groups I see her teach – but something she sees as important to do with this class, her Year 12 modern history class, with whom she has a particularly close relationship. She tells me later that as an Aboriginal woman it's just "in her DNA" to welcome people in this way.

After the introductions Jane writes a heading on the white board at the front of the room: "Conflict in Europe", and then writes beneath it "the rise of dictators". On the screen at the front of the room Jane displays a website that she has designed to collate a number of different Internet resources to which she refers in her teaching. On the site are a number of You Tube clips, but Jane tells students she cannot get them to play using the school's Wi-Fi connection today, and if at all possible they should try watching them at home. Jane starts talking to students about the key personalities they are studying to set the context for their learning that day:

Jane: Stalin – he comes from where?

Stephanie: Russia!

Jane: Yes, born in Russia – but where did he rule?

Rosa: The USSR

Jane: Good. Now Uncle Josef was not a good dude. One of his wives even committed suicide to avoid being with him. We talk a lot about Hitler being awful, but he wasn't the only bad dude around at that time.

While Jane is talking there are varying levels of interest from students. Some are furiously taking notes, some are just listening and a few are distracted, scrolling through their phones.

Jane: Now Mussolini was really the father of fascism. By comparison Hitler was a straighty-one-eighty. Mussolini really had no redeeming features privately or publicly, but Hitler admired him greatly. Here we have a photo of them beside one another.

As Jane talks, there is a PowerPoint slideshow projected onto the whiteboard showing historical images with one or two short written points on each slide. Jane shows a slide with images of Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler and questions students:

Jane: Let's think about who these guys represent and their ideologies. Stalin is...?

Chloe: Communist

Jane: That's right, what about Mussolini?

Lisa: Not communist.

Jane: You're right, not communist, what's the term we use for his ideology?

Sally: Fascist.

Jane: Yes he is, like Hitler over here [pointing to an image on the screen] he's also a fascist. But remember, Hitler is democratically elected in Germany.

Suddenly, a student, Sam, who had been scrolling through his phone looks up and joins the conversation.

Sam: Was he though? I thought he was made Chancellor by the President?

Jane: Thank you for joining us and well done – he was appointed, but remember he had already been elected to the Reichstag – the German Parliament – by that time. Can you also help us out with how Stalin came to power?

Sam: He killed everyone else.

Jane: Yes, he suppressed and killed and terrorised his opponents.

Sam: How did Mussolini get to power?

Jane: Who can help Sam with this?

Lisa: Mussolini was allowed to take control by the King of Italy.

Jane then directs the class' attention to a PowerPoint slide on the screen at the front of the room and announces "it's election time! Who will you vote for?". Jane tells the students she is going to introduce them to three anonymous candidates and they will have to vote for someone on the basis of what she tells them. She reads through the options for the class:

Jane: Candidate one - I am a womaniser and my health is failing.
Candidate two- I have a drinking habit, I'm an interventionist and have a defiant attitude. Candidate three - I am a decorated war hero, I don't drink and I talk non-stop about how to create a stable economy. In your university teams, I want you to have a chat about who you might vote for and why.

Students huddle and chat in their table groups and then come together as a class and all groups agree that they think candidate three is the best option.

Jane: Well, like many Germans in the early 1930s, you all just voted for Adolf Hitler.

There is laughter and some swearing from students who realise the meaning of the activity when Jane reveals images of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Churchill and Hitler.

Jane: Don't feel bad that you all just said you'd vote for a fascist monster. You only had limited information didn't you? If I had only that amount of information I might have voted for him too.

Jane goes on to talk about the strategies and techniques Hitler used to cultivate popularity amongst Germans - the selective use of information and extensive use of propaganda. She talks without notes and discusses a range of visual sources with students from photographs to Nazi propaganda. After several minutes of talking Jane then stops abruptly and says "have I lost you? Time for some teamwork I think". For the remainder of the lesson Jane gets students working in their 'university' teams on worksheets that take them through the steps to the outbreak of World War Two in

Europe. During this time, Jane sits down at each table and discusses the work with each group – working for extended periods of time with particular students to explain concepts or go over the narrative of the lead up to the outbreak of War. At one table there is an extended conversation about the concept of appeasement and whether it was the correct approach for the allies to take, whilst students at another table look puzzled and say they have not heard the term ‘appeasement’ before. For a moment, Jane seems exasperated and says “look at what our whole last lesson was about! Honestly! Is anyone with me?” As she moves to another table the conversation strays from discussion about European dictators to contemporary leaders and students have a long debate about who the current Australian Prime Minister is, and whether we should become a republic.

At the end of the lesson Jane asks the students to submit their work into their university boxes and leave it for the next lesson. She thanks the students and farewells them, encouraging them to get to their next lesson on time.

An analysis of Jane’s practice using the table of invention for analysing practices

Elements of practices	Practice architectures found in or brought to the site
<p><i>Project</i></p> <p>The lesson is part of the Stage 6 modern history course ‘Conflict in Europe’ and the objective is to have students identify and understand and distinguish between the various world leaders during World War II, whilst also consolidating some earlier lessons around understanding Hitler’s rise to power in Germany. Jane does this through a variety of strategies and activities which she moves through in response to student attention and engagement.</p> <p>This lesson is typical of Jane’s approach to history teaching more generally – characterised by an unrelenting positivity in her approach and steered by the objective of engaging all students in learning history. Jane’s knowledge and understanding of her students as individuals helps her develop lessons and strategies that allow them to make connections to history that are meaningful to their own lives and contexts.</p> <p>Jane understands her role in teaching history at Bayview as more than just</p>	<p><i>Practice landscape</i></p> <p>The lesson occurs in Jane’s classroom – a space Jane has made both her own and her students’. It is recognisably a history classroom, with historical images and memes dominating the walls of the room, alongside photos of Jane’s students over the years. The space is cluttered and a little messy, and at the centre is Jane’s comfy armchair, giving the classroom a homely and informal feeling.</p> <p>The design and layout of the classroom signals the importance of space and belonging to Jane and her students. Jane spends a lot of time in the classroom, even when she is not teaching, and so it acts as both a teaching space and a meeting space for Jane and the students of Bayview.</p>

<p>helping her students achieve academic success. Jane's identity as an Aboriginal woman underpins and fundamentally shapes her sense of history teaching praxis. For Jane, history education is an integral part of a broader project of students understanding their place in the world. She sees power in the capacity of history to address the systemic and intergenerational disadvantage faced by students at Bayview High School.</p>	
<p>Sayings</p> <p>Jane uses a combination of simple question and answer strategies with students to help them revise and recall previous learning, deliberately waiting for students to finish her sentences. Speaking to her students, Jane's language is far less formal than in her interviews and discussions with me and she uses colloquial phrases and terms when explaining historical ideas (<i>Uncle Josef was not a good dude, Hitler was a straighty-one-eighty</i>). But Jane also frequently paraphrases and adds to student responses to model and extend their knowledge (<i>Sam: He killed everyone else. Jane: Yes, he suppressed and killed and terrorised his opponents.</i>)</p> <p>There is also a lot of dialogue in the classroom that is not in aid of the objective of the lesson – students talking about a range of things unrelated to history, sometimes asking questions which seem off topic. Jane is tolerant of this dialogue and often uses it to come back to ideas and subjects that relate to history.</p>	<p>Cultural-discursive arrangements</p> <p>Jane's use of informal language works to assist student engagement in history. Her frequent paraphrasing of historical terms into colloquialisms helps to make historical concepts more accessible to students, which in turn helps students engage with the historical learning.</p> <p>Similarly stories and personalities play a central role in the cultural discursive representation of history in the classroom – students access and understand history through Jane's storytelling and through the way in which she vividly describes key historical personalities.</p>
<p>Doings</p> <p>Jane guides the 'doings' of the lesson through guided questioning of students, narrative and explanation as well as some supported group work. Jane's original plan to show a series of short YouTube clips of the key leaders from World War II changes at the last minute because she cannot get the clips playing.</p> <p>Jane uses a PowerPoint presentation to support her verbal explanations to students, but her presentation contains very little text and instead makes extensive</p>	<p>Material-economic arrangements</p> <p>Jane's practice is very clearly shaped by the material-economic arrangements of Bayview High School.</p> <p>Many of the choices Jane makes in guiding student learning in this lesson are the result of her compromising about what she is able to achieve in light of the resource constraints she faces such as an unreliable Wi-Fi connection which prevents her showing historical films during lesson time.</p> <p>Similarly, the dominance of Jane's verbal</p>

<p>use of photographs and historical cartoons. While Jane speaks and asks questions of students some are taking notes but others are sitting quite passively, using their phones or chatting to one another.</p> <p>Student activity and involvement peaks in the lesson during the 'voting' exercise where all students are involved in a show of hands as to who they would vote for and many are animated and enthusiastic in their questioning.</p> <p>Although Jane originally planned more extensive work and discussion with students around the role of propaganda in promoting Hitler's ideology, she abruptly changes course when she senses she has lost the attention of the class. What follows is students working in table groups (their 'university' teams) using a worksheet and questions relating to propaganda and the rise of Hitler.</p>	<p>explanations, and the sharing of resources amongst groups of students reflect the lack of textbook or printed resources for students to use.</p> <p>The Higher School Certificate does not loom as a large material-economic influence on practice in the same way it does at Churchill or Greenview. Jane still signals her high hopes and expectations for her students through the use of 'university' teams as a way of labelling student working groups.</p>
<p><i>Relatings</i></p> <p>Jane speaks warmly and affectionately with her students. She shows a high level of tolerance and understanding for the range of student behaviours in her class and does not directly challenge or seek to punish disruptive or off task behaviour. Jane relates to students with positivity and enthusiasm and warmly welcomes student participation.</p>	<p><i>Social-political arrangements</i></p> <p>The social-political arrangements of the lesson reflect the history Jane has with this particular group of students – most of whom she has not only known and taught since they began high school but who she has other connections with as a long standing resident and community member. Jane's approach to the lesson also reflects her broader understanding of the significance of relationships in teaching, and the way in which creating and maintaining positive and constructive relationships with her students is the underlying driver of her teaching praxis.</p>
<p><i>Dispositions</i></p> <p>Jane's approach to teaching history in this context is a demonstration of the way in which her knowledge of history is woven together with her understanding of both her students and her experience in teaching at Bayview High School. Jane's expert historical knowledge is evident in the way she is able to harness and build upon all student contributions – even those tangential to the subject matter of the lesson. This breadth of historical knowledge enhances student engagement because Jane is responsive to students' curiosity and</p>	<p><i>Practice traditions</i></p> <p>Whilst teacher instruction leads much of the activity and learning in this lesson, the lesson is not necessarily teacher-focussed, as student participation and engagement drives Jane's pedagogical decision making. The classroom environment is quite informal, and Jane gently champions and encourages student involvement without judging or punishing some obvious cases of students who are off task. The effect is that she leaves the door open for student engagement at all points in the lesson.</p>

<p>interest. Jane demonstrates great skill as a pedagogue in this lesson – making careful judgments about how and when she responds to a range of sometimes challenging student behaviour and conversation. Everything about Jane’s disposition as an educator communicates to her students her high expectations, her positive opinion of them and their capacities as students and the value that she places on education.</p>	
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Table 9: An analysis of Jane’s practice using the table of invention for analysing practices

What’s going on in Jane’s classroom: situating praxis in practice

Jane’s identity as an Aboriginal woman and her belief in education as a social justice project infuse all aspects of her practice and form a key way in which she frames her personal understanding of history teaching praxis. For her, teaching history is not about the individual performance of her students in their final exams but is part of a longer-term project to change the attitudes her students have towards history and formal education itself, and is an opportunity to create generational change within her local community. She refers to her current class of Higher School Certificate Modern and Ancient history students as ‘HSC-One’, a play on the notion of ‘generation one’ and reference to the fact that nearly all the students in that cohort will be the first in their family to finish high school. Jane draws parallels to her role in getting students through their final year of schooling and exams to the ‘Close the Gap’ campaign to overcome systemic disadvantage for Indigenous Australians, telling me:

It’s a long game, it is absolutely a long game. It is a similar long game we have with closing the gap...It doesn’t matter what their mark is, but will they be able to look at their kids and say ‘well I got an HSC and so you’re going to get a HSC and you’re going to do better’?

Jane’s personal understanding of her role as a history teacher powerfully demonstrates Kemmis et al’s’ dual notion of praxis which “on the side of the individual... concerns the formation of persons; on the side of the social... concerns the formation of communities and societies” (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 27). Jane is committed to the teaching of history for its capacity to enrich and change the lives of her students in an immediate and long-term sense, as well as the role and significance of history education in the wider community.

For Jane, teaching senior history classes is an opportunity to improve educational (and by extension, life) outcomes for her students. Jane articulates the social justice project of teaching history when she tells me “you cannot teach kids to be kind and caring and good human beings without teaching them where they have come from and what they have overcome”. This connection between history, identity and Jane’s teaching praxis is particularly strong in relation to the Aboriginal students in Jane’s classes:

.... Um... for me, as an Aboriginal and as a history teacher, I have a great belief that our kids will not close the gap until they know their history, until they know their background.....I am a strong believer that culture and history are one and the same, you can't have one without the other, you cannot understand one without the other. I teach Aboriginal kids that know nothing about Aboriginal past at all. Nothing. Stolen Generations means nothing to them, let alone anything prior to 1788. They are disaffected and they have no sense of history. And all they get is white history.

Burgess (2016) notes that Aboriginal teachers’ pedagogical cultural identity is one that is “formed in an ongoing conversation with one’s habitus, field of expertise, professional identity and pedagogical relationships” (p. 116). For Jane this plays out in the complex way in which her identity as an Aboriginal woman forms the foundation of her sense of teaching praxis and the position from which she negotiates the challenges and constraints presented to her pursuing that praxis in her classroom.

Engagement in learning

In the existing research around history teachers and history classrooms there has been little research into what it means, in a practical sense, to engage diverse learners and students from low socio-economic backgrounds in learning history. Where the issue of engagement is discussed, it is most often in relation to the challenges of tackling students’ boredom with learning (Clark, 2006), or lamenting the lack of knowledge and capacity of teachers to translate historical concepts into meaningful and engaging pedagogical strategies (Wineburg, 2001). In their close analysis of Elizabeth Jensen and John Price’s teaching practice, Wineburg and Wilson make only passing and vague reference to the teachers “making sure students stay on task” (2001, p. 163) without further exploration of either the skills the teachers use to do this, or the significance of this to any subsequent learning. But spending time in Jane’s classroom, it was very

obvious that her efforts to engage students in learning history are far more purposeful and sustained than with other teachers I observed in this study, and the question of what it means to 'engage' students in the learning of history takes on a necessarily different quality in her classroom to that in school contexts such as Greenview and Churchill.

In each lesson I observe, I see Jane working incredibly hard for small moments of focus and engagement from her students. Jane's demeanour with students is laid back, friendly and warm, but equally firm and encouraging. The pedagogical strategy of the University 'teams' that I observe Jane using in this lesson is one that Jane returns to several times over the course of my visits. It is a strategy that serves a dual purpose – on one level it is a pragmatic step Jane has taken to address the fact that many of her students turn up to class without basic supplies like pens and paper. By having these resources on the table, Jane's lessons are not disrupted by students who need to borrow items in order to participate in learning. But Jane later reflects that she also uses the boxes as a "fun and aspirational" pedagogical tool. For a cohort of students many of whom don't see themselves as likely of going on to further study at university, Jane signals to them the value she places on academic learning and achievement, and raises expectations by making them 'belong' to these elite universities while they are in her classroom space. Jane's establishment of high expectations for her students within a highly supportive classroom environment is key to cultivating student trust and willingness to learn and illustrative of those qualities that have been found to be so pivotal to making a difference for student learning (Cochran-Smith, 2012; Hayes et al., 2006). Having students work in these teams is also a key strategy that frees Jane from her position at the centre of the classroom and enables her to work with students individually and in small groups, recognising the wide diversity of learners in her class and the different levels and rates at which they are engaging in history (Okolo, Ferretti, & MacArthur, 2007).

Early in my time in Jane's classroom I recognised in myself a discomfort as I watched her teach. As an experienced classroom teacher myself I struggled with the level of inattention and distraction from students that Jane seemed to accept as the norm in her classroom. At any one point in time during her lessons, Jane would only have the full attention of a handful of students – with others distracted by their phones or chatting to each other. Despite this, I very rarely saw Jane reprimand her students for phone use, or demand the attention of the class before she proceeded with the lesson. Instead, Jane ploughed on with her lessons, energetically and enthusiastically teaching students as

their levels of focus waxed and waned over the hour. I realised that my own instincts and experience as a teacher initially made me sceptical of Jane's strategy of teaching on in the face of such distraction and apparent disengagement in her students. I addressed this in one of my conversations with Jane, asking her directly about how she manages the issue of student attention during class. She tells me her approach is very much about the broader context of teaching senior students at Bayview High School in which 'deficit discourses' (Comber & Kamler, 2004) around education and post-schooling opportunities are persistent:

We deal with kids who have to take six subjects, and at least one or two they are not going to have much interest in. Being a very small year restricts our ability to offer electives, so a lot of kids in this class took Modern [History] because there was nothing else on the line. In other senior schools you wouldn't have that problem because they have chosen that elective. So...there's a pragmatism. The other thing is, I know these kids are adept at doing 2 things at once. So while Jack is sitting there scrolling, he is still listening. Not as much attention as I would like, but he wasn't out of the lesson totally.

Jane's approach with student Jack is perhaps the best example of her pragmatism around issues of student attention and engagement. Jane tells me that Jack is known through the school as a 'problem student' and is frequently excluded from classes with other teachers because of aggressive behaviour, conflicts over his lateness, phone use and rudeness to staff. Jack sits through most of his Year 12 modern history lessons with his feet on the table, playing computer games on his mobile phone with his earphones in his ears. Early in my time with Jane I observe Jack and assume he has little to no interest in the substance of Jane's teaching, and so I initially doubted Jane's assessment that he 'wasn't out of the lesson totally'. Then, just a few days later, during a lesson about Mussolini, another student asks Jane if Australia has ever been led by a dictator. Before Jane can answer, Jack lifts his head from his phone and responds quickly and decisively:

Jack: I'm sure the Aboriginal people would say that we had.

Jane: I think you're on to something there Jack. Do you want to tell us more about why you say that?

Jack: Like all the Governors were dictators hey?

Jane: Yes, you are so right. Many of the early Governors of Australia had pretty much dictatorial powers, they were answerable to England but really had the power to do whatever they wanted. That's a great insight, thank you.

Hayes et al. posit that "good teachers focus on making their lessons interesting and demanding, and that this focus ameliorates the need to focus on managing students disruptive behaviour" (2006, p. 61). Here, Jane's approach to managing Jack's level of attention in history was a delicate one. Her tacit tolerance of his obvious inattention and disengagement worked to avoid the conflicts that occur for him in other classes, which in turn kept open the possibility of this moment of engagement. Just as Jane suggested to me, Jack was paying sufficient attention to not only make a contribution but a deeply thoughtful and complex one that showed quite a well-developed understanding of Australia's contested history, and Jane did not skip a beat in welcoming him into the lesson or express surprise at his involvement. She later tells me that she always chooses to be positive with her students, because the alternative automatically inhibits her ability to teach:

Disengagement is very difficult to get around. If I decide to have the fight, then the lesson is over. If you stress about it you're going to lose everyone else. If you don't want to have the fight you give them pens and paper and you just get on with it. The last thing you want is to be shouting at [Jack] or punishing [Jack]. If I send him out and have a fight over the phone then he is out totally. Then they learn nothing. It is pragmatic. I know it shouldn't be that way, but it is.

Jane's reflections on the 'pragmatism' of her practice echoes Australian research in the area of student engagement, recognising the complex and layered meaning of 'engagement' in a classroom context (McFadden & Munns, 2002; Munns, 2007). By distinguishing Jack's compliance with classroom norms from the issue of his substantive engagement in the learning, Jane's pragmatic approach leaves the door open for Jack's quite sophisticated connection to the curriculum in this lesson. It is an encounter that is illustrative of the connection between what Munns and Sawyer term small 'e' engagement and big 'E' engagement, or as they explain:

the importance of students from low SES backgrounds being substantively engaged in their current classroom experiences ('e'), but also developing enduring and rewarding relationships with the larger project of education generally (E) (2013, pp. 21-22.).

Jane's challenges of cultivating engagement in her classroom are very context-specific and certainly unlike those presented to Penny and Max. For Jane, the end goal of engaging students in learning both the content and skills of history is made a more complex task by the challenges of getting students to first engage with school and learning on any level. This is especially pronounced in the senior years where school attendance is no longer compulsory, students may not be studying history as their first preference and expectations of students for their post-school options are quite different to those in Max and Penny's schools:

Our kids don't think they have to go to uni. They don't think they have to get a degree. Some of them think McDonalds is fine. I think that's fine. These kids are very streetwise, and they get a bang for their buck. They want to learn stuff, but they don't understand why they want to learn.

In touching on the issue of students not understanding '*why they want to learn*' Jane shows sensitivity to the connection between students' sense of school as "useful, important and relevant" (Sawyer et al., 2013, p. 103) and their level of classroom engagement. For Jane, this means presenting history as a subject with real world connections and implications for her students' lives. Working within a poorly resourced school, it is Jane's own historical knowledge and personally developed resources and materials (such as the university boxes and website) that support student learning of history in her classroom.

Visual imagery and source material play an important role in Jane's strategy to draw students into historical learning. Jane's choice to use history-themed memes represents a powerful message to the young people she teaches of her willingness to engage with history using language and mediums that are familiar and relevant to students (Beach & Dredger, 2017). Jane's classroom is at once visually chaotic, but also welcoming and appealing – it signals a sense of belonging to her students – both in terms of students feeling welcome in the physical space of the classroom, but also because the impact of

the memes is to make history more accessible and less elitist for the students. Visual sources also play a pivotal role in Jane's teaching – the lessons I observe are most often scaffolded around visual historical source material in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, accompanied by very little text, and supported by Jane's own verbal explanations and storytelling. Jane also often uses sections of historical documentaries that she can access for free on the internet, as, similar to the teachers interviewed by Husbands et. al (2003), she says students find it easier to immerse themselves in different historical eras the more visual sources she can provide them with. Jane describes this teaching approach as “modernised chalk and talk” where PowerPoint presentations serve the role that ‘chalk’ used to:

I try to get something up there for everyone to understand. That's the PowerPoint, just as notes on the board would have been once. I am trying to get the majority of kids to understand something. I will put it up and then talk for half an hour about each slide. Hoping someone gets something out of it.

Jane's classrooms, like those of the other exemplary history teachers in this study, are undoubtedly dominated and defined by both the quantity and quality of teacher talk. Jane's ability to offer nuanced and meaningful verbal explanations to her students is supported by her truly vast historical and general knowledge that enables her to traverse history, contemporary society and pop culture to help students comprehend and contextualise historical ideas and events. Jane tells me that her knowledge of history has been built up through her own personal interest and passion for history of all kinds – local, modern political, as well as ancient history, and has been honed through years of teaching experience. Names, dates, anecdotes and historical narratives fall out of her mouth, seemingly without effort and her delivery is always animated and authentic. Jane's classroom practice attests to the importance of teacher knowledge in forming a foundation for generating student engagement in historical thinking (Ravitch, 2000).

Jane regards history as being fundamentally connected to understanding the nature of contemporary society, and her role as a teacher in helping students make connections between the past and present, telling me “it doesn't matter what you look at in history, it connects to the modern world. We are all connected to the past”. Part of helping students make this connection involves Jane having an awareness of students' existing knowledge and understanding of both historical concepts and ideas that they bring to

the history classroom (Lee & Ashby, 2000). But for Jane, bridging the gap between her students' historical and contemporary knowledge is made more difficult by the limited frame of reference many of her students have for understanding the broader context of the history they are studying. Jane explains:

As a history teacher, having the kids have a general knowledge is a huge bonus and that is really difficult for us... I am trying to teach them who Mussolini is, but they have no idea who their own Prime Minister is, that's really quite a challenge.

Because of this, I see Jane's use of careful and deliberate strategies that encourage students' curiosity in exploring historical material, but that also make this material accessible and relatable. Jane's use of language such as "bad dudes" to describe the dictators of Europe has the dual impact of being both an entertaining but also highly instructive way of helping students make sense of these personalities. Similarly, the learning activity that asked students which candidate they would vote for allowed Jane to very succinctly and effectively contextualise for students some of the conditions that led to the German population voting for Hitler (Reisman & Wineburg, 2008). Jane accounts for these particular strategies by telling me "you really need to break it down into their home language otherwise it isn't relatable, it will go over their head". Jane's reference to a 'home language' in her classroom connects to her experience in Aboriginal education and refers here to the colloquial and informal language of students at Bayview High School – a combination of adolescent slang and pop-culture references which Jane uses in a natural and reflexive way in the classroom to engage students in discussion about historical ideas. In teaching students in her Year 12 ancient history class about the erasure of images of the Pharaoh Hatshepsut, the following exchange takes place:

Rachel: Why did they get rid of all the images of her?
Jane: It's a good question. Why do you think?
Rachel: I'm not sure...
Jane: Well, it's a bit like having an ex-boyfriend and wanting to delete all your Instagram pics that he's in...
Lisa: ...Oh...and replacing him with [pop singer] Harry Styles!
(laughter).

For the students this is an amusing and accessible analogy to draw, and one that triggers laughter but also immediate understanding in this room of 17 and 18 year olds. Jane is speaking their language.

Jane's use of familiar cultural references and contemporary analogies helps to develop student confidence in encountering historical concepts and ideas (Havekes et al., 2017). For instance, whilst her students have a very basic understanding of contemporary politics and struggle to identify Australian political leaders, they all have an awareness of who Donald Trump is, and so Jane frequently makes reference to Trump or America when discussing the rise of dictators in Europe. It is a comparison she makes carefully and thoughtfully, aiming to avoid students making simplistic generalisations, but to support them thinking about how particular themes echo across historical eras. At times Jane's examples and analogies even relate to Bayview High School itself – its staff and students. Jane is constantly looking for ways in which history can be more relatable, understandable and meaningful to these students.

The practice of building historical understanding through these 'connections' allows Jane to simultaneously build students' contemporary general knowledge and sense of citizenship at the same time she teaches history. Jane tells me that her goal in teaching history at Bayview High School is to develop students' general knowledge and their critical thinking skills. She pursues this goal in her classroom practice by never missing an opportunity to grow and extend on any aspect of student interest and curiosity in history. During a documentary about the Luftwaffe, one of Jane's students casually asks "did we bomb them back?" Jane uses this student question as a chance to talk in depth about the nature of the Allied bombing offensive, and show photographs of Germany after allied bombing raids – leading to a lengthy discussion about the meaning of 'total war'. Jane never fails to take up these opportunities to harness student interest and run with it – even when it ostensibly falls outside of the history syllabus Jane is teaching. In one such example that perfectly illustrates the combination of Jane's pedagogical skills and historical knowledge, the following exchange takes place during a discussion about Adolf Hitler:

Kayla: When do we get a lesson how Hitler lost his balls? (laughter)

Jane: Well, I hate to disappoint you but it was only one, not both (more laughter). And it's interesting, because they claimed at the time he lost it in

World War One, but research now tells us he was probably born that way. Why do you reckon they spread the rumour about him losing it in war?

Kayla:oh I dunno! I was kidding miss!

Jane: But it's a great question! It's now thought that the war injury rumour was just propaganda. It's interesting to consider the propaganda surrounding Hitler...

In stark contrast to Max and Penny's classroom where the Higher School Certificate was frequently referred to as a key framing feature of their teaching practice, the HSC and examinations rarely get mentioned in Jane's classroom. It is not that Jane does not have aspirations for her students, but that she is frank that her goal in teaching history is less about the results her students achieve than it is about keeping students in formal schooling for as long as possible, and the associated beneficial knowledge and skills they develop as a result:

At the end of the day there is a long game. Maybe we don't get there with these kids right now, maybe we don't get there with this generation but we want them to take an interest. I don't care if it's physics or history, but they are getting some education, they are getting to know the system. Ask any teacher, a kid who has been through the HSC is going to know better, you do know better. But you remain optimistic because it's a long game.

Jane's commitment to this broader, long term goal of history education is in part enabled by the teaching context of Bayview high school, which in comparison to Penny and Max's schools is far less fixated on the final academic results obtained by their students. But it is also a commitment formed through Jane's years of experience as a teacher – from teaching thousands of students and understanding what it is that makes a difference in the lives and trajectories of the young people she teaches.

The role of relationships

As with all teachers in this study, a key part of Jane's success in engaging students in history is creating a positive and welcoming classroom environment for her students. Jane's approach of introducing each of her Year 12 students to me at the start of my observations with her was perhaps the clearest indication of the way in which Jane sees her students as individuals, and the respect she holds for each of them. Jane tells me she

regards herself as a “coach and cheerleader” for her students, one who is “relentlessly optimistic” in her approach to classroom teaching. Watching Jane teach, it is obvious she rejects hierarchical understandings of the student-teacher relationship and that her approach is one that allows her to develop profound connections with students and creates opportunities for deep learning. I see this ‘coach and cheerleader’ role played out in each and every lesson I observe, and Jane’s celebration of student effort and involvement in lessons has the effect of encouraging her students to take risks with their learning that they might not otherwise take. Jane’s relationships and rapport with her students is authentic – developed over years of teaching and living in this regional community and is strongly aligned to her sense of teaching praxis and Aboriginal identity (Burgess, 2016). Jane knows these students and their families, she is aware of their interests, hobbies, likes and dislikes, she knows about their part time jobs and their friendship circles. Jane’s awareness and understanding of her students not only makes them feel valued and welcomed in the classroom, it provides a foundation for her to draw connections with history in ways that make sense to these students. It would be nearly impossible for a teacher without this level of rapport to generate similar levels of historical understanding with these students, and Jane’s practice represents a powerful argument in favour of considering more seriously the role of classroom relationships helping to navigate some of the barriers to learning in a context like Bayview High and creating possibilities for deep engagement and learning in history.

Conclusion

Observing the repertoire of Jane’s pedagogy we see the complex way in which school context and teacher professional identity influence the nature of good teaching practice. Like Penny and Max, Jane is a passionate, knowledgeable and enthusiastic teacher of history – but the teaching context of Bayview High School and the needs of her students operate to distinguish the way in which her expertise is enacted in her practice. Jane’s knowledge and understanding of her students give her insights and allow her to approach teaching in ways that make the themes and ideas of history both engaging and relevant. But Jane is not only interested in engaging students in immediate learning experiences, and her approach to teaching history is underpinned by a well developed sense of her own teaching praxis with a long term view to her students’ development of knowledge and their sense of citizenship. Jane’s practice works to harness small moments of engagement with students in her classroom to positively influence their attitude not only to learning history, but to education more generally.

Jane's skills in developing and fostering positive relationships is fundamental to her impact in the classroom and is also a key way in which Jane is able to navigate some of the significant material-economic constraints presented to her by the teaching context of Bayview High School. The perspective of Jane's students, as well as a deeper analysis of the way in which her practice is enabled and constrained by her teaching context will be picked up again in my discussion of Jane in chapters nine and ten.

Chapter Eight

Dan's Classroom

A vignette of practice

All Dan's history classes are timetabled in the same classroom – a room that he inherited when he first started teaching at Jacaranda High School six years ago. Dan tells me that when he first arrived, the classroom was run down and covered in graffiti and he organised to have it repainted and then set about decorating it as a specialist space for learning history. Similar to the impression I have walking into Jane's classroom, my eyes are immediately drawn to the busy and colourful walls around Dan's room. Across the entire back wall of Dan's classroom are two timelines made up of historical photographs and images – an ancient history timeline on the vertical axis and a modern history timeline along the horizontal axis. There is very little blank wall space in the classroom at all, with motivational posters, amusing history-related 'memes' and samples of student work all over the side and front walls.

About two weeks into my observations with Dan, he tells me that he is worried his Year 12 ancient history class is struggling to come to terms with the language and foundational concepts for their new unit on Sparta. The majority of Dan's students are from a language background other than English, and Dan is worried that their ability to understand and communicate more complicated historical ideas was impeded because they had not come to terms with some of the key, somewhat idiosyncratic, terminology of the topic. Chatting in the staffroom at the end of the day, Dan said he was planning a series of lessons to work on building students' conceptual understanding of Spartan society, integrating role-play with the use of technology.

A few days later I arrive in the staffroom to meet Dan at the start of the school day and he is excitedly unpacking a number of shopping bags – he shows me that over the weekend he has purchased (and personally paid for) a number of costumes and props such as wigs, plastic swords and shields and fake muscled torsos. He also shows me a booklet with a range of Spartan concepts written in large font. He tells me that the booklet and costumes are the focus of his next few lessons with Year 12.

The bell rings and we head to class, our arms full of the costumes and props. Dan's students arrive and see the boxes of props and costumes, several exclaiming with excitement:

Jasmine: Oh cool – show me!

Blake : This is the best!

Dan settles the class at their desks and talks to them about the plan for the lesson:

Dan: You are all getting a booklet of key terms. These are all concepts we have started discussing in this unit – some of them you already know but others you might be having some trouble with. You might wonder 'how on earth will I remember all these weird words?' Well, we are going to bring them to life – take photos and film them, and then using the app on our phones we will be able to go back and remind ourselves what that word means. It is absolutely amazing and is going to help you out heaps with the terms. If there is anyone who doesn't want to be in the actual photographs, come and talk to me – you can be my photographer and prop specialist. I want everyone involved in some way. Okay – let's open the booklet, and have a think about how we might visually represent these concepts. Come and have a look at what we've got to use.

There is a flurry of activity and a lot of noise as students search through the costume box, grabbing at particular outfits and talking about what will be needed to act out particular words and phrases. Dan walks around and has conversations with small groups of students as they play with the costumes and talk about the activity before noticing that one student, Ravi, has taken himself to the side of the room with his iPhone and has put in his headphones.

Dan: Does anyone want to be King? Ravi? (Dan waves his hand in front of Ravi to get his attention).

Ravi: No way. This is bullshit. Nup. (Shakes his head at the teacher). Who wants to dress up? Are you serious Sir? Nup this is shit.

Dan: (Speaking quietly to Ravi) Don't start with me today. I'm going to pretend you didn't just swear at me twice in the first 5 minutes of this lesson and we are going to try again. Ok? (louder to the whole class)

....come on, I need an awesome King...who else is going to be able to do it? Hey?

Ravi: (smiling) Oh...Ok.... yeah for sure, only if I am the King alright?

Dan: (To whole class) Alright – first up is the Gerousia. Who has some ideas about how we can represent this?

A number of students start arranging the tables into a u-shape.

Dan: Good – I like your thinking. Who can explain to me why you've set the table up like this? Who is going to sit at the table?

Yasmine: The Gerousia is like the council, so we need somewhere for all the old guys to sit around and make their decisions

Dan: Good explanation. Did everyone hear that? Who is going to be on the council of elders? Who is part of the Gerousia?

The students put on costumes and arrange themselves around the table and another student takes the photo.

Dan: Ok, what's our next term? Alright – the Ekklesia. Here, take a beard. If you want to be in this photo...

Students come forward, take costumes. There is a lot of laughter as students put on the beards.

Dan: Now, if you have taken a beard, stand up.

Amber: (Pointing to the chairs and tables) Do we sit down here?

Dan: What do you think?

Stephanie: Not yet, we need to be elected by the Ephors

Dan: Okay then, let's get our Ephors – put your hand up – I need how many people with their hands in the air to represent this voting process?

Students: Four

Dan: Yes, we need four people voting – let's summon our Ekklesia then.

Ravi: (Looking in costume box) Ooooh, I just found some spears! Awesome!

Dan: Leave those, they are for our Phalanx which we will do in the playground tomorrow. No spears in the classroom ok?

A photo is taken representing the Ekklesia and the Ephors. The entire class is attentive and patient while the tableaux are put together and photographed. Over by the box of costumes and props Ravi tells another student to be careful and not damage anything.

Dan: What's next?

Blake: Syssitian

Stephanie: We need plates and food.

Dan: Well in terms of food...I have lollies (Students cheer.)

Dan: But how many lollies to put on each plate? Can anyone help me out?

Jacqueline: We all need the same, it needs to be equal.

Dan: Jacqueline thinks everyone needs the same amount of lollies in our photo of the Syssitian. Is she right? Why is she saying that? Can someone explain to me?

Ling: It's the compulsory banquet and everyone – even the King gets the same as everyone else.

Dan: Yes! Great – we are going to chat more about what this represented about Spartan society. Now...who can count these lollies out equally for me?

Ravi: Why didn't you get us KFC instead?

Dan: Like I haven't spent enough money on you guys already?

Yasmine: It's ok...the lollies are great sir.

Out of the corner of his eye Dan spots a student taking a video to upload to Snapchat.

Dan: Hey - I know this is a fun lesson, but I can't have you taking photos for snapchat – this is just for our class ok? (The student puts away their phone.)

The lesson continues with a number of other photographs and short videos being taken inside the classroom to represent the Helots, Gerousia and the Dual Kingship. Dan then shows his students an application they can download on their phone so that when they point their smartphones at the word in their handout, the images and films they have made today will play on their screens. Dan has organised for the following day's lesson

to be in the school hall and playground for the final photographs, of the Phalanx and Agoge to be taken there.

Two weeks later, Dan’s class is working through a number of different activities based around building their written explanations about Spartan society. As students work away at their own pace, I observe a number of them with their glossary books out, and phones hovered above as they revise these concepts. As their unit on Sparta continues over the following weeks, Dan frequently refers back to the images and role play in his verbal explanation to the class – reminding students of particular details of the photographs to help explain relationships or structures of Spartan society. Dan also uses the photos to illustrate a number of PowerPoint presentations he develops for the class, and during one such presentation, Ravi looks up at the board and exclaims ‘there I am, I am a King!’

An analysis of Dan’s practice using the table of invention for analysing practices

Elements of practices	Practice architectures found in or brought to the site
<p>Project</p> <p>The project of the lesson is to build students’ conceptual understanding in relation to key terms and vocabulary relevant to their unit of study on the Spartans. Students are using their knowledge of particular terms and concepts to develop tableaus and role plays to be photographed and filmed to then develop into a visual glossary using a digital application.</p> <p>In this and other lessons I observe Dan teach, he works incredibly hard to generate and sustain student engagement and to help each of his students identify some aspect of learning history that they enjoy. Parallel to this goal of making history enjoyable for his students, Dan’s practice is driven by an understanding of the contemporary relevance of the skills and knowledge that history can offer to students in interpreting the world around them. Dan’s creative and innovative use of technology is a particularly notable aspect of his practice that helps him meet this goal of both enthusing his students and making the study of history relevant to their lives. Dan’s pedagogy is also very</p>	<p>Practice landscape</p> <p>The lesson occurs in Dan’s history classroom – a colourful space decorated with historical images, timelines and memes. During the lesson Dan uses an array of costumes and material that he has bought to support students’ making the visual glossary of historical terms.</p> <p>For this lesson, the usual layout of the classroom (rows of forward facing desks) is moved and altered, as students move the furniture around as part of their process of role play and setting up the tableaus to represent each concept. It is a very physical lesson.</p> <p>Dan makes innovative and creative use of technology and is particularly reliant on students’ familiarity and engagement with mobile image-based technology.</p>

<p>clearly cognisant of the diverse cultural and language backgrounds of the students at Jacaranda High and his practice demonstrates a sensitivity and awareness of the particular needs of his students.</p>	
<p>Sayings</p> <p>The sayings of the lesson strongly reflect Dan’s purpose in generating engagement in the visual glossary exercise, and in doing so to build student knowledge and confidence using historical language and terminology. Dan speaks to students with a heightened tone of enthusiasm – giving instructions that aim to both energise and include class members. Whilst Dan is often preoccupied with providing instructions to help orchestrate the movement of students into each new ‘scene’, his focus remains contextualising and familiarising students with historical terminology they need to master in their HSC course (“<i>let’s summon our Ekklesia</i>”). Although teacher talk drives the activity, Dan makes space for students to offer explanations and check their understanding – keeping the focus of the lesson on conceptual understanding and literacy.</p>	<p>Cultural-discursive arrangements</p> <p>The cultural discursive arrangements of the lesson focus around the decoding of historical concepts, and the related process of students representing their understanding of the concepts through images and role-play.</p> <p>Throughout the lesson students demonstrate their understanding of both the task Dan has asked them to engage in as well as the content of the task (the historical concepts and vocabulary he is building). Throughout the activity students work to synthesise new language and discourses relevant to this history topic with their existing knowledge, and grow in their understanding of these ideas.</p>
<p>Doings</p> <p>This lesson involves sustained effort from Dan to orchestrate and manage the movement of students, the organising of costumes and use of props. The classroom is a whirl of movement and sound and Dan works hard to maintain student focus on the purpose of the lesson – moving through each of the words at a pace that maintains student interest and attention.</p> <p>There is also sustained effort from Dan to generate interest and involvement from all students in the class – roles and responsibilities are shared around so that students are all physically engaged in different aspects of the task as the lesson plays out.</p> <p>The task students are involved in is a rich one that helps students generate deep and meaningful understandings of historical concepts through an embodied experience. The use of technology supports these understandings to be more than merely</p>	<p>Material-economic arrangements</p> <p>Notable amongst the material-economic arrangements in support of the lesson are the large amount of costumes and props Dan has organised in support of this teaching strategy. The fact that Dan has purchased these personally for students to use reveals much about the broader material-economic conditions of Jacaranda High School and the role of teachers’ own resourcing of student learning in schools which face resourcing constraints.</p> <p>The lesson, whilst creative in its use of technology, is not reliant on individual students or the school itself having access to particular technology. Dan makes use of a free app that students can download and use on their personal phones.</p>

<p>momentary and for students to make use of these images and role-play experiences over and over again – either through their own use of the visual glossary or through Dan’s including of the images in his own teaching materials.</p>	
<p><i>Relatings</i></p> <p>The lesson is deeply relational – with Dan relying heavily on generating cooperation with and amongst his students to create the visual glossary. Whilst many students welcome the activity and approach it with enthusiasm, Dan works incredibly hard to generate ‘buy in’ with particular students, most notably Ravi.</p> <p>Dan works hard to generate a sense of fun around students’ learning of history, and rewards students for their involvement and commitment through verbal affirmation, but also through giving students agency in their learning throughout the lesson.</p> <p>Dan works to make explicit his expectations around behaviour and the involvement of students throughout the lesson.</p>	<p><i>Social-political arrangements</i></p> <p>This lesson is demonstrative of Dan’s well developed understanding of his students and their learning needs – his sense not only of what these students are in need of to support their learning but also the most effective and engaging way of achieving that goal.</p> <p>Dan’s way of relating to students reveals aspects of his broader approach to learning and to history which not only prioritises engagement from all students, but sees students as co-constructors of their learning experiences. Dan takes this one step further in providing opportunities for his students to not only co-construct their learning experience, but to also generate learning material to be used in lessons – which further enriches moments of engagement.</p>
<p><i>Dispositions</i></p> <p>Dan’s knowledge, skills and values demonstrated in this lesson distinguish him as an expert history teacher. Dan displays a deep level of knowledge not only of historical subject matter, but also the ways in which this historical knowledge is interesting and relevant to his students. In this and other lessons I observe, Dan is able to guide student learning through establishing positive relationships that value inclusion, participation and cooperation. Dan provides clear structure and guidance to his students, but also creates space in the lesson for students to take leadership and ownership of the learning activity and resulting product of that learning. Dan demonstrates skill in his capacity to generate cooperation and commitment from all students in the lesson, gently but firmly insisting on the involvement of all students.</p>	<p><i>Practice traditions</i></p> <p>Dan takes risks in the pedagogical strategies employed in this lesson, departing from established traditions of teaching history through teacher-led discussion, student reading and written activities to involve students in an embodied experience. Dan’s planning for this lesson shows his strong sense of what will both engage this group of students and also what will assist their conceptual grasp of the unit they are studying.</p> <p>The success of the lesson owes much to the already established dynamics between Dan and his students and the way in which this has created particular expectations and understandings about how students participate and learn about history with Dan as their teacher.</p>

Table 10: An analysis of Dan’s practice using the table of invention for analysing practices

What's going on in Dan's classroom: situating praxis in practice

Dan's passion and commitment to teaching History at Jacaranda High School is inextricably linked to his own experience of attending the same high school, where his love of history was nurtured and encouraged by his teachers. In particular, Dan recalls his history teacher from his final year of schooling: "he had this ability to tell a story, take you there and remember it, just by standing up there and talking". Much like Penny, Dan's sense of teaching praxis relates to the way in which he sees history as providing students with ways of thinking and understanding that help them make sense of the contemporary world. In particular, Dan makes links between his capacity to teach students to analyse and question source material and documents and their ability to engage critically in a world saturated in media and information:

It is definitely important that they have an understanding of the society that we are today, and the truth. They need to have the skills and they do need to be able to think critically...their world is run by social media these days so it's very important that they take a source and question it. If it's a newspaper or it's television they're more aware that they need to question things on Facebook and they need to question things on TV.

Dan's belief that history is fundamental to understanding contemporary society is evident in his teaching and through the way in which he uses contemporary examples and issues and connects them back to their historical origins. For example, in introducing a unit on 20th century Australian history to his Year 9 students, Dan begins with a lengthy explanation about why the school does an Acknowledgement of Country and how such acknowledgements are a recent phenomenon – reflective of changing attitudes and understandings of Aboriginal people's relationship to the land. Dan's explanation provides students with perspective that enables them to place something quite familiar within its broader historical and social context – bringing additional meaning to their participation in future Acknowledgments, but also deeper appreciation of the complexities around the historical recognition of Aboriginal ownership of land.

The transferability of historical thinking skills such as contextualisation and the consideration of historical evidence to challenges of the modern era have been well noted by those developing such models of thinking (Wineburg, 2018). It is interesting to note, however, that Dan tells me he has "never heard" of the historical thinking movement and had not come across any of the historical thinking frameworks in his pre-

service teacher education. Significantly, it is not that Dan does not engage his students in historical thinking – indeed his teaching is clearly driven by a very clear-sighted vision for the role of this kind of disciplinary thinking in students’ lives and a meaningful sense of how to enact that thinking through practice. Dan’s commitment to his understanding of historical thinking is driven instead by his sense of teaching praxis – one which clearly sees a role for the skills that history can give students now and into the future. Dan’s praxis also cannot be separated from his understanding of the students and community of Jacaranda High School. Similar to Jane, Dan sees his role, and the role of history education as laying the foundations for learning and understanding that may not develop until students have left his classroom:

I think passion for history comes later in life. You really need to live life to have an appreciation for history, even if you plant the seeds and when they have graduated they develop that passion for history, that is actually what it’s about. They might not really understand things until much later, but that’s ok. I’ve been part of that process.

Dan’s recognition that for many students in his class, an enjoyment or understanding of history might not come until they are adults is in part referencing his own experience of learning history – where his own positive experience of learning combined with his post-schooling experience of leaving Jacaranda High School for further study and travel allowed his historical knowledge and understanding to flourish. Much of the literature surrounding the issue of how students learn history recognises that students’ historical knowledge and understanding begins forming well before students enter the history classroom (Seixas, 1993). Dan’s insight and understanding of his role in the life of his students reminds us that formal schooling is also not the end of students’ historical education – but rather just an intermediate stopping point – a stage where good teachers can foster curiosity, passion and develop students broader understanding of historical skills and ideas, and also importantly lay foundations for students’ future understanding of the world and civic participation.

In the vignette above, as with other lessons I observed, Dan’s practice is particularly notable for the way in which he engages his diverse classroom of learners in history, his use of technology to foster ‘buy in’ to learning, and the way he builds relationships with his class groups.

Engaging diverse learners in history

Having attended Jacaranda himself and thus far only taught in this one school, Dan's teaching practice is finely honed to the particular needs of this school community. Over 70% of students at Jacaranda High School are from a language background other than English (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2018), and the students in Dan's classes present a range of diverse learning needs including low levels of literacy and numeracy. For Dan's Year 12 ancient history class, the challenges of preparing for the Higher School Certificate are made more difficult because of the extensive new vocabulary and associated conceptual knowledge they need for each unit of work they attempt. As Dan tells me in our initial interview: "trying to explain the content and improve their literacy skills at the same time can be quite tricky". Havekes et al. (2017) note the pivotal role teachers can play in decoding the specialised language of history as a discipline, and helping students to construct relationships between concepts being studied. Dan's idea to combine aspects of role-play with a conventional historical glossary presents a highly effective way of developing not only students' historical vocabulary but also their deeper conceptual understanding of historical ideas.

Through the process of dressing up and arranging themselves into particular scenes, Dan turns otherwise dry historical concepts into embodied experiences for these students which they use to contextualise future knowledge about Sparta. Cole, Mooney and Power (2013) note the particular potential that role play has as a pedagogical strategy with a high cognitive as well as affective impact on student learning. The strength of this activity for these students is enhanced through the way in which Dan sets high standards for students throughout the activity – he introduces and frames the activity and then provides some gentle reassurance throughout, but then requires students to take the lead in nutting out how to represent each concept, and requires students to justify their choices to him and the rest of the class. Whilst Dan does not explicitly teach metahistorical ideas in these lessons, his students are engaging in processes of historical explanation and justification, requiring them to have a sense of the connectedness and significance of particular historical concepts, and an awareness of historical context. In this case it was Dan's choice of pedagogical activity that enabled students to deepen their substantive knowledge of Spartan society whilst simultaneously developing their procedural knowledge of why these concepts are significant and how they relate to one another.

Importantly, this lesson sequence is one that strongly engages and enthuses students, and that Dan successfully uses to harness what Sawyer et al. (2013) term 'buy in' from

reluctant learners such as Ravi. Munns writes about the way in which engaging pedagogies are those that generate a 'sense of wonder' from students - when teachers generate a sense of surprise combined with an opportunity to be reflective and curious (Munns, 2007, p. 301). Similarly, there is a playful and joyful element to Dan's teaching in these lessons that taps into students' sense of wonder. Reviewing my field notes from this series of lessons, the one descriptor that I use repeatedly throughout my notes is that of 'joy' - "it is a joyful lesson"; "students joyfully cooperate"; "there is a sense of immense joy in the room". This overwhelmingly positive learning environment is very purposefully cultivated through Dan's pedagogy and his approach to building relationships with students, particularly those in Year 12 who no longer have to attend school:

You have kids who are being forced to be at school in our senior classes, who are at a very low levels of literacy and who are disengaged altogether, and that's a constant battle.

Dan tackles this 'battle' of engagement with the diverse learners in his classroom through energetic lessons that display his own passion for history and foster this sense of 'joy' in the classroom:

I know I am very animated when I teach, especially when I am teaching about something I want to be teaching and I find really interesting. Those are typically the lessons when I've got something I really love teaching and I focus the entire lesson on that. There will be other times when I'm trying something out that is a bit different, if I am getting them to role play, with Year 7 we have created movies showing an Aztec sacrifice in the playground using body parts and limbs and Halloween things I bought at the dollar store. That definitely engages them. For example, we re-enact gladiatorial battles in ancient history.

Dan's admission that he is 'animated' when he teaches history is something of an understatement. Dan teaches his students with unbridled energy and enthusiasm, particularly when engaging students in historical narratives. As an early career teacher, Dan seems self-conscious when telling me that he still does a lot of 'chalk and talk' with his students, but tells me that although he is interested in "innovative stuff" he feels that students need an understanding of the sweep of history to have the confidence to then

undertake things on their own. He tells me “if you don’t engage a class by talking to them and storytelling you lose your audience”. Dan’s reflexive reference here to students as an ‘audience’ reveals much about the energy and approach Dan has to teaching history, and echoes the parallels that Wineburg and Wilson (2001) have drawn between history teaching and acting. In front of a class Dan is very much the charismatic performer seeking to initially engage and entertain his students in order to create a positive and lasting experience of learning history.

Similar to the challenges that Jane faces at Bayview High School, Dan finds that his efforts to develop student engagement in history and also simultaneously prepare them for success in the external Higher School Certificate exam can be difficult:

We need to keep students engaged in the content and we need to explain it in a way that is interesting to them and there is a fair amount of content to get through, but the tricky part about it is that a lot of our kids get quite good verbally but in terms of their written literacy, it lets them down.

Responding to this challenge, Dan’s pedagogy always has a strong focus on literacy underpinned by students being both cognitively and physically engaged during their time in the classroom. A favourite activity I see repeated with different class groups is “Mr [Dan’s] Family Feud” where Dan adapts the popular TV game show for his classes, complete with answer buzzers and sound effects and teams moving around the room, much to the delight of students. The students work in teams to answer a range of historical questions (which have a strong focus on foundational concepts) and Dan says he finds the resulting insight he gains into student levels of historical comprehension invaluable.

Engagement with and through technology

A particularly notable aspect of Dan’s practice is the way in which he has integrated technology in all aspects of his teaching to facilitate student engagement in his classroom. The way in which Dan has combined different technology applications with pedagogical strategies that rely on visual sources enables him to make historical concepts and ideas more accessible and engaging for his students who find the literacy demands of history to be a challenge:

Typically most students who disengage in class will also have low literacy levels, so my lessons are full of visuals, bringing in and

incorporating as many visuals to give them an understanding that will engage those students and then making writing tasks quite achievable, by acknowledging and rewarding their effort.

Dan's use of visual images to engage students in history extends beyond just his teaching practice to the way he has carefully (and painstakingly) decorated his room. Accompanying each of the historical events represented on the timelines that span the back wall of the classroom are historical images with simple captions that also contain a QR code. Through the codes, Dan has linked each event on the timeline to a collection of other resources and source material that students can access through an app on their phone (for example, the image of the Kennedy assassination links through a QR code to a site with the original Zapruder film and other historiographical material). The use of these QR codes turns the timeline from an informative classroom decoration into an interactive experience for students, and transforms the classroom space into something resembling more of a virtual museum. Dan tells me that his classroom walls represent "hours of work" in printing and laminating images and preparing the codes and links for students – he has lost count of how much time and money he has spent on the room. The impact of all those hours of work is a vibrant and exciting classroom, and a classroom that sends both explicit and implicit messages to students about Dan's love of history and his values and expectations for learning. Committed to engaging students in history in any way he can, Dan uses not only his pedagogical repertoire but also the physical space of the classroom, combined with innovative applications of technology to connect students to the events and eras they are studying.

Dan's prolific and creative use of technology sets him apart from other teachers in the study, despite some of the resourcing challenges he faces at Jacaranda High School. Dan tells me that when he first arrived at Jacaranda High School only six years earlier he may as well have been teaching in the "dark ages" as his classroom only had a blackboard and overhead projector. At the time of my visit, Jacaranda was not particularly well resourced in terms of student technology, relying instead on students themselves to 'bring their own device' to school to use in class, which Dan tells me results in haphazard and unreliable technology use across class groups. Nevertheless, Dan still manages to make effective use of technology in simple but innovative ways – beyond just using computers for research or word processing. The use of the QR codes around the room and the 'visual glossary' strategy both rely on students' own smartphones – effectively harnessing a technology platform that is both accessible and already enthusiastically embraced by his students. Interestingly, Dan also makes extensive use

of his own smartphone in teaching – for example, he operates a ‘hands down’ classroom in which he calls on students rather than asking them to put up their hands to answer questions. He uploads all his class rolls to a random name generator that he uses to call on students and to also learn their names. Dan also uses an app on his phone to run quizzes with students – scanning student codes he has allocated to each student in the class to collect data quickly and without the need for students to log on to a program themselves – a strategy he has only recently started trialling in his classroom but which works seamlessly the several times I see him use it as a way of collecting feedback about students’ levels of understanding.

Building foundations

As with all the teachers in this study, Dan’s practice relies heavily on the positive and productive relationships he develops with his students. The lessons I observe with Dan take place at the very start of the school year and before we begin observations he tells me that I am likely to see a lot of him setting up his “classroom management” approach during these early lessons. But far from seeing a lot of emphasis on classroom management, what I do see is the way in which in Dan uses these first lessons of the year not only to establish these relationships with his class groups, but simultaneously to orient students in the study of history – establishing a secure foundation on which the rest of the year’s learning can rest.

Upon meeting his Year 7 history class for the first time, Dan begins by asking the class about the sportswoman the class group is named after. Who is she? Why is their class named after her? Students stare blankly at him – surprised he hasn’t begun the class with the usual introductions or administrative matters. Dan asks them “how are we going to find out about her?” Students begin to chat – some pull out their phones and use Google to find out who she is. A picture of the sportswoman is put on the screen at the front of the room and then Dan asks the students to think about why she was selected as someone to name a class group after. Students wonder aloud about whether she herself went to the school (Dan looks this up and they find out that she did not), or if she had visited the school in the past (Dan says not that he is aware of). Finally, a female student at the front of the room says “it’s to inspire us. She has done lots of amazing things, and you want us to do that too”. This exercise takes only a few minutes, but without realising it, Dan’s Year 7 class has been introduced to the idea of undertaking research about questions that spark their curiosity, they have had the opportunity to consider the importance of one individual and have discussed and weighed up a range of explanations for their class name. Very gently, Dan has begun their journey into

studying history as a discipline of research dominated by questions of significance, debate, evidence and context.

Like other teachers in the study, Dan has a rich and deep general and historical knowledge that he draws on in his teaching – developed through his own formal study and also his interest in travel and historical films and documentaries. Dan always carefully contextualises his history lessons with reference to popular culture or politics – cognisant that for him history is just as much about knowing about the past as it is “having an understanding of the society we are in today”. It’s not unusual to see Dan traversing both historical and contemporary issues in his teaching – at one point teaching students about the writing of the Australian constitution and the next moment talking to them about current political events in Canberra. Dan tells me:

Whenever I’m teaching a particular syllabus dot point⁵ I always bring it back to a real world example of today and how important it is that they understand this stuff. Making those links with their world that they live in give them that understanding of why it is important to think critically.

In this way, Dan teaches students to value historical ways of thinking not only through teaching them about the past but applying those thinking skills and insights to the contemporary world and in ways that students can use beyond their study of history.

Although the least experienced teacher in the study, it is significant that Dan himself attended Jacaranda High School a decade earlier. Just as Hayes et al. note that uncommon pedagogical practices were in part a reflection of teachers with a “set of dispositions towards students and their communities” (2017, p. 93), it is particularly significant that Dan is teaching in a community to which he very much belongs. Similar to Penny, Dan takes time to introduce himself to students, embedding this as part of a ‘timeline’ activity where Dan talks to students about significant historical events in his own life, before asking students to do the same. Interspersed with pictures of Dan’s favourite sporting team and his pets, Dan shares with students his own story of being a student at Jacaranda High School (which he describes as being “a big fish in a small pond”) and going on to study to become a history teacher. In these introductions, Dan lets his love and passion for history shine through:

⁵ In NSW Syllabus documents, areas of content to be learnt by students in each school subject are explicitly listed in point form under each topic heading. This presentation of subject content to be taught has led to them being colloquially referred to by teachers and students alike as ‘dot points’.

I let my students know that I'm a history nerd. I don't expect it to catch on but the moment that you show excitement or enthusiasm for it, you need to hope it's contagious. They can see I'm excited about it, excited to go home at night and plan lessons.

Although Dan is an early career teacher, he has nevertheless been able to build a foundation and rapport with his students that allows him to plan learning experiences that demonstrate a strong understanding of students' own community, cultural and family backgrounds. It is a reminder to us that experience is not always a necessary companion to expertise. Importantly, Dan constantly signals to students not only his love of history, but also his commitment to the school community and to his students—fostering a reciprocity of goodwill that is evident in students' own enthusiasm in Dan's lessons.

Conclusion

Observing Dan teach offers up a compelling portrait of how a good teacher can foster investment and commitment in learning from a diverse and sometimes reluctant community of students. Dan demonstrates the sheer complexity of practice that seeks to simultaneously engage students in learning whilst developing both historically specific vocabulary and deeper conceptual understanding. These are some of the challenges of classroom teaching that confound even experienced educators, and yet Dan does so with less experience than the other teachers in this study. It is also vitally important that we acknowledge (and discuss, as I do in the following chapters) that, as with other teachers in the study, there is a considerable 'invisible' labour involved in Dan's practice – in the hours spent preparing his teaching strategies and in the decoration of his interactive classroom. Dan makes no secret to me of the time and financial cost of some of the strategies he relies on in his teaching, and in recognising the high quality of Dan's teaching practice we must also consider the implications of the expectations we place on teachers, and especially early career teachers, in terms of their workload.

Dan's focus on foundational work with his students – developing strong relationships with his classes, and secure conceptual understandings alongside the necessary language to communicate meaningfully about history – set his practice apart and enable him to make a real difference as a teacher in the school community of Jacaranda High School.

Chapter Nine

Students' Voices on the Nature of Good History Teaching

The focus of chapters five to eight was on examining the nature of teacher practice from within the classrooms of exemplary history teachers, through conversations with the teachers themselves and close, sustained observations of their classroom practice. In this chapter, I turn to consider the ways in which students understand and experience the practices of the four teachers in the study through their interactions and learning in their classrooms. The data presented in this chapter draw upon focus group interviews conducted with students of each of the participant teachers in the study as well as holistic analysis of classroom interactions and interviews with teachers. In the focus group interviews, students were asked the same set of stem questions (appendix E) without their teacher present, and their responses were audio recorded for transcription. The questions included asking students to recall a particularly memorable lesson with their teacher and to describe what and how they learnt about history with that teacher.

Student voice is a significant but neglected area of research when it comes to exploring teacher practice. As I explored in more detail in chapter four, this research proceeds from an understanding of teacher practice that is socially constituted and that frames students as co-constructors of teachers' work rather than passive recipients of teachers' pedagogical decision making (Smith et al., 2010). Consistent with this theoretical orientation is an appreciation of the active role students play as agents in constructing teacher practice through the interactions and relationships they have with their teachers (Edwards-Groves et al., 2010). In acknowledging the role of student agency in the practice architectures of teaching it necessarily follows that there be a place in this thesis to include students' own understandings and perspectives.

The inclusion of student voice in this way addresses a significant gap in existing research about pedagogy and practice. In their exploration of the contemporary state of education, Kemmis et al. (2014) acknowledge that students' voices have traditionally been absent from much of the research surrounding teaching and learning. Mockler and Groundwater-Smith (2014) attribute this absence of student voice and perspective in research to both the narrow way in which 'evidence' is defined and considered, as well

as the tendency to sideline the views of young people within society and schools more broadly. The field of history education has been enriched by the research of Clark (2008) who made extensive use of student interviews in her research about student attitudes to the history curriculum. Including the voices and perspectives of students in this research builds on Clark's work to provide a much more complete picture of how students experience learning with these teachers. Whilst a key theme of this thesis has been the diversity of good history teaching practice in different school contexts, the focus group data in this chapter stand alone as they reflect some broad areas of consensus from students about what makes the participant teachers in this study 'good' teachers and about the nature of pedagogical strategies that students experience as effective and engaging.

Considering student voice in framing the 'good' teacher

The use of the term 'student voice' has become something of a catch-all phrase which can signal a range of different ways of recognising, consulting and including students and young people in research (Cook-Sather, 2006). The term 'student voice' is used in this thesis in a very literal sense, as this chapter is structured around the conversations I had with students about the four participant teachers in this study. It is however important to acknowledge at the outset of this chapter that I do not seek to represent 'student voice' as a single monolithic entity (Cook-Sather, 2006). The students in this study are not representative of 'all' students – and I do not treat their insights as such. Similarly, it is worthwhile noting that the level of student engagement represented in this chapter is intended as a starting point for exploring student voice in discussions around what constitutes good teaching, rather than an end point. Michael Fielding (2011) presents a typology for characterising the engagement of students in educational research, ranging from students as a source of data through to students as joint authors and the design of intergenerational learning projects. Against this continuum, the level of engagement with young people in this project certainly frames them more as 'data source' than participatory co-researchers, but nevertheless their perspectives represent a valuable source from which we can gain new and powerful insights to complement, challenge and enrich classroom observations and teacher participant interviews.

In the context of this study, the perspective of students is not only a theoretical, but also a methodical necessity. The use of a peer nomination process for identifying exemplary teachers came with the risk of identifying teachers who were known within their professional circles as being accomplished, but who were not necessarily held in similar regard by their students. It was important to approach the student focus group

interviews in a way that gave students the opportunity to speak openly about their thoughts and experiences of learning with these teachers, and in ways that did not limit or pre-judge the ways in which they might characterise their learning. As the extracts and exchanges reported below indicate, “students’ voices, observations and insights are especially valuable in throwing light on how educational practices ‘work’ and how they learn” (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 9). The quality and richness of data generated through these conversations with students represent a strong argument in favour of the inclusion of student voice in the way we theorise and discuss good teaching and teaching practice and for broader and more creative involvement of students in educational research more generally.

Each of the focus group interviews with participant students began in the same way, using a strategy proposed by Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009) involving students selecting and speaking briefly about an image they like. In this project, students were presented with a selection of images (Appendix F) and were then asked to select which image best represented the way they felt about learning in the participant teacher’s history classroom, and why. This technique not only acted as an icebreaker for the student focus group interviews but also prompted student reflection and discussion about their learning in history in an open-ended way. It was interesting that all students interviewed used the images as a way of framing and explaining what they saw as the strengths of that particular teacher:

I chose the leaf picture. I saw the veins on the leaf as representing all the branches of stuff she is teaching us. It is never ending and enjoyable.
(Mark, Greenview College).

I picked number two [image of children skipping] because relating it back to [Dan’s] class he usually gets everyone to collaborate with each other, we do a lot of research and a lot of teamwork.
(Stephanie, Jacaranda High)

I would say number four [image of a sleeping animal]. When she is teaching we learn, like, every lesson, but we also like, feel comfortable in this classroom while she is teaching. She makes you feel like home.
(Lisa, Bayview High)

I chose image two [image of children skipping], because as some people have said before I think this class is founded upon the idea of collaboration and supporting one another. I think [Max] encourages that spirit of...of...teamwork...maybe that's the right word for what he does.

(Rick, Churchill College)

Given the opportunity to talk about their teachers in open-ended ways, students confirmed the characterisation of their teachers as being 'good' teachers, often by way of unprompted comparison and contrast to other teachers and ways of being taught:

I chose image number two [image of children skipping]. She takes a different approach to teaching, whereas a normal teacher will just get up the front with a textbook, she will do discussions, group work all that different type of learning.

(Jake, Greenview College).

Jake instinctively contrasts Penny to other 'normal' teachers, providing insight not only into her teaching practice but also the broader context of teaching and learning at Greenview College. It is a sentiment echoed by Robert who agrees and adds:

She stands out from the other ways we are taught. We notice because it's different. Most other teachers just do textbooks. But she is one teacher who engages you, uses analogies, has actual discussions with you.

(Robert, Greenview College).

As the data presented below attest, the students do more than just affirm the framing of the participant teachers as 'good' teachers of history. These students provide us with the perspective and wisdom that they have as students, what Kemmis terms their "insider knowledge" (2014, p. 9) – insider knowledge of being a student, but also insider knowledge that relates to their particular contexts and experiences of schooling.

How students understand and talk about good teaching

Engaging with the perspectives of students, it is important to acknowledge and account for the influence of the different contexts in which students are learning. The practice architectures of learning history in schools for these students are shaped by the conditions and arrangements particular to each learning context. My observations and

interviews with teacher participants highlighted the ways in which each teacher's practice can be understood through the theoretical lens of the sayings, doings and relatings specific and contextual to their schools. In light of this, I had similarly expected the feedback and insights from the focus group interviews to be highly specific and particular to each teacher and school context. Instead, what became apparent as data were coded and categorised, was that whilst there was certainly diversity in the way in which individual teachers related to students and engaged them in learning, there was also a strong sense of consensus across the different focus groups about those aspects of teacher practice that students considered impressive and engaging. In the discussion that follows I explore the insights offered by students across the three broad areas of consensus – teachers' relationships, teachers' disciplinary knowledge and teachers' pedagogical work. Many of the insights shared by students align with other research around teacher pedagogy and practice and represent an important student-generated contribution to some of these established conversations in educational research.

Similarly throughout the interviews, students' observations and commentary about their teachers' work roamed freely over issues of teachers' relational and pedagogical work – which these students certainly see (as other researchers have) as connected and overlapping (Comber, 2006). Through the process of categorising and discussing how students frame and understand good teaching, I am not seeking to suggest a neat checklist of 'good' teacher qualities or features of exemplary practice. Indeed, my intention is quite the opposite – to use students' voices to provide insight into the complexity and layered nature of these teachers' practice and the way in which teachers navigate the particular contexts of their work to really understand and meet the needs of their students.

Relationships

Just as observations and discussions with the participant teachers highlighted the significance of their relationships with students as a dominant influence on their classroom practice, so too the importance of relationships emerged as the most common and recurring theme from all focus group interviews with students. Whilst all four teachers have a high level of knowledge and engagement with history as a disciplinary area of expertise (which, as I discuss below, students also recognise) it is the way teachers relate to their students, and the classroom environments they create that dominated my conversations with students about each of the participant teachers. Edwards-Groves et al. argue for considering the significance of the social and relational dimensions of practice in making sense of educational practices more generally, arguing

that “understanding educational practice is largely, but not only, a matter of understanding the relationships formed among people in educational settings” (2010, p. 45).

When we consider the nature of the student-teacher relationship in high schools, there can be the tendency to think of a relationship that lasts for the length of a school year, with little recognition that frequently the most successful learning relationships might be the results of a more lengthy relationship between teacher and student. Whilst there is little longitudinal research about the nature of these relationships over the course of secondary schooling, the student data from this study shows that for many students, their relationship with the participant teachers extends over many years and has been framed positively through previous experiences of learning with that teacher. In the case of this study, all participants in the student focus group interviews were senior history students and had therefore selected to study history for their final years of school. For many students the role of teacher was just as, if not more important than the subject they were selecting:

I picked it because of the way we were learning about it last year. [Dan] makes it more interesting, and more fun.
(Yasmine, Jacaranda High)

I literally only did history extension because [Jane] was teaching it.
(Jade, Bayview High school)

For me I selected history because of the teachers. Because [Max] and [another teacher] are both very, very good teachers. I'd had them before and they are very good at making any subject enjoyable.
(Tim, Churchill College).

Students showed particular awareness and appreciation of the ways in which teachers made an effort to prioritise getting to know them. For Penny's students at Greenview College, that process involved receiving a letter from her, and being asked to write a letter in return:

Jake: On the first day of history she gave us a sheet of paper welcoming us to the course and telling us a bit about her, about her family, that sort of stuff.

David: We had to write a letter back to her, it was an introduction.

Jake: It makes it personal.

David: I think that was also important because she asked us how we like to learn and through that feedback you could tell she took that on.

Jake: Other teachers don't do feedback. They know their thing and they keep going.

Penny's students value the personal connection she makes through her letter and it is a very powerful representation of the kind of 'relational work' that Barbara Comber (2006) writes about, in which she finds that teacher success in engaging students is predicated on a relationship of authentic mutual respect. The trust and reciprocity established by Penny writing to her students first is then followed up by a genuine interest in the lives of her students – both as individuals and also as learners. Importantly for Jake and David, the interest is not a hollow one – they see evidence of the feedback Penny seeks in her pedagogical work, with Jake later adding that “at the end of every term she asks what went well and what could be improved”. Penny's pedagogical work is built on the foundations she establishes through this relational work – both through personal connections with her students but also insight into the way her teaching practice is being received by students.

Dan's students at Jacaranda High school echo a similar sentiment to Penny's when they tell me:

Mohammed: We make a connection. We are on like the same level kind of thing.

Amber: Yeah, like he actually listens to you.

The connection the students make between their teachers getting to know them, listening to them and the quality of their learning is borne out in other research on teachers' pedagogical work. Teachers taking the time to get to know students and allowing students input into learning has been demonstrated as a key feature of classroom pedagogies that build community and create a supportive classroom environment. Hayes et al. (2006) note that whilst many teachers acknowledge the importance of students having a say in their learning, it is rarely translated into a regular feature of classroom practice. Here, both Dan and Penny's students note their teachers' willingness to seek input and feedback as a key feature in establishing a

trusting, positive classroom environment where they are regarded as active stakeholders in constructing their learning.

The notion of relationships takes on a different significance in the 'high stakes' academic environment of Churchill College. Here students regard their learning with Max as being helped along by the jovial relationship he establishes through "banter", largely about sport. It is a way of relating that students feel is very particular to their school with one student offering:

I reckon his skill set of how he relates to us is tied towards boys. I reckon in a girls' environment it would be different. Like he does a bit of light-hearted insults which other people wouldn't take but that the lads love.
(Paul, Churchill College)

Similarly, another student refers to the way in which Max establishes rapport through 'nicknames' for students:

[Max] calls me [nickname]. He has these little things for a lot of people in the class. It gives you the idea that you're not just another face in his class. He knows you and has a personal rapport with you.
(Ned, Churchill College).

Insights from the students at Churchill College remind us that whilst students regard the relationships their teachers foster as a key feature of exemplary teaching, the way this occurs is highly specific to the culture and context of each school environment. For example, the rapport Max develops with students at Churchill College uses languages and patterns of relating that reflect the broader cultural-discursive and social-political arrangements particular to elite boys' education (Proctor, 2011).

The importance of the "relational architectures" (Edwards-Groves et al., 2010) in framing the possibilities of practice is perhaps best illustrated through the insights and words of Jane's students at Bayview High School. For Jane's students, the relationship they have with her not only facilitates Jane's teaching and learning of history, it is a necessary pre-cursor to any teaching and learning occurring at all. When asked during the focus group interview what they enjoy about being taught by Jane in particular, the following exchange occurs with a group of Jane's students:

Lisa: It's like a family.

Rachel: Yeah, she is our family.

Lisa: I actually want to be here.

Rachel: It is pretty much my favourite class.

Lisa: Honestly, I skip every single class except this one.

Jade: It's like a safe place.

Time and again throughout the interview, Jane's students reference aspects of her warm and welcoming attitude, and the connection they have with her as the reasons they persist in the face of academic challenges. Two Year 12 students explain to me:

Sally: We pretty much all failed our exam, and like when I said we all failed she said 'I don't care, I love you guys anyway.'

Rachel: Yeah, like some teachers when you fail they make you feel so bad.

Sally: Yeah, they make you feel so bad, like one of my teachers, I'm not going to name, she made me feel so bad that I just didn't want to come to school at all. [Jane] never makes us feel like that. We come and we talk it through and we work at what we have failed at.

Jane's students recognise and value their connection to her as a teacher, and show awareness of the way in which her approaches are making a difference to their education more broadly. Identifying their learning with Jane to be like that of a 'family' echoes the observations of Sawyer et al. (2013) who saw the facilitation of community-like learning environments as key to engaging students from low socio-economic backgrounds. In exploring the role of teacher-student relationships in making a difference to student outcomes, Hayes et al. note that meaningful social support for students goes beyond merely the fostering of 'good relationships' and instead is "about creating classrooms where students are not scared to fail" (2006, p. 38). Supported and affirmed, Jane's students feel safer to take risks with their learning in her classroom knowing that she values them regardless of their academic achievement. Jane is primarily recognised as a good teacher because of her skill in creating relationships of trust and rapport with students in a context where students commonly experience feelings of failure and disappointment around schooling (Hayes et al., 2017). Edwards-Groves et al. (2010) discuss relational architectures in terms of the kind of opportunities they enable and constrain. Here student voice affirms the significance of teachers' relational work in enabling the capacity for pedagogical work, because for many students the way in which their teacher relates to them makes any pedagogical work

possible at all. For Jane in particular this relational dimension of her teaching cannot be separated from the role of her disciplinary knowledge or pedagogical decision making (Comber, 2006).

The perspectives of students across all four school contexts affirm that the dispositions of individual teachers in the classroom and their way of forming positive relationships with students acts as a bedrock to student engagement and learning. Common to all students spoken to in the study was the belief that good teachers were those who prioritised their relationships with students as individuals, and that this plays out in classroom practices that are inclusive, welcoming and safe places for intellectual risk-taking to occur.

Teachers' disciplinary knowledge

In the literature and research surrounding what it means to teach history well, much emphasis has been placed on the role and importance of teachers' disciplinary knowledge in providing a foundation for rich and engaging pedagogical work (Ravitch, 2000; Von Heyking, 2015). In students' observations and descriptions of teacher practice, teachers' disciplinary knowledge is instinctively connected to notions of teachers' 'passion' for subject matter and to particular aspects and strengths of their pedagogical practice – identifying what Wineburg terms “the nexus between what teachers know and what they do” (2001, p. 50). Wineburg and Wilson go further on the issue of teacher knowledge to say that whilst “knowledge of subject matter is central to teaching...expert knowledge of content is not the sole determinant of good teaching” (Wineburg & Wilson, 1988). It is here that the framework of practice theory provides a useful way of thinking about the interplay between teachers' disciplinary knowledge and the way in which this knowledge is deployed and enacted by teachers through particular educational practices.

All teacher participants in this study are subject specialists in history, and as my discussion in chapters five to eight explored, their expert level of subject knowledge and deep personal interest in history is a key factor in shaping their practice and defining their sense of identity as history teachers. This subject expertise is noticed by students who very clearly value the disciplinary knowledge their teachers bring to the classroom and see it as an important feature of what makes them good teachers. It is interesting to note, however, that students frequently pair their observations and insights about the knowledge base of their teachers with reference to how this knowledge manifests itself (e.g. through story telling) or that this knowledge is coupled with the teacher's own

passion and interest in history which they make visible to the students in various ways. For students, teacher knowledge is important, but not as important as how this expresses itself or translates itself into teacher practice, meaning we cannot separate teacher knowledge apart from the practices within which it is embedded or 'bundled' (Schatzki, 2013).

When asked if they get the sense that Jane likes teaching history as a subject, students at Bayview High school respond enthusiastically:

(Many): Yes! Oh yes for sure!

Jade: It is the only thing she likes! (laughter).

Rosa: She gives the idea she knows a lot more than she lets on to us. She doesn't want to it to be too much for us, but, like... she is *so* smart.

Sally: She tells stories and stuff that tell us so much.

Rosa: Yeah, or she relates it to modern day events.

Similarly, Penny's students at Greenview College see her historical knowledge demonstrated in the strategies she uses to help orient students in the past:

Ben: One thing she does well is her analogies, she links things to her life or someone else's. She helps you understand the topic using her stories.

For both Jane and Penny's students, their extensive knowledge of history as a subject area is connected to both their passion for history, which translates into their skills in historical story telling, and meaning-making through analogies. Strategies such as these show strong evidence of pedagogies for 'connectedness' that build students' disciplinary understandings through touchstones that resonate from students' own lives and facilitate both engagement and deep learning (Hayes et al., 2006, p. 53). The insight that Jane "knows a lot more than she lets on" hints at students understanding the pedagogical decision making involved for Jane in adapting and communicating her knowledge in ways that assist students understanding. They see Jane's knowledge, but more than this they see what Comber describes as the "responsive deployment of pedagogical knowledge" (2006, p. 61) which is the real marker of expertise in her classroom.

Dan's students at Jacaranda High see his commitment to history embedded not only in his deep and reflexive use of historical knowledge, but also through his expression of enthusiasm in other ways, such as decorating his classroom with a range of historical sources for students to interact with:

Stephanie: He just seems genuinely interested in the topic that he's teaching as well.

Blake: Sometimes he doesn't have anything but he can still go on for hours and hours on the content because he knows it like the back of his hand because he is interested in it.

Stephanie: Just look around this room, no other teacher would do that!

Claire: It's a pretty special room you think?

Stephanie: Yeah, he puts in a lot of effort, you can just see it.

Dan's students make an instant connection between his interest in history, his knowledge of history (and his ability to "go on and on for hours" about historical content) and the time and effort he puts in to making his classroom an engaging space. It is an important recognition that when encountering and considering teacher practice, the way students encounter and experience the physical set-ups of practice can be just as significant as other dimensions of practice.

At Churchill College, where the pressure to succeed in the Higher School Certificate is a driving force behind much of Max's pedagogy, students still see Max's knowledge and passion for history as setting him apart from other ways they are taught, as this exchange illustrates:

William: You can tell he has a real passion for the actual subject as well. He actually said one class he was reading [the historian] Barrett the night before, so you can tell he is really interested in the subject and that drives him.

Declan: Yeah, I am sure that if he wasn't so involved and interested in his subject and so knowledgeable that the whole 'drill you for the HSC' might dampen our love of the subject. If it was just a dry 'learn this and this and this for the HSC' it would probably dampen it, but because [Max] is [Max] and how much he loves the subject, you don't even notice it.

In an environment where students' central concern is their academic achievement and post school opportunities, Max's own personal knowledge and interest in history works to add depth and value to what might otherwise be quite a transactional approach to teaching and learning of history. For example, by Max talking about reading historians in his leisure time, he hints at a role for history outside of the limited frame of reference of their final year assessments, and students connect this personal passion to the depth and richness he brings to their classroom learning.

Teacher knowledge, existing as it does inside the minds of individual teachers, is not readily visible to students. It therefore makes sense that the students interviewed were far more aware of teacher knowledge in instances where teachers expressly reference it, or where it finds expression in some other aspect of pedagogical design or classroom set up. Whilst not discounting the importance of teacher knowledge in framing and influencing the quality of teacher practice, listening to the way students understand and experience teacher knowledge reminds us that teaching is fundamentally a social practice consisting of a "constellation" of activities and influences which cannot be separated out from one another as discreet influences (Schatzki, 2013, p. 13). Viewing the sayings, doings and relatings as 'bundled' into particular practice arrangements we see the interconnectedness of teacher knowledge to things such as pedagogical decision-making as well as resource allocation and are therefore forced to think more holistically about the role of teacher knowledge within a broader nexus of influences on how teachers work.

Teachers' pedagogical work

Listening to students talk about the nature of teachers' pedagogical work provides insight into the types of classroom practices that students find engaging and the ways in which students see and understand teachers' pedagogical decision making. The teaching and learning strategies that students remark on in their interview are memorable because in many cases they represent a departure from the usual way in which they are taught – providing insight not only into the teachers but also the broader contexts in which they are practising. These descriptions of pedagogical strategies also provide insight into the alignment the participant teachers cultivate between the notion of "what history *is* and what it *does*" (Sandwell, 2015, p. 83), demonstrating the skills of the participant teachers in developing meaningful engagement in learning experiences that cultivate historical thinking.

None of the teachers in the study made regular use of textbooks in their teaching, something that all student focus groups remarked on and regarded as a strength of their practice. Whilst students at Bayview High do not have the option of using textbooks (because of resourcing challenges at the school), the students remark that Jane does not need textbooks to engage them in learning and instead relies on stories and teaching support such as maps, which she draws herself.

Lisa: I remember every lesson when she pulls out the map.

Jade: Oh she freaking loves that map! (laughter).

Lisa: It's super helpful though. And she can just look at that map and tell us a story and we will all understand. She makes it interesting.

For both Penny and Max's students at Greenview College and Churchill College their lack of reliance on textbooks in their teaching is a particularly notable point of comparison with other teachers. As one of Penny's students describes:

Other classes, other teachers are there with the textbook, put stuff on the board, 'ok answer stuff in your textbook'. But [Penny] gets you engaged and she gets you learning and understanding. We have to find information ourselves, it gets us engaged.

(Mark, Greenview College).

Penny's students at Greenview College are effusive and animated when talking about aspects of her pedagogy that they value. Very early on in our interview, Lee, a Year 11 student is keen to tell me about a recent lesson with Penny where they had been learning about the Irish Easter Rebellion:

...we were all doing our work and all of a sudden she just burst out into the French national anthem! Everyone was like [looking around] "ok, what's happening?"we were so confused. And then later, she's like – "you were confused, imagine how the non-Irish people felt when they were walking down the street and all of a sudden heard people talking about revolution" ...they wouldn't have known what was happening either. She made us understand that confusion.

(Lee, Greenview College)

By briefly simulating feelings of confusion and disorientation with her students, Penny opens the door for her students to engage in an empathetic way with the historical notion of perspective as they are creatively exposed to different perspectives on the event they are studying.

Penny's students describe her teaching style as "quirky" and appreciate the diversity of learning experiences that she provides in her lessons:

Mark: With history, no one lesson is the same. She will change things so we don't end up doing the same thing.

Lee: I think it also requires a very creative and open-minded person to teach like that, because not everyone has the ability to come up with something that will reinforce something that is so hard to understand. It's very personal to the teacher.

Penny's students see very clearly the skill demonstrated in her "thoughtful repertoire of practices" (Munns et al., 2013, p. 96) and they make connections between this and her understanding and skill as a teacher of history – the ability for her to make difficult and challenging subject matter both understandable and engaging for students.

Creativity and collaboration is a similarly strong theme for students at Jacaranda High when they talk about their learning with Dan. Yasmine explains with great joy and enthusiasm how she feels about Dan's teaching strategies:

We are young and we like things that excite us and make us happy and engaged and [Dan] is exactly the teacher you want...you get excited! Like 'Oh my God I'm going to [Dan's] class!' ...you are really excited to go in there, you go there and you always have fun.

(Yasmine, Year 11 student, Jacaranda High)

Blake, a Year 11 student in Dan's class talks about Dan "tapping into our creative side" and that Dan's teaching strategies show that "he just gets us". Blake elaborates:

He gets us to act out all the stuff that we did with like costumes and stuff. And I really like it. No other teacher does that. He gets props and you get engaged and you get out of your comfort zone.

These descriptions of learning provided by both Dan and Penny's students echo the research by Munns et al. (2013) about the importance of thoughtful pedagogical practices such as collaboration, role play and strategic use of ICT to foster meaningful engagement and assist student 'buy in' to particular learning experiences. Blake's description of Dan's teaching as getting him "out of your comfort zone" also suggests that while one strength of his teaching is making his class an enjoyable experience for his students, another strength is the intellectual quality embedded in his pedagogy, a factor which is widely recognised as a hallmark of powerful pedagogical practice (Hayes et al., 2006; Munns et al., 2013). Far from resisting difficult or complex tasks – students of the participant teachers were well placed to rise to the academic demands made of them in class, founded as they are on strong authentic relationships, and confidence from students in the knowledge and skills of their teacher.

Both Penny and Max's students show a particular awareness of the alignment between their teachers' pedagogical choices and broader historical skills of interpretation of evidence and contestability of ideas. In Penny's classroom engagement is further fostered through discussion and debate:

Robert: We do class debates. She put us all in specific topics and we were arguing from different perspectives. And it was a period of research and then we discussed it, and I remember it was really influential in our class.

David: Yeah, it kind of showed that it doesn't matter who is right but it's about how you use the evidence.

At Churchill College, where Max's pedagogical work is more obviously framed and driven by preparation for the Higher School Certificate exams, his efforts to engage students in historical analysis and interpretation are noticed and valued by students:

I think the way he encourages different interpretations, means that people...like we engage with sort of debating back and forth, week to week, after doing our own research about whatever is controversial and coming back and being able to talk to him about it and compare ideas. He really makes us engage with it by creating these ongoing arguments about it. (Tim, Churchill College)

The students of the participant teachers are learning about history not only in ways that they find engaging, enjoyable and relevant but they are also learning in ways that foster

wider awareness and understanding of how history as a discipline works. The valuing of strategies like narrative exposition, inquiry, discussion and debate and role play all provide students with a grounding in history as a discipline built on research, interpretation and evidence. Students' awareness and valuing of these pedagogical choices made by their teachers is a powerful reminder of the complex and layered nature of history teachers' disciplinary and pedagogical skills.

Conclusion

As the conversations detailed in this chapter attest, talking to students about their teachers and seeking their thoughts about teacher practice provides rich and meaningful data about how students understand and experience classroom learning. At a time when there is increasing discussion around how we define and understand 'quality' teaching (Connell, 2009; Mockler, 2014; Ryan & Bourke, 2016), the student data in this chapter represent a powerful argument for the inclusion of student voice in debates and discussions around these issues, despite the difficulties of doing so. Students' understanding and assessment of their teachers' practices provided in these conversations is nuanced and insightful and captures an understanding of practice that is so frequently left out of educational research concerning learning and teaching. It is also a reminder that secondary school students, who may be taught by up to six different teachers on any given day, have real knowledge and insight into contemporary teaching practices and are able to provide meaningful commentary and feedback on these as informed agents.

Reflecting on our understanding of history teaching more specifically, the voices of students here powerfully demonstrate the nexus between teacher-student relationships and the capacity to engage students in learning historical concepts and skills. The relationships of trust, rapport and teamwork that teachers foster through the relational architectures of their practice are fundamental to making possible the subject-specific dimensions of their pedagogy that draw on themes of creativity, discussion and collaboration. Whilst students were readily able to point to and discuss aspects of teachers' pedagogical work that fostered both their enjoyment and engagement in learning history, it was teachers' relational work in establishing the classroom as a safe, encouraging and welcoming space that all student focus groups nominated as setting the participant teachers apart from other ways they had been taught. If we accept (as these students ask us to) the pivotal role of the social-political dimension of teachers' work to the practice architectures of good history teaching, then the impacts on the way we frame and consider what it means to be or to become a good history teacher are

significant. Despite a decades-old debate about the power and primacy of teachers' subject matter knowledge to creating meaningful disciplinary learning in history, the data presented here suggest that teacher knowledge cannot and should not be separated out from other aspects of teacher practice when considering influences on student engagement in history. For these students, their understanding of history is made possible by the personal skills and broader contextual arrangements that make their history classrooms places of positivity, engagement and connection. These factors provide a common foundation to the experience of learning history that encompasses or perhaps transcends other contextual factors particular to these students and their learning contexts and instead focuses our attention more sharply on how it is students experience learning, and what it means to be a 'good' teacher in the eyes of our students.

Chapter Ten

Mapping the Practice Architectures of Exemplary History Teaching

I have so far explored the practices of four exemplary history teachers from within their classroom, through their own reflections on praxis and practice, and using the voices and perspectives of their students. This chapter seeks to consider more holistically the nature of exemplary teaching practice drawing back for a ‘bird’s eye view’ of the data collected in the study, and using the theoretical framework of practice architectures to structure a discussion of the ways in which each teacher’s practice plays out in each site in specific ways. This chapter also considers the role and significance of models for historical thinking for teachers of history, arguing that the role of students, and teachers’ understanding of their learners, play a far greater role in framing the possibilities of classroom history teaching than existing models allow.

The lens of practice architectures

As established in chapter four, the purpose of this research has always been to develop a contextualised and nuanced understanding of exemplary history teaching across four different sites. Indeed, in my accounts of each teacher’s practice I have sought to very carefully depict the teacher’s pedagogical strategies alongside descriptions and discussions of each of the schools, class groups and physical spaces in which the teachers worked. The table of invention also represents a key analytical tool, bridging the discussions of chapters five to eight, and the analysis of this chapter. A key reason for this analytical approach to the data in this study is in recognition that the context in which practices play out are a key determinant for the possibilities of practice in each site – and our understanding of exemplary teaching practice for each of these teachers cannot be properly understood without some parallel exploration of the way in which those practices are enabled and constrained by the arrangements at each site. As explored in more detail in chapter three, the theory of practice architectures accounts for the way in which practices are composed of sayings (which reflect the cultural-discursive dimensions of the site); doings (which reflect the material-economic dimensions of the site); and relatings (which reflect the social-political dimensions of the site). These *sayings*, *doings* and *relatings* “hang together” and are “enmeshed” in distinctive ways within a site (Kemmis et al., 2014; Mahon et al., 2017). Using these arrangements as an analytical lens through which we consider each teacher’s practice

enables a clearer focus on the way in which their disciplinary expertise in history is enacted and realised through different pedagogical approaches, and is framed by different expectations and conditions within each site. It is an approach which highlights the range of influences – from the inter- and intra-personal to the local and systemic – that shape the possibilities of practice for each teacher within each site – at times working to enable particular practices in particular ways, whilst at other times working as a constraint on practice. The preceding chapters have offered four distinct descriptions of exemplary history teaching with a notable range and diversity in both the way in which these teachers approach and undertake the task of teaching history and the contexts in which their practice is enacted.

Applying the theory of practice architectures as an analytical tool to explain, understand and account for particular practices in particular sites brings with it the challenge of how to represent the complex, deeply interwoven and interdependent nature of the relationship between the arrangements that prefigure particular practices. Indeed, whilst the discussion below uses sub-headings to separate out an analysis of the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements of teaching practice at each site, these should not be taken as indicating a neat or even a clear delineation between these influences. As Mahon et al. note:

that the sayings, doings and relatings that comprise practices *happen together* means that practices cannot be reduced to any one of these actions on its own. To say these things “happen together” in the abstract is not very interesting; to those developing the theory of practice architectures, the interesting question is how some particular sets of sayings (language) come to hang together with a particular set of doings (in activity, or work) and particular set of relatings (e.g., particular kinds of power relationships or relationships of inclusion or exclusion) (2017, p. 8).

So whilst the discussion below is loosely organised around each of the different dimensions of practice, there is also significant overlap and interplay between each of the arrangements – perhaps best typified by the way in which an influence such as the external examination of the Higher School Certificate is at once a cultural-discursive influence (in the way it shapes the possibilities and boundaries around what is said in the history classroom), a material-economic influence (in the way it dominates classroom activity and reveals issues of educational inequity brought to bear by such

assessment) and also a social-political influence (in the way it shapes the possibilities and expectations between teachers, students and other stakeholders in education).

Reflecting on historical thinking and the practice architectures of history teaching

As explored in more detail in chapter two, historical thinking, historical consciousness and historical reasoning are related notions that describe the procedures, processes and structures that underpin the way historians work to understand the past. These notions and models of historical thinking have sat amongst the central concerns of this research project as I sought to explore how we understand and make sense of the classroom practices of our very best history teachers. Driven by the interests and concerns of practising historians and academics, worried about levels of historical literacy and critical thinking capacities amongst students, historical thinking frameworks have operated to dominate much of the academic discussion around history education in recent decades. Yet, if we consider historical thinking models as just one contribution to discourses around what good history teaching might look like, then perhaps it is time that we similarly valued the contribution we gain from the insights and experiences of history teachers themselves. The practices of history and history teaching are related, but importantly, separate practices, comprised as they are by the:

discursive, material, economic, social and political arrangements that form an exoskeleton of mediating preconditions around the practice – and the practitioner – here and now, limiting the possibilities of practice in some ways, and pushing practice beyond existing limits in others (Kemmis, 2009, p. 34).

The practice architectures of history teaching, as they play out across the four sites in this study raise significant questions about the challenges presented to history teachers in contemporary Australia and add complexity to existing ways of understanding the purpose of history education. As disciplinary experts with a well-developed sense of how history education contributes to helping students “live well in a world worth living in” (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 27), these teachers work toward a dual purpose of having students love and understand history and also enter the world with the skills and understanding of society that historical thinking can provide. It is here that we see some overlap, but not necessarily alignment, between these teachers’ sense of praxis and existing models of historical thinking, which interestingly did not loom large in their own understandings and self-perceptions of the purpose and nature of history teaching, despite their dominance in academic discourse around history teaching.

Whilst all teachers in the study certainly have a sense of, and commitment to some version of ‘historical thinking’ as a goal of history education (even if the specific phrase was not used in conversation, or was not familiar to them as was the case with Dan) none of the teachers were limited by this understanding in their sense of teaching praxis, reminding us that teaching itself is a practice “not just the means of introducing students to other practices” (Noddings, 2003, p. 250). It is an observation that Hayes et al. make with regard to the ‘uncommon pedagogical practices’ of literacy teachers where “simply knowing a pedagogical approach does not automatically translate into ‘better literacy teaching’” (2017, p. 93). Similarly with models of historical thinking – whilst they provide a certain understanding of the discipline of history, they do not in and of themselves give a sense of how teachers enact practice that encourages historical thinking *within actual sites of practice*.

Exemplary teaching practice is not simply synonymous with being an *enacted* version of historical thinking models, not least because as models of thinking and assessment, they do not readily translate or give meaning to the suite of strategies and pedagogies that I observed in this study. Similarly, whilst historical thinking models posit developing students’ disciplinary understanding of history as being at the heart of the project of history teaching, the teachers in this study demonstrate that their own understanding of the role and scope of history teaching eclipses these ideas to also recognise and respond to the lives of their students and the context of their work. In other words, whilst history sits at the centre of historical thinking models, for teachers, it is the students who sit at the centre of history education. The teachers in this study see teaching history as a fundamentally relational task – where their approaches to particular themes and topics, and their success at generating classroom engagement are all predicated on the depth and quality of relationships they foster with their students. Reflecting on history teaching as its own practice, independent of that of the practice of history provides a useful way forward for thinking about how we consider the work of history teachers, and highlights the under-theorised role of pedagogical relationships and engagement as a necessary precondition for historical thinking to occur.

The cultural discursive arrangements of exemplary history teaching

The cultural-discursive arrangements are those that “prefigure and make possible the particular *sayings* of practice” (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 9) and in the context of this study relate to the way in which discourses and language operate in each teacher’s classroom to enable or constrain particular teaching practices. For these teachers, we can map the

cultural-discursive arrangements of their practice through the language used in the classroom (in quite a literal sense, what is said and the dominant topics and nature of classroom discussion) as well as more broadly the discourses and language associated with the learning of history and as written in the NSW History Syllabus. These cultural-discursive arrangements of practice have a significant impact on shaping the language, and therefore the pedagogical strategies utilised by teachers in their classrooms, as well as influencing how teachers approach and understand both the broad notion of education as well as the discipline of school-based history. The way in which these cultural-discursive arrangements 'hang together' in each site helps account for the differences in language, tone and pedagogical decision-making amongst the four teachers.

The sayings of historical thinking

It is generally accepted that secondary school students' sense of history and capacity to engage in historical thinking is predicated on their own sense and understanding of history developed through their learning in primary school, their understanding of history through popular culture and their own family and cultural histories (Létourneau & Moisan, 2006; Seixas, 1993). Seixas' own discussion of the role of a students' background and prior experience is one of the only ways in which context or cultural capital is acknowledged by researchers in this area as a prevailing influence on engagement in the history classroom. And yet the close study of the history classrooms in this project demonstrates that a significant aspect of this prior understanding of the cultural-discursive foundations of historical thinking is strongly connected to students' socio-economic background and opportunities they may have had to travel, read widely and engage in activities such as museum visits (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

As we saw in both Dan and Jane's classrooms, the language and vocabulary attached to the study of history presents a particular challenge for students such as these, who in many cases are studying history in their second language or have low levels of literacy. Dan and Jane spend much of their lesson time 'decoding' historical discourses for students in ways that make history both accessible and engaging to them. The dominance of teacher talk in these classrooms, seeking both to highlight engaging aspects of history whilst also provide secure explanations for students, is a reflection that for many students the history they are learning does not fit neatly into their existing cultural-discursive worldview. There is an obvious contrast here with the classrooms of Jane and Max, where students are much more secure in their foundational understanding of history and much more confident in their engagement with historical

language and discourse. Here, the interplay of cultural-discursive and material-economic arrangements lays bare the inequalities in how different cohorts of students in different contexts might approach the study of the same subject matter and how this impacts on students' capacity and readiness to engage with historical thinking concepts. The social-economic backgrounds of Penny and Max's students and the associated 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1990) they bring to the classroom place them at a distinct advantage in the way they encounter and make sense of new historical learning. Lévesque (2008) notes that a key component of students' capacity to think historically is an ability to apply existing understandings of historical themes and ideas to new contexts and situations. It necessarily follows that the greater exposure and engagement students have to history as a discipline, the greater their capacity to successfully engage in this deeper level of disciplinary thinking. As Thomson notes:

The children who are most often successful are those who already possess, by virtue of who they are and where they come from, some of the cultural capital that counts for school success. Through the game of schooling, they acquire more. They are able to do this because they are 'at home' with both the ways in which schools operate and with the kind of knowledges, the cultural capital, involved (2002, p. 5).

Barton and Levstik recognise this role of cultural capital and context when they concede that "different contexts call for different practices" (2004, p. 18) in the history classroom – a nuanced observation not widespread in literature surrounding historical thinking, dominated as it is by the cognitive sciences. Arguing for a sociocultural understanding of student learning in history, they argue that:

Because knowledge results from interactions between people and their environment, we will be able to make sense of how students have developed their ideas only if we understand the settings in which they have encountered the past (p. 17).

The idea that students bring varying levels of socio-cultural familiarity with the discourses and conventions of history to the classroom shows the strong intersection between the cultural-discursive and material economic dimensions of learning in history and requires us to consider the relevance of Thomson's (2002) 'virtual schoolbag' to the history classroom. In her study of two students entering the schooling system, Thomson looked at the way in which students' family and cultural background,

their economic position and their prior learning all formed part of the 'virtual schoolbag' they brought to the classroom – laying bare the fallacy of the school system as an even playing field and emphasising the role that sociocultural forces play on students' readiness to encounter particular discourses and practices associated with formal schooling.

If we compare the 'virtual schoolbags' of students in Jane and Max's classrooms, there is a clear contrast in how their backgrounds and life experience have positioned them to receive and integrate the discourses they encounter in the history classroom – and indeed their capacity to make sense of historical thinking concepts. When Jane is discussing with me the challenge of teaching history to students who have a limited general knowledge (such as knowing the name of the Australian Prime Minister) she comments "I'm sure at many schools that would not be a problem. At some schools the name of the Prime Minister is on their honour board". Jane's insight is a telling one, because indeed the honour boards of Churchill College are replete with the names of Australian politicians and other notable individuals. For Max's students their 'virtual historical schoolbag' is full to overflowing with experiences and resources that help them integrate and make sense of the language and conventions of historical study – such as access to up to date historiography, regular excursions that take them to institutions such as the Jewish Museum and even a regular international history tour to historical sites relevant to senior study (a tour which Max led the previous year and to which he refers regularly in class: "remember when we were in the Parthenon museum lads?") These experiences place Max's students at a clear advantage in the way they encounter and synthesise the discourses of history in the classroom, and impact on their engagement with historical thinking more broadly.

Sam Wineburg (2001, 2007) famously noted that the discourses of history and the process of historical thinking was 'unnatural' for many students – and he is of course correct that the skills of historical analysis are both unfamiliar and counterintuitive to many students. However the contrast between Jane and Max's classrooms remind us that this type of thinking is more 'unnatural' for some than others, and we would do well to consider the broader cultural-discursive assumptions that underpin the teaching of history and the notion of historical thinking in our schools. A key skill for teachers in engaging students in historical thinking is their capacity to recognise the relevant aspects of their students' 'virtual historical schoolbag' and shape the development of historical knowledge and understandings accordingly. Their capacity to do this relies

just as significantly on their relationships and understanding of their students as it does on their background expertise as disciplinary experts in history.

The role of the History syllabus

Observing these teachers at work, it is impossible not to notice the way in which the NSW syllabus documents operate as a dominant discursive frame that dictate many of the 'sayings' of practice in these classrooms, particularly those in the senior years. The direct relationship between the NSW Stage 6 Modern and Ancient History Syllabus and the content of the external Higher School Certificate examination has had the impact of making the language of syllabus outcomes and content areas (or 'dot points') a key driver of both teacher and student talk in these classrooms. This influence is most obvious in Penny and Max's classroom where both the teacher and students demonstrate a deep familiarity with the language and discourse of both the Syllabus and the HSC examination, and discussion about both dominates lessons and provides the framework through which history is taught. Max begins all his lessons by orienting students to the 'dot point' they are up to in the Syllabus – with these 'dot points' determining the scope, content and sequence in which historical content is learnt. The discursive dominance of the Syllabus over the sayings of history teaching practice does not, of course, automatically preclude the teaching of historical thinking skills in tandem with meeting syllabus content requirements, which Parkes and Donnelly note do play a role in framing the approach to history in the NSW Syllabus (2014).

It is significant to note that the last several decades of curriculum development in NSW have seen both an increasingly prescriptive and content-heavy history syllabus coupled with fewer opportunities for teachers to exercise choice and judgement around topics that work for students from a range of backgrounds (History Teachers Association of NSW, 2016). There is significant overlap between the sayings, doings and relatings of history practice and the way in which the written syllabus shapes what is possible for each of the teachers in this study. Jane, who has been teaching history in disadvantaged communities for over two decades, remembers a time when senior students had the choice of four differentiated History courses which catered to students with a range of prior success and a diversity of literacy levels. Until the late 1990s students in NSW had a choice of studying *HSC Modern History* or a simplified course called *Modern History: People and Events*, or similarly *HSC Ancient History* or *Ancient History: Personalities and their Times*. The simplified courses were subsumed during the process of rationalising subjects for the 'New HSC' that was introduced in 2000. Reflecting on these changes, Jane tells me:

The senior syllabus today is ridiculous. We need what we used to have way back which was the two general courses, which would give students like this a fighting chance. Our kids cannot write four pages under exam conditions.

Penny identifies a similar theme with regard to other recent changes to the History curriculum which have narrowed choices and that she sees have impacted on students' capacity to engage in historical discourse. The most recent iteration of the NSW Modern History Syllabus (2017) saw the removal of a unit in which students studied one historical personality, their biography and their impact on historical events. History teachers expressed frustration at the removal of this personality study, which many saw as a key way in which deeper disciplinary learning found expression in the content and outcomes of the NSW History Syllabus. The study encouraged students to contemplate the actions and motivations of individuals within the context of the historical era in which they lived, and facilitated engagement with broader historical thinking concepts such as empathy, significance and perspective (History Teachers Association of NSW, 2016). I asked Penny if she felt the syllabus is working with her or against her as a teacher of history and she tells me:

More like the syllabus is working over there and I'm working over here....often the syllabus seems to be written by people who are not connected to students, they are written as political documents to show an agenda. You know, for example the modern syllabus, taking out the personality. For a lot of students the personality was their way through connecting to history. You might not understand global forces, but you can understand that someone got pissed off because their girlfriend left them or something like that.

von Hover and Heinecke (2005) note the added dimension of time pressure in shaping practice for teachers working with both prescriptive curricula and external examinations. For Jane, it is not only that the expectations of the three-hour written HSC examination are beyond most of her students, it is that with the sayings of her practice largely dictated by an increasingly crowded and prescriptive syllabus, she has little time to spend remediating or assisting those students who are struggling. She tells me:

There are some kids, lovely kids, that are trying, and they will write stuff, but it's completely irrelevant to the question, they will write and they will be studying, but I have to give them a 5 [out of 25] and it breaks both our hearts because I don't have the time to then even sit down with them and do much about it because I've got to get to the next dot point.

The cultural-discursive arrangements that prefigure and shape teacher practice do so in complex ways, intersecting with the material-economic and social-political arrangements. These teachers' practice is shaped both by the discourses of the discipline of history, but also by the way in which these are expressed and developed into formal requirements of the NSW History Syllabus. The diversity of 'sayings' evident in the different practices of the teachers in this study demonstrates the key role that context plays in shaping the way students engage with and make meaning of historical discourse. It is clear from the close study of each of these teachers' practice that a key element that makes their practice exemplary is their ability to make the language and discourses specific to history meaningful and comprehensible to their particular students through a range of creative, differentiated and thoughtful pedagogical strategies. Each of the teachers in the study has a reflective approach to their practice where they show keen awareness of students' developing understanding of historical content and their readiness to consider history's complexity and contingency. In many cases, however, this practice is impeded by broader influences that make this process of differentiation and meeting the needs of individual students a more difficult one because of a failure to recognise the considerable differences in students' capacities and preparedness to engage with the cultural-discursive sayings at the heart of historical study.

The material-economic arrangements of exemplary history teaching

The material-economic dimension of practice architectures concerns "the resources that make possible the *activities* undertaken in the course of the practice" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 32) and recognise that both physical and economic conditions shape what educators can do in particular contexts – creating the "webs of possibilities" for practice (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008, p. 44). For the teachers in the study, the material economic arrangements include physical set ups such as their classrooms as well as the material resources available to them in the course of their teaching – aspects such as technology, textbooks and other supplies. The relationship between the material-economic arrangements and teacher practice in these sites is complex, because as this

research makes clear, exemplary teaching occurs in poorly resourced schools every day. But the disparities in resourcing between government and independent school systems in Australia⁶ were very much visible in the schools visited as part of this study and raise questions about the role of resourcing, funding and school 'status' in enabling and constraining particular practices for these teachers.

The doings of historical thinking

It is interesting to note that much of the interest that developed in the notion of historical thinking in schools came from concerns about the way in which teachers in the United Kingdom and North America were approaching the teaching of history. History classrooms were often staffed by non-specialist history teachers who relied heavily on poorly-written history textbooks, with teachers' pedagogical repertoire limited to what Sandwell and von Heyking call "kill and drill" history (2014, p. 4). Within this approach, history is framed as a set of facts about the past and history pedagogy limited to an unimaginative process of transmitting those facts (Sears, 2015). The teachers in this study – having been identified as exemplary by their peers and community – unsurprisingly confound and contradict all of the worst assumptions about this 'crisis' in history pedagogy, and in doing so provide us with important insights into what the 'doing' of historical thinking can look like as enacted pedagogical practice. Considering the material-economic 'doings' of historical thinking has an interesting resonance here because in the field of history education 'doing' history is often discussed as a way of better engaging students in learning about history as a discipline – rather than as a collection of knowledge about their past. Through the lens of practice theory, however, the 'doings' of historical thinking are located more broadly within the material-economic arrangements that support and make possible teacher practice in pursuit of students' deeper disciplinary learning.

It is through an examination of these material-economic arrangements that the role of teachers' disciplinary orientation in history, and the influence of that orientation on the activities in their classroom is placed within a broader context. For example, whilst none of the teachers in the study make regular use of textbooks, this is not in large part because of their orientation or belief about the nature of historical learning or the deficiencies of textbooks but rather the intersection of other influences and factors that shape teacher practice in this way. Similarly, although all teacher participants were passionate, knowledgeable specialists in history, their own reflections on decision

⁶ For an effective summary of the nature and impact of school funding arrangements in Australia see the report by Perry for the CEDA (2018).

making in their classroom reveals the dominant role that their students and prioritising student engagement play in their decision making in the classroom. For each of the teachers in the study, their pursuit of history teaching praxis, reflected as it is in the way in which they go about teaching history, in their choices of teaching strategies, in the arrangement of their classrooms, in their use of particular sources and material – is as much about what is possible to do in their particular teaching context as it is about how to teach history well.

Resourcing and inequality in the history classroom

Both Jane and Dan teach in schools that face significant resourcing constraints when it comes to the material ‘set ups’ that support teaching and student learning. Not only do both Bayview and Jacaranda High Schools face resourcing restrictions common to many government schools, they also teach a student population primarily drawn from lower socio-economic backgrounds and without active or well-funded parent and community committees. Given the similarities in material-economic conditions of the schools, it was interesting to note the very similar strategies that Dan and Jane used to make their otherwise old and tired classroom spaces lively, colourful and engaging for their students. The use of historical posters, timelines and ‘memes’ around Dan and Jane’s classrooms create a stark contrast to other learning spaces in their schools, and make the classroom walls themselves an opportunity for engagement and learning in history. The walls of Dan and Jane’s classrooms are representative of their teaching praxis more broadly – sending their students a message about the value they place on learning, on historical knowledge – but also a willingness to connect and relate to students through the use of humour that appeals particularly to young people. Both classrooms represent hours of work, and there is a strong interplay here with the social-political dimension of practice as this investment of labour and money is also clearly noticed by the students who see the teacher’s investment and care for these spaces as signalling their broader commitment to the community of the school. Dan and Jane also make significant use of other resources in their teaching – such as Jane’s ‘university boxes’ and Dan’s costumes and props for the visual glossary activity – materials which are fundamental to helping their students engage in history through rich and embodied learning activities. But whilst these resources represent a strength of both teachers’ practice they also hint at an underlying systemic constraint because these resources, as with most of the other physical resources Dan and Jane use to support student learning, have been supplied and funded by the teachers personally. The lack of resources that both Dan and Jane face in their classroom teaching is further compounded by the lack of financial support they have professionally – with both making extensive use of informal professional

development strategies such as Twitter and connections with other teachers, rather than expensive external professional development – in contrast to both Penny and Max who have both undertaken tertiary study and extensive external professional development with the support of their schools.

These resourcing constraints are particularly acute at Bayview High School where Jane’s access to technology, textbooks and materials that support her teaching work is severely limited by what she describes as the “global budgeting” challenges at the school (and that Jane is at pains to point out are faced by all teachers at the school, not just herself). Jane does not have enough up to date textbooks for all her students to use, and is limited to \$120 worth of photocopying per school semester. For senior subjects such as modern and ancient history which rely heavily on students having access to a variety of historical accounts and perspectives as well as access to past HSC papers and practice materials, such restrictions represent a considerable disadvantage, one Jane is acutely aware is not shared by students in other schools and contexts:

It’s not an even playing field. I will get more philosophical and say, forget about 5 swimming pools at [an elite Sydney private school], I don’t want a pool, I just want a laptop for the kids or projectors with light bulbs that don’t snap and you can’t replace... or not having to bring my own projector.....I am expected to get my kids good [HSC performance] bands with nothing.

The idea of supporting student learning with “nothing” is echoed by Jane’s students in their focus group discussion. When asked if there was one thing they could change about learning History in Jane’s classroom the students don’t hesitate to offer a wish-list of resources and materials which they say would make their learning better:

Lisa: “Better equipment”

Rachel: “Yeah, better projector. A smartboard. Laptops!”

Kayla: “An air conditioner. In summer we can’t breathe in this room.”

Sam: “The teachers are expected to provide so much for the students to learn and yet they are given nothing.”

Lisa: “We have no budget for printing so we can’t get handouts.”

Rachel: “I guess, in the long run, you could say we are just another public school.”

The material-economic constraints of teaching at Bayview are compounded by the circumstances of Jane's students' home lives which are often complex, and make it difficult for students to meet the demands of senior school:

We are battling with kids that don't have Wi-Fi. We have kids in there who don't have homes...And a couple whose dads had just gone to gaol or just got out of gaol, we have all of it. They were doing major works without Wi-Fi, without computers. We got major works written by hand. Old school.

For Jane, the material-economic constraints of teaching in an under-resourced school impact directly on her teaching practice. The predominance of teacher-talk in her lesson is in part a pragmatic response to the resourcing challenge she faces – without reliable technology for the students, or textbooks for them to read or enough photocopies to generate worksheets or activities, Jane's practice is simplified to the use of PowerPoint presentations coupled with 'teacher talk' and verbal explanations. Whilst it is important to note that Jane's students single out her story-telling skills as a highlight of her teaching practice, Jane regards these resource constraints as making it more difficult for her meet the individual learning needs of her students:

I tried to differentiate using some textbook stuff and then you just run out of [photocopying] money - like I was trying to pick a simple one and then a harder one and then you run out of money, so how do you do it? You can't do it.

Jane's pessimistic assessment that "you can't do it" provides insight into the personal cost, indeed I would say the weariness, that Jane feels after teaching in under-resourced, high needs school environments for over two decades. She tells me:

You will see me working hard and when you look around, we all work hard. We can't rely on technology, we are out the front with PowerPoint, or one textbook between three students trying to make it work. Literally old school hard yakka [hard work], five periods a day, five days a week. We are exhausted.

This sense of exhaustion leads Jane to underestimate the capacity of her teaching practice to work against and indeed successfully overcome some of these material-economic constraints through the quality and characteristics of her teaching practice, underpinned as it is by a fundamental belief in the transformative capacity of education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Jane's practice represents the kind of 'uncommon pedagogies' at the heart of Hayes et al.'s (2017) research around teaching that makes a difference in disadvantaged communities. Like the teachers in that study, Jane's approach to her students demonstrates an approach to practice that hinges around and is distinguished by a particular disposition to the community in which she works.

The way in which material-economic arrangements shape and impact on the possibilities of practice for Max and Penny within the independent schools in which they teach is very different to those of Dan and Jane, but nonetheless complex. Both Churchill and Greenview Colleges are well resourced schools – funded by both government support and parent contributions and as a result the majority of students attending them are drawn from the upper quartiles of socio-economic advantage. On one analysis, Penny and Max are both at a distinct advantage to Dan and Jane in the way they pursue their teaching goals, largely unencumbered by concerns about photocopying budgets, lack of material resources or concerns about student access to technology or materials. Max, who at the time of my visit to Churchill College was acting in the role of Head of Department, described the budget he had for purchasing books and materials for staff as "ridiculous" telling me "I spent \$300 on history books the other day just because I could". It deserves acknowledgement that teaching history at well-resourced schools comes with distinct advantages around access to contemporary history texts and materials as well as access to expensive professional development and even school funded tertiary study for teachers. However, a close examination of the context of Max and Penny's work reveals that the material-economic conditions of well-resourced schools play a part in establishing a school culture of expectation and performance that can create acute pressure for both staff and students, and has significant impact on the possibilities for these teachers to pursue praxis in the history classroom.

As noted in chapter six, the HSC examination looms large in Max's classroom and is responsible for framing many of the 'doings' of Max's practice. Max regularly builds lessons or activities around examination "drills" preparing students to answer particular styles of questions in ways that maximise their opportunities for achievement. It is difficult to separate the interplay of the cultural-discursive dimension

of Max's practice from the broader material-economic and social-political influences that come from working in a high fee, high stakes academic environment like Churchill College where there are explicit expectations of Max and the results his students will achieve. Max demonstrates a clear awareness of the way in which these pressures shape and constrain his teaching, telling me his practice is largely determined by his "obligation to the stakeholders" who are the parents of his students. When I ask Max how these obligations shape what he says and does with his students, he tells me:

In Year 11 you will probably hear me talk a lot about 'next year' and 'in preparation for next year'. But then in Year 12, it affects everything. And even the homework activities, the class activities are determined by the HSC exam for that topic. So they only ever write paragraphs and 25 mark responses for the historical period, they only ever write ten markers, six markers and four markers for Pompeii and Herculaneum, um, Spartan society they do two, three, five, 15 markers, that sort of thing.⁷

There is an obvious tension here between Max's own passion for history, and well-developed sense of history teaching praxis and the narrow means-ends discursive framing of history in his senior classrooms which is driven by the syllabus and HSC examination. As noted in chapter six, Max commented that he feels his practice has been negatively affected by the way in which the 'end goal' of students learning operates as a dominant frame of reference at Churchill. That goal that Max mentions is student academic success in the HSC and a guaranteed entry to university education. It is a very different way of conceiving of student success to that of Dan who tells me:

If I get a student who gets a Band 1 in history but leaves the class and goes out into the real world with a love and a passion for history and remembers a few stories then that's great. Just because they don't get a Band 3 or 4 doesn't mean they're a failure in history.

von Hover and Heinecke, in their study of how high stakes examination environments impacted on the 'wise practice' of secondary history teachers found that external examinations and accountability measures had led some teachers to:

⁷ Max's comments here refer to the way in which he structures expectations about students' written work around the format and marks available for particular topics in the HSC examination. Students only ever express their historical understanding for particular topics in the way the examination requires of them – demonstrating a clear relationship between the HSC and the 'doings' of history in Max's classroom.

...lose some connection to their love of teaching certain topics, as well as the opportunity to focus on approaches that foster the “doing of history” (2005, p. 111).

Whilst I am not suggesting that the high-stakes environment has done anything to dull Max’s obvious passion and commitment to history education, there is a clear tension here between the pursuit of the deeper purpose of history education and the crude apparatus of the HSC examination as a measurement of Max’s success as a history educator. These tensions are similarly evident in our examination of the social-political arrangements of practice.

Social-political arrangements of exemplary history teaching

The social-political dimension of practice architectures concerns the social connections and relationships that work to frame and construct the conditions for practice (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 32). For the teachers in this study, the social-political dimension of their practice encompasses their relationships with their students; their position within their own school hierarchies; and their broader positioning and status within the profession of teaching and in society as history teacher. As explored in more depth in chapter nine, it is these teachers’ relationships with their students, their understanding of them and their embedding of this understanding within the relational dimension of their practice that forms a key aspect of their success as history educators. Whether it is Penny’s talking to students about their interest in particular video games; Max’s interest in his students’ sporting commitments on the weekend; Jane’s awareness of students’ complex personal and family relationships or Dan’s tapping into youth culture through his pedagogical strategies, the relationships cultivated and maintained by these teachers create a foundation from which all other possibilities of practice follow. Dewey famously noted that “teaching may be compared to commodities. No one can sell unless someone buys” (1933, p. 35). And yet, in the literature concerning history education and history teaching in particular, there is a strong emphasis on teachers’ subject matter knowledge (or, if you like, what teachers are ‘selling’) and scant, if any treatment of the role of interpersonal relationships and their role in historical learning (or how teachers might generate the interest of their ‘buyers’). Yet for each of these teachers, the relational dimension of practice is that which allows for this exercise of disciplinary expertise and creates the positive learning environment necessary for historical learning to occur.

For Jane, the social-political dimension of practice is especially powerful as she navigates the complexity of being an Aboriginal teacher working in a disadvantaged

regional area with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Teaching history in a school where the cultural-discursive and material-economic conditions present considerable constraints on Jane fostering student engagement and interest in history – it is the “relational architectures” (Edwards-Groves et al., 2010) of Jane’s practice that allow her to make a difference with the students of Bayview High school. By Jane’s own assessment her teaching is “all about relationships. It is all we have”. Her own understanding of the role of relationships is borne out by the observations and comments of her students who note her positivity and high hopes for them as setting her apart from other teachers they have encountered. During my time at Bayview High School I did wonder how Jane’s students might feel differently about education if they were able to regard their relationship with Jane as the **norm rather** than the exception.

Beyond their relationships with students, a teacher’s position and relationships within their school also influences their practice. For Penny this means negotiating her practice against the narrow way in which her own school judges her ‘success’ as a history teacher:

... it’s tricky because the school where I am at is very conservative, and they just want students to get good results, and we talk about learning, but really that’s code word for results...and so, as long as I get good results they don’t care what I do in the classroom.

Penny credits her years of experience as a teacher and school leader as helping her navigate this arrangement where she both ‘delivers’ the school the good results they (and fee-paying parents) expect, whilst also pursuing history teaching in a style and manner consistent with her sense of history teaching praxis. It is a process Max mentions is becoming more difficult as he moves into leadership positions and negotiates his own ambitions to rise through the ranks of leadership at Churchill College:

the more you teach the more you understand the importance of a test. The more you feel the pressure for that. Purely because you’re experienced, you’re head of faculty, your kids should be achieving ‘XYZ’, unfortunately that’s not a real education.

With so much of Max's practice concerned with the performance of his students in the HSC, and so much of our discussion focussing on the results of his students, I ask Max what the consequences would be for him at Churchill College if his students were seen to be 'underperforming' in history. He tells me:

I'm not going to lose my job because they don't get [above] 90%. But I might be shifted around somewhere...there would be discussions about taking me off seniors for a year...If I wasn't delivering.

It is a frank admission that reveals much about the wider social-political conditions under which Max teaches, and which accounts for the way in which his teaching practice is built around students' academic achievement in the HSC exams. While it is true to say that all teachers in this study have high hopes and expectations of their students, the impact of these high expectations is different for teachers when it is framed as an accountability measure by the schools or systems that employ them. In contrast to what Max tells me about the academic performance of his students and his position in the school, Dan feels no such pressure:

We don't have the pressure some schools have. If we have a year that is disappointing we will know about it, but it's not the kind of thing that gets dragged out and repeated, it will be the thing that we are mildly disappointed for one staff meeting and then we move on. We update programs and we see what worked and what didn't.

It is interesting to pause here and reflect back on the contrasts between Max and Dan's classroom practice and the fundamental ways in which they differ, and consider how these very different expectations of their schools may be influencing and shaping the risks they are prepared to take in their classroom practice. Both teachers approach their subject matter with similar levels of dynamism and passion, but it would be difficult to see Max leaving his tried and tested lessons with their solid focus on syllabus 'dot points' and past HSC examination questions to conduct mock quiz shows, or play dress ups with his Year 12 class for several lessons. This is no criticism of Max's practice at all (which the students of Churchill College remind is us both remarkable and highly engaging) but rather a reminder to us about how a teacher's classroom work is always a reflection on the broader culture and system within which they are working.

All teachers in the study showed an acute awareness not only of their position as teachers of history within the framework of the schooling system, but within society more broadly. History as a school subject has long occupied contentious political terrain, and history teachers have navigated the difficult professional and ideological terrain resulting from the regular flare ups of the 'history wars' (Peterson, 2016). All the teachers commented on their occupying a difficult professional space in this context – with so many different interest groups having a voice in debates around history teaching, and the voices of teachers themselves often considered subordinate to those of professional historians, curriculum writers and even politicians, evident in the dominance of historians writing for and about history teaching. Penny links this positioning to the broader cultural-discursive and material-economic arrangements playing out in relation to the history curriculum, which has seen a narrowing of options for teachers to exercise their professional judgement and an expansion of compulsory content in history, which she has found frustrating:

Let us study what we want to study. I know my class, I know what they are into. I find the syllabus constraints so politically driven and what they do is shut down debate rather than encourage debate. I think that the way history education is used by the government in Australia is abhorrent. It's mandated and it's very limiting.

Dan sees increasingly prescriptive curricula as having a negative impact on teachers' enthusiasm and classroom practice telling me: "I don't think teachers should be told 'you have to teach this' [When teachers are told what to teach] we are going to switch off, it will reflect in our teaching. Why shouldn't we be teaching the content that we feel is appropriate for our students?".

Mockler has traced the decline in the valuing of teachers as curriculum workers and notes that "a teacher who is truly in touch with their students and their learning knows vastly more about the performance of their students than a supposedly objective test score" (2018a, p. 135). This study speaks to a broader devaluing not only of teachers as curriculum specialists, but also of teachers as relational workers who have real knowledge about the students with whom they are working. This is particularly apparent in the case of Jane, whose personal passion and expertise for local Aboriginal history no longer has a place in the senior history classroom. Constrained by both the teaching requirements of the syllabus and the 'accountability' of her students sitting an

external examination, Jane has no choice but to select history topics from options that “don’t resonate” for her students. It is a further example of what Kemmis would describe as the decreased “discretionary space” (2006, p. 462) that teachers have to make decisions with regard to curriculum in an increasingly tightly-managed and regulated regime of schooling.

There is particular irony at the decline in this ‘discretionary space’ and distrust of teacher professional judgement occurring parallel to a range of measures designed to attract ‘higher quality’ teachers (Mockler, 2018b). At the same time at which teachers are being asked to account for and demonstrate the quality of their practice against professional standards, and when additional conditions continue to be imposed on those studying to become educators, we are simultaneously cultivating a generation of highly capable, highly educated teachers who are being given less autonomy over key arrangements that determine their practice. For the teachers in this study, this positioning of their profession results in tension and frustration in enacting their teaching praxis – influenced as it is by so many factors external to their own skill and expertise as history teaching specialists.

The relatings of historical thinking

Considering the role of historical thinking within these social-political arrangements of history teaching practice draws our attention to the:

complexes of relationships between practitioners and those involved in and affected by their practices – different kinds of networks and communities of practice that are made and remade through the living connections that surround the practice (Kemmis, 2009, p. 26).

For history teachers, these relationships consist of both their relationship with students – which operates as a driving force behind their practice – as well as their relationship with the discipline of history more broadly.

As noted above, the relational work of the teachers in this study operates as the foundation for engagement and learning in history (and by extension, their engagement in historical thinking). Whether it be through Penny’s reference to popular culture or Dan’s ability to get his students moving and creating their own learning resources, all

the teachers in this study know their students well and prioritise their relationships in their planning of pedagogical experiences. It is by examining and probing the nature of teacher practice that we make visible some of the implicit components of historical thinking – not only about the readiness of particular students to engage in historical thinking (noted above) but also in the relational ground work that underpins students learning about empathy, or perspective taking. Acknowledging the social-political dimension of history teaching highlights the disconnect between models of historical thinking and pedagogical practices that enact and make possible this mode of thinking in the classroom.

Models of historical thinking, developed as they have been by practising historians concerned about the way history is taught in schools, also work to frame and qualify history teachers' disciplinary expertise in particular ways – positioning their expertise as less than (or at the very least qualitatively different to) that of professional academic historians when it comes to appreciating how history is actually 'done'. Sears discusses these relationships between the identity and practice of historians and history teachers, and calls for more 'cross-boundary' work in the history education space in order to encourage

... both teachers and historians [to] think differently about the relationship of teachers to the discipline of history. Teachers need to grow in understanding of both disciplinary processes and new scholarly work, and researchers need to acknowledge the value of working with teachers in cross-boundary partnerships designed to enhance teacher participation in the discipline and, through that, teacher practice in classrooms (2015, p. 17).

It is interesting that in these assessments of teachers' expertise as history teachers, it is their subject matter knowledge and their grasp of deeper disciplinary processes that define their level of skill and expertise, and hence continually position history teachers as somehow lacking in comparison to their professional historian colleagues. I would argue that this positioning inhibits rather than encourages the development of collaboration and communities of practice between historians and history teachers, predicated as it is on the idea that school teachers are lacking in their understanding of history as a researched-based discipline. As the case studies at the heart of this research demonstrate, the professional expertise of history teachers is something quite

qualitatively different to that of professional historians. Put differently, whilst both professional historians and history teachers might share a similar understanding of the nature and significance of history, the ability to communicate and share that understanding with a room full of teenagers is itself quite a different and specialised skillset – predicated on generating engagement – that this research has highlighted is not adequately represented in the current literature about historical thinking in the classroom.

Conclusion

The close study of teacher praxis in practice developed in the preceding chapters and the analysis within this chapter collectively provide an understanding of history teaching as a social practice. This practice-based view of history teaching recognises the complexities of the sites in which history teaching occurs, and the role of the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements that prefigure these practices and create possibilities of practice of these teachers. It is an approach that allows us to draw conclusions about the nature of practice for these particular teachers, but also to reflect more broadly on the aims and ambitions of history teaching against the realities of enacting that practice in light of the challenges of contemporary schooling in Australia.

Kemmis and Grootenboer observe that teachers today are:

swimming in a sea of discourse about contemporary and immediate problems, issues, ideas, confronting conflict, contradiction, contestation about what is true, right and productive, bringing to bear knowledge and theories handed down from traditions, acquired from debates, and from the educator's own and others' experience (2008, p. 41).

Against this 'sea of discourse' history represents only one discursive dimension of history teachers' work. Mapping the architectures of these exemplary teachers' practice reminds us that being a 'good' teacher is not only about being a subject specialist, and that at any one moment in time these teachers are interacting with a range of discourses, practice traditions, site arrangements and local conditions that constantly work to shape their practice in particular ways. For the individual teachers in the study, it is an analytical perspective that provides us with a fuller, richer and – from a research perspective – more valuable insight into their work. By including the site of practice as a

consideration in thinking about the characteristics and qualities of that practice we both complicate but also enrich our resulting understanding of what it means to be an exemplary history teacher in ways that expand the existing research landscape on the topic, dominated as they are about concerns regarding history teachers' subject matter knowledge.

A key contribution of this research to existing understandings of history teaching is that the capacity of these teachers to realise and enact their sense of teaching praxis involves far more than their own orientation and understanding of the discipline of history and includes the way in which the arrangements in both their local school, but also the conditions and meta-practices of education more generally support or constrain the pursuit of those goals. Examining the nature of good history teaching from the perspective of classroom practice raises questions about how disciplinary thinking is enacted *in practice*, and the role of such disciplinary thinking in shaping teacher practice.

Chapter Eleven

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to provide a rich and contextualised portrait of exemplary history teaching within different school contexts, with a view to making broader observations and conclusions about the nature of teaching the discipline of history to high school students, and to develop an understanding of good history teaching from within the classroom. In this concluding chapter I revisit the central question posed by the title of the thesis; *What does it mean to teach history well?*; summarise the contribution of the research to our understanding of history teaching; to the way we frame discussions and policy about 'good' teaching; and to theoretical and methodological questions about conducting educational research about teaching. Flowing from this discussion of the contribution of this research I present some observations and provocations for research and policy arising from this work.

What does it mean to teach history well?

Whilst it was never my intention for this research to result in a neat checklist of the qualities and characteristics of good history teaching, it is nevertheless appropriate to begin this concluding chapter by returning to the central provocation of the thesis, and consider how this research has contributed to our understanding of what it means to teach history well. In Chapter One I outlined the three research sub-questions that framed the project:

1. How is history teaching practice enabled and constrained by the individuals, conditions and discourses that construct it?
2. How do experienced history teachers engage their students in historical thinking in the classroom?
3. Can existing frameworks of historical thinking inform our understanding of the features and characteristics of history teaching practice?

In seeking to answer the overall question of what it means to teach history well, and address these sub-questions, this thesis makes four concluding claims about the nature of exemplary history teaching, drawing on the understanding of practice developed

through my observation and discussions with all four participant teachers and their student groups.

Firstly, this research demonstrates there is no one way or 'best practice' approach to teaching history well. Good history teaching occurs through a diversity of approaches and strategies and is driven by each teacher's individual approach to practice and their understanding of their students. Long gone are the classrooms that Booth (1969) described with the stern and serious 'sage on the stage' teaching history through long winded monologues and requiring students to rote learn historical facts. The teaching practices that underpin good history teaching are as diverse as the teachers themselves – and they teach history with an emphasis on engaging their students using humour, energy, joy and immense creativity. Whilst on one hand this conclusion may seem unnecessarily obvious, it is nonetheless an important and powerful one to reach at a time when notions of teaching expertise and 'quality' continue to be reduced to standardised and generic descriptions of practice in policy documents and statements of teacher professional practice. This research reminds us that we can both celebrate the diversity of our teachers whilst still attesting to both their skill and impact.

Secondly, teaching history well occurs when teachers possess both expert disciplinary knowledge as well as the knowledge and understanding of their students that allows them to meet students 'where they are at' in relation to their development of historical consciousness. This understanding of students is fostered by the relational dimension of teachers' work, which is a priority for all teachers in the study, and is similarly recognised by their students. This positioning of students not merely as recipients of teachers' expert historical knowledge, but as a key component of how teachers imagine and enact their practice is a key contribution of this thesis to the work on history teaching and has implications for the research of teacher practice more generally.

Thirdly, amongst the range of inter- and intra-personal factors that support exemplary history teaching, the individual teachers in this study all demonstrate the importance of being reflective and engaged practitioners who believe in their capacity to positively impact student learning (and in some cases, improve students' lives) through their teaching. Each participant teacher had a well-developed sense of history teaching praxis in which they understood both the role of history, and also their role as an educator in a very broad sense. Significantly, each teacher in the study understood the role of history education, and their role as history teachers as extending beyond the scope of students'

formal schooling, instead seeing history in the context of the lifetime of knowledge and learning students had ahead of them.

Finally, this thesis claims that teaching history well involves teachers demonstrating skill and expertise not only in their pedagogical practice, but also in the way they negotiate and navigate the constraints presented by their local teaching contexts. In seeking to learn about exemplary practice from within the classroom, this research acknowledges that teaching is complex and can present an array of daily challenges for teachers. In addition to these challenges, the broader context of educational systems and structures in Australia means these teachers are not working in comparable, or in any way equitable, educational 'playing fields'. Each of the participant teachers in this study face very real and challenging constraints on their practice through key material-economic and cultural-discursive influences. A key part of teaching history well for these teachers has been the way in which their love of teaching, their commitment to students and their disciplinary skills and expertise has provided them with the capacity to navigate these constraints and have a positive impact on their students.

Having established these broad claims, I now consider in more detail the contribution of this thesis to the key research themes outlined in chapters one and two.

Contribution to discourses on history teaching and historical thinking

A key aim of this thesis outlined in the introductory chapter was to seek to understand how exemplary history teachers engage their students in the learning of history, and as a related question, how useful existing theories, frameworks and models of historical thinking might be in understanding the features and characteristics of this teaching. Like other academic disciplines that are taught at school level there remain ongoing discussions and debates about the purpose of teaching history to school students and the relationship between school-based history teaching and history as an academic or professional pursuit. In the literature review for this project I explored ways in which notions of historical thinking as pioneered by Wineburg (2001, 2007), Seixas (2006a, 2006b) and Lévesque (2008) had come to dominate discourses around history education in recent years. Whilst offering slightly different approaches to 'historical thinking', 'historical consciousness' and 'thinking historically', this literature shares the common goal of prioritising the disciplinary understanding of history, measured against the "real" work of academic historians doing scholarly historical research. Despite the ubiquitousness of such models, particularly in university pre-service education of

history teachers, these theories and frameworks of historical thinking were not identified by any of the participants as an explicit influence on their practice.

Importantly, that does not mean that teaching historical thinking is not a regular feature of the practice of these teachers, for indeed the portraits of practice in the preceding chapters clearly demonstrate that it is, and very successfully so. The idea of working with and learning how to question primary source material – a key tenet of all the various incarnations of historical thinking – was a regular and reflexive feature of all four teachers' practice, and was particularly embraced by Max and Penny and their teaching of ancient history through students considering and evaluating ancient source material. Similarly, all teachers demonstrated a range of approaches to encourage students to consider history from different perspectives – exemplified by Penny's exploration of Bloch, and Jane's examination of who supported Hitler and why. This attention to the importance of historical perspective not only develops students' deeper historical understanding, but also leads to a rich and meaningful engagement with the very difficult notion of historical empathy (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Retz, 2019). Dan's visual glossary activity could have been executed as a straightforward literacy strategy, but instead required students to establish and consider ideas of historical significance as they were entrusted with making key decisions about how to represent and prioritise historical concepts. That Dan cultivates this deeper level of historical thinking with his students despite admitting that he had never heard of the historical thinking frameworks is significant. Whilst historical thinking models assist us in identifying some of the component qualities and disciplinary strategies of the practices of exemplary history teachers, and are undoubtedly useful for evaluating and reflecting on students' cognitive processes when learning history, we cannot only assess the success of history teacher in relation to these skills, and instead should consider value in assessing teachers for their capacity to enact and engage students in historical thinking through pedagogy.

Probing this gap between models for historical thinking and classroom practice as this thesis has done highlights the importance of engagement in historical learning as a precursor to engagement in historical thinking. As the teachers in this study demonstrate, engagement of students in this kind of thinking in classrooms cannot be assumed but should be explicitly recognised as the particular skill set history teachers bring to the enactment of historical thinking through pedagogy.

This thesis has sought to articulate the features of this enactment of historical thinking as teaching practice, and in particular the importance of relationships in the classroom to creating the necessary learning environment to allow deeper historical learning to occur. In a diversity of ways, the teachers in this study demonstrate in their practice and articulate in their own words the central role that their students play as the key determinant of how they approach the teaching of history. We see this in Penny's use of the social media controversy as a way of teaching perspectives in historiography emerged because of her sense that students weren't 'getting it'; Max's use of sport as a common language to appeal to and engage all his students; Jane's patient and inclusive approach to all student contributions in her lessons; and Dan's effortful motivation of his students through role play to develop their historical vocabulary. We see it also in the responses of students and how they experience and understand this practice – they tell us in their own words how being seen, heard and valued gives them a positive orientation towards learning with these teachers. In contrast, this research has also highlighted the ways in which the broader contexts in which teachers work can operate to frustrate or at times constrain the goal of engagement in history. A key component of teachers' practice observed in this study was their ability to work with and at times around, the conditions and structures which impede their practice – be it Jane's inability to access the necessary resources to enrich her teaching, or Max's sense of accountability for his students' exam results – all of the teachers in this study faced daily, sometimes hourly, negotiations on what was possible in the contexts in which they work.

Good history teaching relies on the ability of teachers to foster authentic and productive relationships with their students in a way that prioritises their learning needs, and approaches the discipline of history with those needs front of mind. This student-centred planning for learning has two key impacts that influence the ability of teachers to engage students in historical thinking. Firstly, the relational dimension of historical thinking generates the trust between teachers and students from which engagement in learning flows – in other words it creates the possibilities for deeper learning. Secondly, it recognises the backgrounds and contexts of learners as highly relevant to their engagement with and understanding of historical concepts and ideas – the different social and cultural experiences students have had that ready them to engage in historical thinking – and allows teachers to be responsive to these needs in planning for learning in history.

The goal of engaging students in historical thinking is a noble and important one. By thinking about how history is researched and written, beyond 'what happened', we have the opportunity to develop in our students the critical thinking and analytical skills which seem more important than ever, most especially in the era of 'fake news' and the proliferation of dubious sources of civic information (McGrew, Ortega, Breakstone, & Wineburg, 2017). This thesis represents a significant contribution to scholarship in the area of history teaching and historical thinking – drawing as it does from expertise within classrooms to recognise the depth and complexity at play when teachers aim to engage their students in this kind of thinking. It represents an opportunity to grow and extend existing frameworks for historical thinking to recognise that whilst historical thinking may be the educational end goal of learning history, the way in which teachers guide their students to that point involves a range of complex and skilled manoeuvres and strategies. Generating engagement in the history classroom involves not only disciplinary and content knowledge, but site-specific contextual knowledge, as well as authentic relationships of trust and rapport.

The insights gained from these case studies also illuminate how broad and complex the overall project of history education is for teachers – encompassing more than just the teaching of disciplinary knowledge and experience. For Penny, teaching history is about encouraging curiosity and a lifelong passion for learning whilst for Jane it is a way of incrementally raising the educational expectations of a generation of students. Both Max and Dan see history teaching as a way of helping students understand contemporary social and political issues. Central to each teacher's understanding of the praxis of history teaching practice is the centrality of students – not in an abstract or generic sense – but the actual individual learners in their classes. Their success in meeting these aims is impacted by a variety of contextual factors – explored in the previous chapters as the architectures that both enable and constrain exemplary teaching practice – but in all cases is enhanced by the strength and quality of the relationships between teachers and students within the particular contexts of the sites within which they work. Recognising this centrality of students to history teachers' practice importantly allows us to both account for and appreciate the wide diversity of practices and pedagogical approaches that exemplary history teachers use when engaging students in disciplinary learning, and reminds us that there is no one way of teaching history well.

Contribution to discourses around 'good' teaching

The contribution of this thesis goes beyond expanding our understanding of good history teaching practice, to engage directly with the discourses and policies that concern the notion of good teaching more broadly. A key finding from my close analysis of each teacher's practice is that good teaching can be demonstrated through a diverse range of pedagogical approaches and is contextual and contingent on a range of local factors – a conclusion aided by my application of the theory of practice architectures as a lens for understanding and accounting for practice in sites. Highlighting the diversity of approaches that different teachers have to practice might suggest that it is difficult to reach broader, compelling conclusions from such research. However, by viewing our discussion of teacher practice through the prism of what is possible in particular contexts we frame our understanding of teachers' work in the context of educational "*meta-practices*" (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008, p. 58). Through a process of mapping the influence of particular arrangements in sites of practice we can work toward developing an understanding of the broader conditions which support exemplary teaching.

Such observations are particularly pertinent at a time when both political discourse as well as educational policy continues to aspire to clearly define and delineate the characteristics of the 'good' teacher. The Australian Professional Standards for Teaching and related regimes of professional registration and accreditation have sought to articulate and describe 'good' teaching against a schema of generic criteria for teachers of differing levels of experience. Similarly, concerns about pre-service teacher education and 'teacher quality' have generated policy responses which focus attention on the question of the qualities and qualifications required of teachers. These examples of contemporary public conversations and policy constructions of the 'good' teacher have been critiqued for the ways in which they limit rather than expand possibilities for our understanding of good teaching (Bourke, Ryan, & Lloyd, 2016; Connell, 2009; Mockler, 2018; Talbot, 2016) and offer further examples of what Larsen (2010) identifies as the centrality of teachers in framing both the 'causes' and 'solutions' to contemporary educational 'problems'.

This thesis makes an important contribution to these discourses around teacher quality and standards through the application of the theory of practice architectures to the examination of teachers' practice. This approach has allowed an analysis of each teacher's work that goes beyond examining their individual characteristics and qualities to instead examine the wider conditions that operate to enable and constrain good

teaching practice in particular sites. Whilst acknowledging the personal strengths and pedagogical capabilities of the participant teachers in this study, a key finding has been the identification of how each teacher's context, with its material-economic, cultural-discursive and social-political arrangements, has operated variously in support of, or in conflict with, their pursuit of history teaching praxis. For some of the teachers in this study, their practice has undoubtedly been enabled by particular situational advantages, such as the very obvious material-economic advantage Max enjoys in teaching upper middle-class students within a well-resourced school context. But Max's teaching context is not without constraints and challenges, most notably the performative pressure he (and by extension his students) is under to achieve high academic results. It is through the prism of practice architectures that we begin to appreciate that a key component of teacher expertise involves the complex negotiation and balancing of these situational constraints and advantages.

The conclusion that school context plays a crucial role in framing the possibilities for good teaching practice has wider consequences given the nature and tone of contemporary policy documents and professional teaching standards which speak to "how to be a good teacher, with little acknowledgement of the complex subjective and objective influences on teachers' work" (Ryan & Bourke, 2013, p. 420). Viewing teacher practice as a reflection of the possibilities afforded by particular sites at particular moments in time, through their 'relatings' with particular groups of students, we begin to identify the complexity of arrangements that are brought to bear in influencing how teachers teach. When policy and standards documents frame 'good' teaching as the demonstration of objective qualities of individual teachers we not only overlook the complexity of these arrangements, but also the fundamentally social and relational nature of the teaching as a practice.

This research has also highlighted troubling disparities in the material-economic conditions between particular schools and demonstrated the impact of this educational inequity on the experience of being a teacher in different contexts. Once we acknowledge the role of context in creating the possibilities of teaching practice, so too we must acknowledge that some teachers face greater disadvantage and disparity as a result of the conditions in those contexts, and that these impact in material ways on teaching practice. Observing Jane's practice, and speaking with her and her students about the realities of learning history at Bayview High School we are reminded about the fundamental difficulties of standardised assessment that sees Jane's students assessed by the same blunt instrument as Max's. The same observation can be extended

to Jane and Max themselves, whose practice is evaluated against identical professional teaching standards and with the same requirements around mandated teacher professional learning and professional engagement – despite the very different capacities of their schools to provide such learning and engagement opportunities. Given the persistence of socio-educational disadvantage across Australia’s highly segmented education system, and the expansion of regimes of teacher accreditation, there are real questions to be answered about how to fairly and equitably account for the work of teachers across these different contexts.

Theoretical and methodological contribution to research about teaching

A further key contribution of this research has been in the methodological and theoretical approach taken in seeking to understand history teaching practice in Australian classrooms. In outlining my research methodology in chapter four I explained that my approach to research aimed to understand history teaching ontologically rather than epistemologically, a distinction Kemmis et al. outline as:

not just seeing education and educational practice in terms of ideas and knowledge (teachers’ professional practice knowledge, for example) – which we would characterise as an ‘epistemological’ view – but as something that happens through *embodied people* who live and work in *sites* (2014, p. 218).

By undertaking long term observations of teachers working in their everyday contexts this research has highlighted the value of this ontological perspective in accounting not only for the richness and complexity of teachers’ classroom work, but the significance of teachers’ local contexts in influencing that work. This contextualised view of history teachers’ work is a particularly valuable contribution given the dominance of ‘epistemological’ models about how teaching and learning happens in the discipline of history. My own background and experience as a history teacher drove key methodological decisions that shaped this research project, most notably that I wanted this to be research with both relevance and resonance to classroom teachers. As such, the decision to undertake long term observations in a range of different classroom contexts was made with a view to developing research that was both grounded in the reality of teachers’ lives and sensitive to the contexts in which teachers work.

This thesis also contributes to a growing body of scholarship that uses the theory of practice architectures as a way of understanding teaching as practice. By not only

describing each teacher's classroom pedagogy but also mapping the material-economic, cultural-discursive and social-political dimensions of teacher practice using the table of inventions, this thesis has been able to draw conclusions not only about the nature of individual teacher practice but the broader conditions, structures and influences that enable and constrain this practice. The theory of practice architectures was a particularly powerful theoretical tool in highlighting the previously unacknowledged role of the social-political dimension of teaching practice as a feature of good history teaching, and the pivotal role of this dimension in overcoming the constraints teachers face in pursuing their praxis.

The use of practice theory also informed key methodological decisions in the project, in particular the inclusion of extensive research conversations with teachers alongside focus group interviews with students as sources of data to complement observations of practice. Proceeding from the theoretical standpoint that teaching is a fundamentally social practice in which learning is co-constructed by teachers and students together, including the perspectives and words of both my participant teachers and their students was both a methodological and theoretical necessity, one which ultimately enhanced the claims of this thesis. The contribution of student voice in particular represents new and significant knowledge to research in the field of history pedagogy and practice. Student voice in this project contributed valuable insights into how students perceive and understand good teaching, and the importance of pedagogical relationships in generating student engagement for successful teaching and learning. More broadly, the data presented in chapter nine represent an argument in favour of regarding students as knowledgeable stakeholders in educational research. The students in this project have enriched this thesis with an understanding of practice that is so frequently left out of educational research concerning good teacher practice – one that values relationships and dimensions of practice that are not easily rendered 'measurable' against performance criteria.

What's next? Implications and possibilities for future research.

The research and findings of this thesis highlight a number of implications for how we research teacher practice and approach questions about teachers' disciplinary and pedagogical expertise in the field of history education, but also for education more broadly. Firstly, this study has highlighted the need for more educational research that draws on insights from within history classrooms to complement and enrich research around disciplinary thinking. In the Australian context, where concerns and anxieties about the nature of history teaching in schools continue to be ongoing political issues,

such research would ensure a more accurate understanding of how teaching and learning of history plays out in classrooms. The contributions of this thesis also demonstrate the value of sharing portraits of exemplary practice as a way to enrich and expand existing models and frameworks of historical thinking with insights from practice, and in doing so recognise that history teachers possess particular expertise in engaging students in historical learning.

More broadly, this research has highlighted the importance of research that considers and engages with complex questions of context when considering how teaching and learning happens in different sites. The call for more nuanced, contextualised, rich case study research is significant not least because of the proliferation of both research and policy approaches that lack such sensitivity to context and local circumstances. As Kemmis et al. argue:

In an era of national curricula, national professional standards for teachers and national assessment programs, it is more important to recognise and celebrate the particularity of learners and the particularity of sites in which they are situated. (2014, p. 218)

For each of the teachers in this study, the particularity of the sites in which they work profoundly shaped the possibilities for their practice, a finding which presents some broader research and policy implications. Accepting the interplay of both context and community in shaping teacher practice, more research is needed about how we adequately educate and prepare pre-service education students for the variety of school contexts in which they could possibly end up working, or at the very least how we support and induct teachers to become familiar with their school contexts and communities.

This research, concerned as it is with the nature of good teaching, has also generated insights which should provoke some consideration about how good teaching is framed and discussed in both public discourse and policy documents. The portraits of exemplary practice presented here demonstrate the rich insights we get into the nature and complexity of good teaching through such case study research. Similarly, this research has demonstrated the value in discussing not merely the individual qualities and pedagogical strategies of these exemplary teachers, but also the wider material-economic, cultural-discursive and social-political arrangements that operate to both

support and frustrate their practice. In light of policy approaches to ‘quality teaching’ that frame teaching as an individual pursuit and place responsibility for ‘being good’ at the feet of individual teachers, there is value in recognising the social and relational nature of teaching, and considering more holistically the range of broader local, systemic and structural issues that operate to impact on teachers and encouraging policy responses. With more research about the nature of contextual constraints on teacher practice we can then seek policy responses that remove or at the very least ameliorate such constraints as a strategy for supporting teachers and improving teacher practice.

Finally, this research highlights the need for more research that engages students in questions that concern their educational futures, including the experience of learning and their relationships with teachers. Engaging with student voice brings with it a range of practical and ethical challenges and necessitates careful reflection on issues of agency, authenticity and consent (Fielding, 2004). For teachers, the process of negotiating to conduct research with students about their practice is a delicate one that Mockler and Groundwater Smith have characterised as “risky business” (2014, p. 59). Inviting students into such conversations must be done in ways that are not tokenistic, with the parallel impact that they also have the potential to disrupt existing power dynamics in schools (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). Within the existing climate of teacher accountability there is also understandable scepticism that consultation and engagement with students on these issues could ultimately end up representing “another example of the cooption of student voice to become a technology of governance” (Mayes, 2018, p.2). These are not insignificant challenges that present many real impediments to the meaningful enactment and inclusion of student voice at a local level. Nevertheless as the students speaking in this research project demonstrate, there are rewards for us as a research community for grappling with and meeting some of these challenges. Students have much to say about teaching that is worth listening to, and the ripple effects of authentic engagement with student voice around the nature of good teaching presents an opportunity to better understand and recognise the complexity and skills of good teachers at work.

Conclusion

In the many months that have passed since I undertook my research with the participants in this study I have, from time to time, touched base with Penny, Max, Jane and Dan to keep them up to date with the project. Not long ago, Jane replied to me, thanking me for “not forgetting” about them at Bayview High School, and wanting to

update me on some of the students I spent time with during my observations and during my focus group interviews. Jane wrote:

One piece of news - you may remember [Lisa] and [Rachel], both characters that I felt had learned very little in history. Obviously their HSC results are best left unmentioned, however, you might be interested to know that early last year they toured through Europe together and sent a great many photos of the British Museum, Italy, France etc. to me. They enjoyed their cultural awakening so much that they are about to go back again. Of course, I don't think either of these two will ever trouble academia but I bet they will be very keen for their kids to do well at school. Which proves my point. Schools like [Bayview] may not get great results, but we make great people and put them (and their future families) on the path to greater success.

I include Jane's email here in the conclusion of this thesis for a few different reasons. Firstly because it distils in one short piece of correspondence the depth and complexity of teachers' practice that I sought so hard to capture over the course of this project, and yet which I always felt was so difficult to pin down and describe in a way that did the work of these professionals any justice. In this short email are Jane's hopes and expectations for her students, which eclipse any sort of competence in the discipline of history that she herself loves so dearly. Reflected in her words are the reasons behind her patience with students, her coaxing and corralling of these young people to learn and engage with the world around them so that they too might participate and understand not only history, but also their own place in it. Within the lines of that email is the reminder that, as Penny said to me many times throughout the study "I don't teach history, I teach students".

I also include Jane's email as a small symbolic act of allowing the teachers and students in this study to have something approaching the last word - in recognition that the classroom vignettes, stories and examples of practice contained in this research are not my own, but something borrowed from them and shared with the world in the hope that others may see and appreciate what might otherwise have remained hidden - the depth of their expertise, the sharpness of their intellect, their boundless creativity and their unwavering commitment to improving the lives of their students through the power of learning history.

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Appendix A

Ethics Approval (University of Sydney)



Research Integrity & Ethics Administration
Human Research Ethics Committee

Wednesday, 30 November 2016

Assoc Prof Timothy Allender
Education and Social Work - Research; Faculty of Education & Social Work
Email: tim.allender@sydney.edu.au

Dear Timothy

The University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has considered your application.

After consideration of your response to the comments raised your project has been approved.

Approval is granted for a period of four years from **30 November 2016** to **30 November 2020**

Project title: **Disciplinary, pedagogy and practice: a multiple case study of classroom history teaching**

Project no.: **2016/832**

First Annual Report due: **30 November 2017**

Authorised Personnel: **Allender Timothy; Mockler Nicole; Golledge Claire;**

Documents Approved:

Date Uploaded	Version number	Document Name
08/11/2016	Version 2	Teacher PIS clean
08/11/2016	Version 2	Student focus group PIS clean
08/11/2016	Version 2	Parent PIS clean
27/09/2016	Version 1	Interview schedule for teacher participants
27/09/2016	Version 1	Invitation to participate in research
27/09/2016	Version 1	Focus group questions
14/09/2016	Version 1	Researcher safety protocol
13/09/2016	Version 1	Participant consent form - teacher participant
13/09/2016	Version 1	Participant consent form - student
13/09/2016	Version 1	Participant consent form - parent
13/09/2016	Version 1	Call for nominations for research project
13/09/2016	Version 1	Lesson observation protocol

Condition/s of Approval

- Research must be conducted according to the approved proposal.
- An annual progress report must be submitted to the Ethics Office on or before the anniversary of approval and on completion of the project.
- You must report as soon as practicable anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project including:
 - > Serious or unexpected adverse events (which should be reported within 72 hours).
 - > Unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

Research Integrity & Ethics Administration
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ABN 15 211 513 464
CRICOS 00026A

- Any changes to the proposal must be approved prior to their implementation (except where an amendment is undertaken to eliminate *immediate* risk to participants).
- Personnel working on this project must be sufficiently qualified by education, training and experience for their role, or adequately supervised. Changes to personnel must be reported and approved.
- Personnel must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including any financial or other interest or affiliation, as relevant to this project.
- Data and primary materials must be retained and stored in accordance with the relevant legislation and University guidelines.
- Ethics approval is dependent upon ongoing compliance of the research with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, applicable legal requirements, and with University policies, procedures and governance requirements.
- The Ethics Office may conduct audits on approved projects.
- The Chief Investigator has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the research and is responsible for ensuring all others involved will conduct the research in accordance with the above.

This letter constitutes ethical approval only.

Please contact the Ethics Office should you require further information or clarification.

Sincerely



Associate Professor Stephen Assinder
Chair
Human Research Ethics Committee

The University of Sydney HRECs are constituted and operate in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) and the NHMRC's Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007).

Appendix B

Approval to conduct research in NSW Public Schools (SERAP)



Ms Claire Golledge
25 Austral Street
PENSHURST NSW 2222

DOC17/13745
SERAP 2016493

Dear Ms Golledge

I refer to your application to conduct a research project in NSW government schools entitled *Disciplinary, Pedagogy and Practice: a multiple case study of classroom history teaching*. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved.

You may contact principals of the nominated schools to seek their participation. **You should include a copy of this letter with the documents you send to principals.**

This approval will remain valid until 10-Jan-2018.

The following researchers or research assistants have fulfilled the Working with Children screening requirements to interact with or observe children for the purposes of this research for the period indicated:

Researcher name	WWCC	WWCC expires
Claire Golledge	WWC1077647E	29-Jul-2021

I draw your attention to the following requirements for all researchers in NSW government schools:

- The privacy of participants is to be protected as per the NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
- School principals have the right to withdraw the school from the study at any time. The approval of the principal for the specific method of gathering information must also be sought.
- The privacy of the school and the students is to be protected.
- The participation of teachers and students must be voluntary and must be at the school's convenience.
- Any proposal to publish the outcomes of the study should be discussed with the research approvals officer before publication proceeds.
- All conditions attached to the approval must be complied with.

When your study is completed please email your report to: serap@det.nsw.edu.au
You may also be asked to present on the findings of your research.

I wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely



Dr Robert Stevens
Manager, Research
10 January 2017

School Policy and Information Management
NSW Department of Education
Level 1, 1 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst NSW 2010 – Locked Bag 53, Darlinghurst NSW 1300
Telephone: 02 9244 5060 – Email: serap@det.nsw.edu.au



Appendix C

Participant information statements



Faculty of Education and Social Work

ABN 15 211 513 464

Associate Professor Tim Allender

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Disciplinary, Pedagogy and Practice: a multiple case study of classroom history teaching

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study about the classroom practices of exemplary history teachers.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you have been identified by your peers and nominated as an exemplary history teacher. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary.

By giving consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

- Associate Professor Tim Allender, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney

Disciplinary, Pedagogy and Practice
Project number:
Version 3 17/7/2017

Page 1 of 5

- Dr Nicole Mockler, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney
- Ms Claire Golledge, PhD candidate, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney

Ms Claire Golledge is conducting this study as the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at The University of Sydney. This will take place under the supervision of Associate Professor Tim Allender.

(3) What will the study involve for me?

As part of this study, the researcher will aim to get to know you as a teacher and observe your classroom teaching practice. Specifically you will be asked to:

- Participate in an initial (audio-recorded) interview of approximately 1 hour regarding your professional background and your experience and approaches to teaching history. This can be done on school premises at a time most convenient to you.
- Consent to being observed in teaching approximately 20-25 history lessons over a period of weeks 4-6 weeks in a pattern negotiated between you and the researcher. The researcher will take detailed field notes during her observations of your lessons about your teaching practice.
- Participate in weekly reflective conversations arising the lessons observed that week. These conversations will explore such topics as the reason for your choosing particular teaching strategies and reflecting on particular episodes or exchanges in that week's lessons. These conversations will be audio recorded for transcription at a later date
- The conversations will be held on school premises at a time most convenient to you.

I will also ask if I may take photographs of your classroom with no people present, and with no identifying features.

The transcripts and field notes obtained during this research will be used in the writing and publication of a PhD thesis. You will be given the opportunity to review transcripts and field notes of the researchers observations prior to publication. You would not be personally identified in the resulting research.

(4) How much of my time will the study take?

This research will require your participation over a 4-6 week period. The lesson observations will take place during lessons you would normally be teaching and should not impact additionally on your time. It is anticipated that the initial interview will take approximately 1 hour and the weekly reflective conversations approximately one hour for each week you are participating in the study.

(5) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can do this by contacting the researcher by phone or email and requesting to withdraw from the study. There are no consequences for withdrawing from the study at any stage.

Interviews:

You are free to stop the interview at any time. Unless you say that you want us to keep them, any recordings will be erased and the information you have provided will not be included in the study results. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview.

(6) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

(7) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

There is no financial benefit to you for being associated with the study. You may find the opportunity to engage in reflective conversations about your teaching is beneficial to your own teaching practice.

The study aims to benefit the teaching profession more broadly by highlighting the teaching practices of very skilled history teachers and sharing this information more widely.

(8) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

Your information will be stored securely and your identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but you will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

All written, audio and electronic data collected will be used for the purposes of the current study only with findings published in de-identified form as a student theses and also in journal publications and conference presentations. Your anonymity will be protected in the publication of findings via the use of pseudonyms and other fictional changes.

During the study all electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer belonging to the researcher and stored (along with hard copies of data) in a locked cabinet in a secure university. Only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the data.

Following the study all information and data will be stored in a secure location on the University grounds for a period of 20 years consistent with University guidelines for research involving young people. Access will be restricted to researchers only. Once the required storage time has passed all hard forms of data will be destroyed by shredding with any electronic data being deleted from server and reformatted to ensure files can not be recovered.

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. This information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

(9) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study.

(10) What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Ms Claire Golledge will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Associate Professor Tim Allender on 9351 6334 or at tim.allender@sydney.edu.au

(11) Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by indicating this on the consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a summary of research findings and an electronic copy of the final publishes thesis. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished.

(12) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney [INSERT protocol number once approval is obtained]. As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

- **Telephone:** +61 2 8627 8176
- **Email:** ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

This information sheet is for you to keep

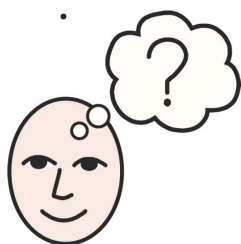
ABN 15 211 513 464

Associate Professor Tim Allender

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Study Information Sheet: **Disciplinary, Pedagogy and Practice: A multiple case study of classroom history teaching**

Hello. Our names are Tim Allender and Claire Golledge.



We are doing a research study to find out more about how good history teachers help their students learn.

We are asking you to be in our study because we want to hear what you have to say about learning history.

You can decide if you want to take part in the study or not. You don't have to - it's up to you.

This sheet tells you what we will ask you to do if you decide to take part in the study. Please read it carefully so that you can make up your mind about whether you want to take part.

If you decide you want to be in the study and then you change your mind later, that's ok. All you need to do is tell us that you don't want to be in the study anymore.

If you have any questions, you can ask us or your family or someone else who looks after you. If you want to, you can call us any time on +61 2 93516334.

What will happen if I say that I want to be in the study?

If you decide that you want to be in our study, we will ask you to do these things:

- Join a focus group with other students from your history class. Claire will ask you all (as a group) a few questions about how you feel about learning history. We will meet in a classroom during normal school hours.

When we ask you questions, you can choose which ones you want to answer. If you don't want to talk about something, that's ok. You can stop talking to us at any time if you don't want to talk to us anymore.

If you say it's ok, we will record what the group talks about with a tape recorder.

When you talk with us and other people in a group, we won't be able to take out the things you say after you have said them. This is because you will be talking in a group and our notes will have all the things that everyone else said as well.

Will anyone else know what I say in the study?



All of the information that we have about you from the study will be stored in a safe place and we will look after it very carefully. We will write a report about the study and show it to other people but we won't say your name in the report and no one will know that you were in the study, unless you tell us that it's ok for us to say your name.

How long will the study take?

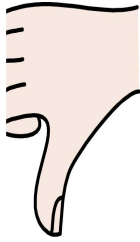


The focus group will take no more than 40 minutes.

Are there any good things about being in the study?



You won't get anything for being in the study, but you will be helping us do our research.



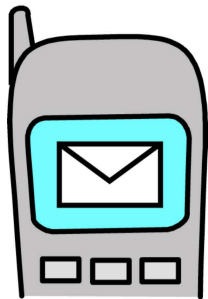
Are there any bad things about being in the study?

This study will take up some of your time, but we don't think it will be bad for you or cost you anything.

Will you tell me what you learnt in the study at the end?

Yes, we will if you want us to. There is a question on the next page that asks you if you want us to tell you what we learnt in the study. If you circle Yes, when we finish the study we will tell you what we learnt.

What if I am not happy with the study or the people doing the study?



If you are not happy with how we are doing the study or how we treat you, then you or the person who looks after you can:

- **Call** the university on +61 2 8627 8176 or
- Write an **email** to ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au.

This sheet is for you to keep.

The pictures we used in this sheet are from Microsoft Clip Art and from the people at Inspired Services Publishing (www.inspiredservices.org.uk). They said it's ok for us to use them.

ABN 15 211 513 464

Associate Professor Tim AllenderRoom 525
Education Building A35
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Telephone: +61 2 93516334
Facsimile: +61 2 93514580
Email: tim.allender@sydney.edu.au
Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>**Disciplinary, Pedagogy and Practice: A multiple case study of classroom history teaching****PARENTAL INFORMATION STATEMENT****(1) What is this study about?**

Your child is invited to take part in a research study about the professional practices of exemplary history teachers.

Your child has been invited to participate in this study because their history teacher (insert name) is being observed for the study and we would like them to participate in a focus group about learning history in this class. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to let your child take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary.

By giving your consent you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree for your child to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your child's personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Parental Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

- Associate Professor Tim Allender, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney
- Dr Nicole Mockler, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney
- Ms Claire Golledge, PhD candidate, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney

:

Ms Claire Golledge is conducting this study as the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at The University of Sydney. This will take place under the supervision of Associate Professor Tim Allender.

(3) What will the study involve?

The study will involve your child participating in one focus group with other students from their history class, and answering some questions about how they feel about learning history. The focus group will be audio recorded to support the research notes made by the researcher (Claire Golledge). The focus group will occur during regular school hours, on school premises and at a time negotiated with the school.

(4) How much time will the study take?

The focus group should take no more than 40 minutes.

(5) Who can take part in the study?

All students in (insert teacher's name)'s history class are invited to take part in this study.

(6) Does my child have to be in the study? Can they withdraw from the study once they've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and your child does not have to take part. Your decision whether to let them participate will not affect your/their relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney, now or in the future.

If your child takes part in a focus group, they are free to stop participating at any stage or to refuse to answer any of the questions. However, it will not be possible to withdraw their individual comments from our records once the group has started, as it is a group discussion.

(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Aside from giving up their time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study for your child.

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

We cannot guarantee that your child will receive any direct benefits from being in the study.

(9) What will happen to information that is collected during the study?

Your child's information will be stored securely and their identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but your child will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

All written, audio and electronic data collected will be used for the purposes of the current study only with findings published in de-identified form as a student theses and also in journal publications and conference presentations. Your child's anonymity will be protected in the publication of findings via the use of pseudonyms .

During the study all electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer belonging to the researcher and stored (along with hard copies of data) in a locked cabinet in a secure university. Only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the data.

Following the study all information and data will be stored in a secure location on the University grounds for a period of 20 years consistent with University guidelines for research involving young people. Access will be restricted to researchers only. Once the required storage time has passed all hard forms of data will be destroyed by shredding with any electronic data being deleted from server and reformatted to ensure files can not be recovered.

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about your child for the purposes of this research study. Their personal information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

Your child's information will be stored securely and their identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but your child will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

(10) Can I or my child tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study.

(11) What if we would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Claire Golledge will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Associate Professor Tim Allender on 9351 6334 or at tim.allender@sydney.edu.au

(12) Will we be told the results of the study?

You and your child have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by ticking the relevant box on the consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a summary of the research findings that will be published as a PhD thesis. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished.

(13) What if we have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney (Protocol number 2016/832). As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you (or your child) are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

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- **Email:** ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

This information sheet is for you to keep

Appendix D

Interview schedule (teachers)

Preamble to interview:

The purpose of this interview is to explore your own background and experience as a history teacher, as well as your own thoughts and philosophy about history and history education more generally. You are not obliged to answer these questions and we can stop the interview at any time should you wish to do so.

1. Before we talk about your own background as a history teacher, I'm interested to know – what were your experiences of history like when you were at school?

Prompt:

- Do you have any specific memories of your history classroom or teachers when you were a student? Tell me more about these.

2: Tell me about how you came to be a history teacher?

Prompts:

- When did you/ what made you realise you wanted to be a teacher?
- Where and when did you first start teaching history?

3: Thinking about when you first began teaching history, how did you feel about your teaching practice in those initial years?

Prompts arising from answers:

- Tell me more about why you felt that way? Any memories of specific incidents that caused you to feel that way?
- What kind of strategies helped you find your way as a beginning teacher of history? Were any individuals particularly significant to helping you?

4: Do you feel your teaching practice has changed since you first started teaching?

Prompts:

- In what way has it changed/ stayed the same?
- Can you think of what has influenced these changes?

5. How would you describe your current teaching practice in regards to history?

Prompt:

- What do you think I might observe when I visit your classroom? What will I see going on?

6. Reflecting on your own teaching practice, what do you see are your particular strengths in the classroom?

7. What do you enjoy most about teaching history?

8. Can you think of a lesson or sequence of lessons that you feel was especially engaging for your students? Tell me about that lesson/ lessons.

Prompt:

- How did you know your students were engaged?
- Is this a strategy you had used previously?
- What made you decide to teach it that way?

9. How do you go about engaging students who show a lack of interest in history?

10. I want to move to the topic of history education more generally for a moment – we have compulsory history education to year 10 in NSW and from time to time the topic of how much history and what history our students should learn is debated by wider society - do you have a view about those debates? What do you personally see as the purpose of history education?

Prompts:

- Why do you see that as the purpose of history education?

Probe:

- You say you feel the purpose of history education is (.....). How do you think this is reflected in the way that you teach history?

Prompts:

- Tell me more about that (approach to practice)
- How supported do you feel in pursuing that purpose with your students? Do you ever feel there are any barriers put up? (probe as to what they might be).

11. Some people consider there is a tension for history teachers between the demands of a syllabus to cover a particular amount of historical content and the teaching of historical skills to students. Do you have any thoughts on that tension?

Prompts:

- Do you feel this tension in your own practice? If so – how do you manage / negotiate it?
- How well do you feel the curriculum allows you to explore/ navigate those tensions?

12. (If not previously raised by participant) I'm wondering if you are aware of research around the topic of 'historical thinking' in the classroom?

Probe:

- (If yes, aware) Tell me about what you understand is meant by historical thinking?
- How do you think teachers can encourage historical thinking by their students?

13. I'm interesting in hearing from you what you think are the essential elements of history that students need to learn about, and how you think you might help students develop an understanding of these:

Probe/ prompt:

- (for essential elements/ skills mentioned) how do you try to encourage this in your classroom?
- Any other aspects?
- (if not previously mentioned) probe on skills of orienting students in new time and place/ developing historical empathy/ dealing with complexity and contradiction

14. Thinking again about your teaching practice, what is your view about the use of textbooks in the history classroom?

Probe:

- How much use do you make of history text books in your teaching practice?

15. What role do primary sources play in your classroom?

Probe:

- (explore different ways in which they might be used in different contexts volunteered by participant)

16. How much use do you make of historiography in your classroom?

Probe:

- (explore different ways in which they might be used in different contexts volunteered by participant)

17. Reflecting again on the way in which your practice might have developed or changed over time, could you tell me about things you do to stay engaged with the discipline of history?

Prompt:

- Do you attend any professional learning/ do professional reading/ read for own education/enjoyment/ further study?

18. If you could change anything about the way history is currently taught in secondary schools, what would it be?

19. Is there anything you would like to add or anything you would like to ask about the interview?

Appendix E

Interview schedule (student focus groups)

Icebreaker activity (see images attached):

To start with I'd like you to select an image that shows how you feel about learning history in (teacher's name)'s class. Share responses.

Question route:

1. I'd like you to think about a history lesson you have had with (teacher's name) where you learned something that you felt was important. Tell me about that lesson:

What do you learn?

Why do you feel it was important?

What happened in the lesson?

How do you think what happened helped you to learn?

2. What do you enjoy most about (teacher's name)'s history lessons?

3. If you could change anything about learning in history in (teacher's name)'s class what would it be?

Appendix F

Stimulus images for student focus group interview

Focus group stimulus images:

Image 1:

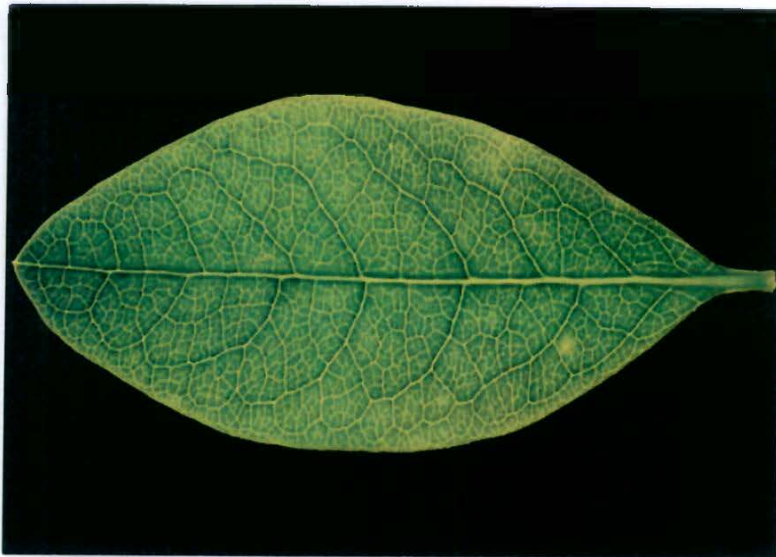


Image 2:

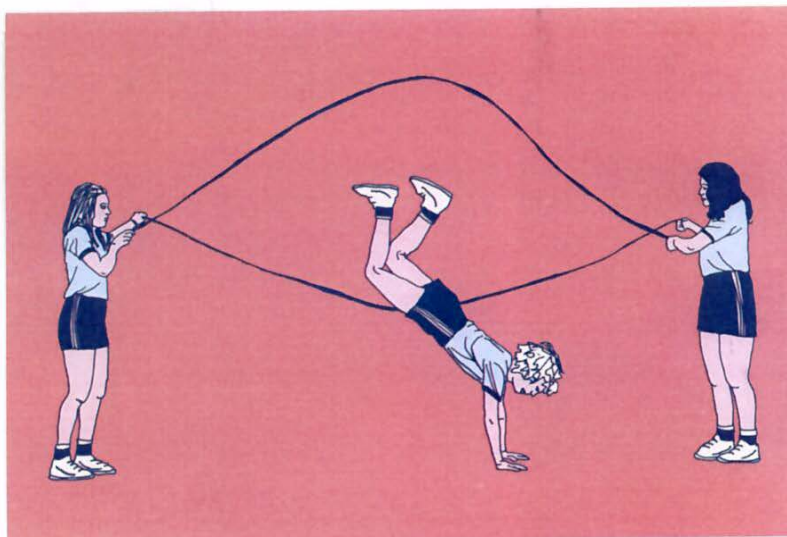


Image 3:

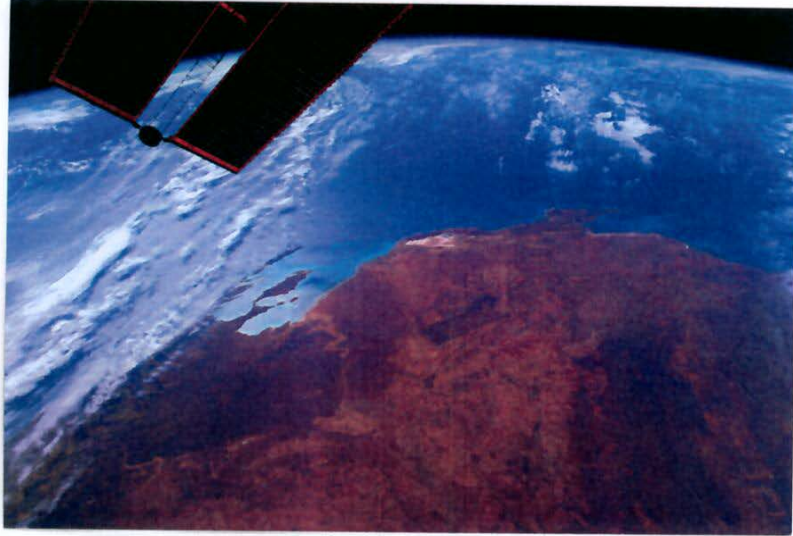


Image 4:

