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Chapter 9

The Role of the Teacher Ruth Wood and Claire Jackson, with Sandra Bayliss and Nick Usher

Introduction

The teacher's role may be perceived and described in many ways. It is possible that emphasis is placed upon facilitating, supporting, leading and guiding the cognitive development of the learner. Skills, knowledge and understanding, which are embodied in curriculum documentation and presented according to subject relevance, are often foregrounded. The process of translating curricula such as this into practice is sufficiently challenging; however, the preceding chapters highlight the multi-faceted role of the teacher, which extends beyond the measurable and more tangible outcomes of learning. In an age of supercomplexity, the teacher is amidst competing and often conflicting demands, which are difficult to navigate. As a moral practice, teachers will consider and respond to the needs and well-being of the learner not only contemplating how pupils might perform in assessments but also reflecting upon the needs and experiences of the pupil as an individual in their own right – collaborating and communicating with other professionals beyond the geography of the classroom and forging sustainable and productive links between home and school. At the core of such activity are teachers' own values, and to gain a better understanding of these, this chapter examines the individual and the collective voice of teachers drawn from a range of practice settings. In so doing, this chapter explores the ways in which teachers conceptualise and enact their role and the factors that influence their values, identity and practice.

Being a teacher

Individual conversations with teachers in England during the 2017–18 academic year provided the basis for this chapter. In three instances, these were recorded and analysed in order to inform the discussion. Ten questions guided each conversation and provided a means of exploring the values, beliefs and experiences of teachers working in either an Early Years (for children from birth to five years of age) or Primary setting (for pupils aged between seven and eleven years). As conversations, it was possible to explore ideas in a relatively informal manner where both individuals were able to consider, reflect upon and respond to one another's ideas and experiences. Each conversation was transcribed and analysed in order to identify some common themes and variations arising from individual circumstances.

The contributors to the conversations have been included as authors, and have provided feedback in the development of this chapter. The opening question designed to initiate the conversation, 'what is the role of a teacher?', may seem relatively straightforward; yet, responses varied quite widely and often included examples, which revealed some of the micro- and macro activities alongside the range and diversity of roles within a role. Above all, the answers given by teachers highlighted the

ever-present challenges and tensions, which require more than the verb 'teach' to adequately reflect all of the intricacies and complexities associated with this role. Initially, there was a tendency to list a range of terms, for example, the teacher is an 'educator', 'facilitator' or 'impartor of knowledge'. Alongside these terms there were a range of perceived responsibilities signalled using terms such as 'substitute parent', 'social worker', 'therapist' and 'carer'. Often, the list of terms was delivered with some humour, but then revised and modified to make distinctions between the teacher's role and that of others. For example, one teacher revised the use of the term 'therapist' and explained that 'I know that I am not a trained therapist but sometimes I feel as though I am providing some sort of therapy to parents or children because they can share their anxieties, worries and fears with you, as the teacher, and you need to be able to respond to them'.

Window on Research

Löfström, E. and Poom-Valickis, K. (2013) 'Beliefs about teaching: Persistent or malleable? A longitudinal study of prospective student teachers' beliefs', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 35, pp. 104–113.

Löfström and Poom-Valackis (2013) carried out a longitudinal study exploring the beliefs about the role of the teacher with Estonian undergraduates in their first and third years of a non-teaching degree programme. The driver for this research was concerned about the diminishing numbers of students entering teacher training. Students were asked to describe the role of a teacher using a metaphor and also to complete a knowledge-based instrument, which used rank ordering. The research questions were: (1) What metaphors do students use to express their beliefs about the teacher/teaching? (2) How do students' beliefs about the teacher's role (as measured with the teacher's knowledge-based instrument) differ between the first and the third years of study? (3) What kind of relationship exists between the measurement of beliefs using metaphors and the teacher's knowledge-based instrument in the first and third years of study? (4) Is there a difference in beliefs about the teacher's role between students who chose to enter teacher education programmes and those who chose other educational paths?

Analysis of the data identified that students in their first year most commonly used a metaphor that reflected the teacher as a nurturer or pedagogue, with others focusing on subject knowledge and didactic expertise. By the third year metaphors were often expanded to reflect a developing belief and understanding of teaching. The knowledge-based instrument produced similar findings with students who continued into teacher training scoring higher on the pedagogue element and lower on the subject matter expert element than those who did not choose teacher education. The researchers conclude from this that there is a dominating belief that the role of the teacher is that of a care-taker or someone who supports the upbringing and development of children. When researching the beliefs of prospective practitioners in Estonia, Löfström and Poom-Valickis asked participants to offer metaphors that described the teacher (2013). For example, the participants completed the sentence 'A teacher is ...' with a wide variety of words and phrases including, but not restricted to, a leader, a second mother, a radio, a king (2013, p. : 108). Overall, Löfström and Poom-Valickis's research highlighted the emphasis their participants placed primarily on the teacher as a 'nurturer' and thereafter on the importance of subject knowledge (2013: 111).

This seems to echo the perspectives of the teachers in our study who shared specific examples from practice, which illustrated their perceptions of the conflicting demands between care and education aspects of the teacher's role. Similarly, the early years teacher identified the challenge of balancing the heart and the head (Cox and Sykes, 2016) when working with young children. She identified that an element of 'professional love' (Page, 2011) is required so that children feel secure in their

environment and are ready to learn and develop. Comment During conversations, it became apparent that there exists an interplay between the terms 'role' and 'identity'. Roles are usually defined by the school or society and may be linked to a professional code of practice, whereas identities can be a source of meaning that is developed through individual experiences and reflections (Gu, 2014); often influenced by significant others. The interweaving of this terminology is evident both in the literature and the interviews with teachers. For example, when asked why they had entered the teaching profession, responses from teachers focused on, 'making a difference in the lives of children and families'; 'enabling children to reach their potential'; and, in some way, 'impacting on a generation'. Pollard (2014) identifies similar attitudes, referring to them as 'early idealism'. Many teachers enter the profession with a strong sense of purpose and with a desire to contribute to communities and society. Personal values motivate them at the start of their teaching career and are drawn on as teachers find their place within schools and the profession. This brings challenges as teachers evaluate their practice within the context of a personal philosophy based on socially just practices alongside the statutory requirements of the profession. As Moyles (2001, p. : 90) states, 'For practice to reach professional status, both head and heart need to meet at the interface of reflection.'

Whilst reflecting on their journey from newly qualified teachers to their current professional status, practitioners in this study identified changes that had taken place as they dealt with the daily struggles of practice related to pupils and policy. Drawing on past experiences and personal values, they looked towards their future image of self as a teacher. This refining process of development from initial teaching experiences to more confident professionalism is explored by Ewing and Manual (2005). They analyse the perceptions of new teachers through the stages of early expectations and a sense of vocation; early days of the first teaching appointment;: early survival phase; finding a place; consolidating pedagogical content knowledge; and building a professional identity. One of the teachers in Ewing and Manual's study shared the views of our practitioners that the personal commitment and sacrifice required to meet their own high expectations of the professional role have impacted on their sense of self and identity. Ewing and Manual (2005) conclude that the voice of the teacher needs to be heard more consistently through meaningful contexts within the infrastructure of the school. This can enable connections with other staff members and opportunities to reflect on personal philosophy, tensions, anxieties and successes within a coconstructive ethos. The personal values that underpin practice support this process of reflection and enable teachers to evaluate what they do in the classroom alongside what they believe about education and learning (see Chapter 8).

This reflection also takes place within the context of external policy and curriculum challenges, highlighting another role of the teacher as a 'creative mediator of policy' (Pollard, 2014, p. 5). Our teachers identified that a strong sense of personal identity supported by considered values and beliefs also gave them the confidence, motivation and resilience to manage the balance between work and life; thus enabling them to more effectively provide high- quality learning experiences for each pupil and to maintain a positive sense of self and well-being. This can be viewed as a self-perpetuating cycle as these teachers then have the drive, enthusiasm and well-established personal philosophy to provide quality- learning opportunities for the pupils in their care. Reflective Question Following Lostrom and Poom-Valickis's research, complete the sentence 'A teacher is ... ' with as many words or phrases as you can think of. How do these help to describe your values?

Reflexive Question

What has shaped these values? Drawing on values and beliefs can initiate an affective response, which then impacts on actions in the classroom and interactions with pupils, parents and colleagues

(Hargreaves, 1998). It has already been recognized in this chapter that teachers are, most likely, driven by a need to protect and support their pupils and that they feel passionate about this role. Some contemporary research has concluded that such feelings and emotions are a necessary part of teaching (Claxton, 1999; Goleman, 1996) and highlights the importance of attuned teachers who see, hear, feel and sense 'the everyday nuances of children's lives' (Cox and Sykes, 2016, p.: 16). There is, however, a complex interplay between care and education: another potential dilemma for the reflective teacher to engage with. Cox and Sykes (2016) liken the role of the teacher to a kaleidoscope due to its ever-changing nature. This constant integration of status, identity and values is then subject to re-examination and testing within a societal context. During social change, the teacher can become a mediator 'bridging the past, the present and the future' (Gu, 2014, p. : 4). For example, within assessment, the current government drive is focused on standardization, testing, raising levels of attainment and data; much of the resulting pedagogy is at odds with the philosophies of teachers who place the pupil at the centre of their practice and recognize the value of creativity within the curriculum. Many teachers are drawing on their professional values in order to navigate a way through this climate in order to provide inspiring and supportive ways of making a difference in the lives of pupils now and for the future. For example, curriculum-related teaching and management responsibilities such as after-school clubs, residential school trips, assemblies, lunchtime supervision and fundraising events including school fairs, all lie outside the formal curriculum but are inevitably connected. These provide enhancements to the pupils' learning experience either directly or indirectly. Some would argue that as the curriculum becomes more focussed upon reading, writing and mathematics, other subjects are pushed to the periphery and squeezed in terms of time and resources. The 'broad and balanced' curriculum advocated by the Schools Council (amongst others) in the 1970s has, perhaps, faced challenges with greater attention focussed on what are referred to as 'core subjects', notably English and mathematics. In elevating some subject areas of the curriculum above others it might be argued that the cohesion and relatedness between subjects has been diminished with greater interest placed upon what pupils learn in a relatively diminished curriculum field. The OfSTED education inspection framework (2019) appears to be addressing the dilemma of balancing and inter-relating subjects within the curriculum. Terminology such as 'well balanced, knowledge-rich, skills, and cultural capital' appear in the documentation and the impact of the framework on the role of the teacher will be interesting to monitor over time.

Reflective Questions

What external influences do you think are constantly affecting your role as a teacher? What tensions have you experienced in your role? In what ways might these tensions affect your values? Will they change or be affirmed? It is impossible to separate the identity of the teacher from society. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, teachers are able to recognize the external influences that shape their role. The pupils, the classroom environment, school policies and procedures, parents, colleagues, other professionals and government initiatives or changes, impact upon the social and cultural construction of teacher identity. As Griffin (2008, p. : 356) states, this formation of identity takes place at 'the intersection where the outside world meets the individual.'

Conflict, Challenge and Change

Inevitably, when exploring the range of activities undertaken by teachers, conversation turned towards some of the challenges, most notably tensions between a target-driven culture and the need to support pupils' development and well-being. Much has been written regarding performativity, new managerialism and neoliberal times; this chapter does not intend to revisit these debates but instead, seeks to explore conflicting demands and the experiences of teachers in

light of their professional values and beliefs. As revealed in the previous section, teachers placed the pupil's welfare and development at the core of their activity. Even when additional responsibilities were called upon such as the management of a curriculum area, the teachers described how their actions sought to enrich or support learning experiences.

Case study: Role conflict

Country: England

Age group: Seven to eleven 7–11 years

Setting: Primary School

Participants involved: Primary school teacher

All teachers held additional roles and responsibilities. As a P.E. coordinator, one teacher disclosed how they invested evenings and weekends supporting pupils' participation at sporting events and how they were also responsible for the development of planning and assessment in the subject area. As they explained, You do it for the children. because you know that for some they would not have the opportunity to participate in activities if you didn't do it. It's a lot of extra work and it means you have less time to focus on planning for your own class, you know, marking their work and preparing for the next day. It's also not always seen by other people, as it is out of the school day and sometimes at weekends too. I mean I enjoy it because the children want to do it but it is hard to balance the two. When I've got reports to write it is almost impossible.

OUTCOMES

Sometimes, additional roles and activities might resonate with one another, but in other instances they might compete and conflict with what might be considered to be the primary and perhaps most important role of the class teacher. As one teacher with management responsibilities stated, ' ... and teaching has to come in there somewhere. I love being in the classroom because I can actually be with the children and teach them something.'

WHAT WE CAN LEARN

Even for those who were relatively new to the profession, some form of additional responsibility has been assigned. The teacher is effectively burdened with more responsibilities, which can only make it more challenging to focus on teaching-related activities in their expanding role. In management terms, this would be described as 'role-overload' and 'work overload' (Handy, 1993, p. : 67) with additional tasks placed on top of, or alongside the existing ones. It is during the conversations with teachers that the values they hold are revealed. It is possible that teachers find their values challenged or displaced not only from increasing and potentially conflicting demands but also from the 'terrors of performativity' bringing about changes not only in the schools as organizations but also in each individual's understanding as to what it means to be a teacher (Ball, 2003, 2016). Among the various mechanisms of performativity and accountability, OfSTED inspections seemed to be particularly challenging with the period awaiting notification of an inspection described by one teacher as a time when, ' ... you focus so much on the paperwork that you don't have time to do the job. I'm not saying that we let anything slide but we didn't necessarily do things in as timely a fashion as we did this time last year.'. In such instances, teacher's values and beliefs are tested with the need to perform to the required standards sometimes running counter to the teachers' convictions. This apparent conflict raises discussion surrounding the need for teachers to 'employ some sort of moral compass' (Santry, 2018) in order to take a stand against perceived threats which

do not appear to place the interests of the pupil at the heart of professional practice. In a competitive and performance-oriented system this is not without risk where perceptions of success (and failure) are often determined by measures, statistics and comparison. Uncertainty and self-doubt were visited and revisited in conversations with the teachers who raised their concerns and analysed their actions and specific events in an attempt to resolve what might be described as 'cognitive dissonance' (Festinger, 1962) where there are apparent inconsistencies between values and action. In such circumstances, individuals may change either their belief or their action. Changing belief is unlikely to be undertaken lightly or within a short space of time and so it is more likely that the action will cease or be subject to modification. However, where the latter incurs an element of risk resolution may involve adjusting perceptions associated with the action to justify or rationalize the conflict between belief and action. In all conversations, the amount of paperwork involved in teaching was highlighted as being both necessary yet overwhelming with teachers seemingly trying to find some resolution to possible dissonance. Comments surrounding the collection and management of data, some of which are listed below, were particularly interesting and revealed some of the underlying tensions. '... there's lots and lots of paperwork ... recording everything you can although you may not need it ... but there may be that one instance when it is necessary and then you've got it.' '... the marking load is absolutely huge ... somewhere in there is the actual teaching and I love the teaching ... with everything else that goes on I would say I spend less than half of my time actually teaching ... face-to-face teaching.' " ... taking into consideration all of the work I do outside the school day it's quite frightening how much of that time I actually spend teaching the children."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, all of the teachers indicated that their working week would almost always extend into evenings and weekends, a trend which was noted by Campbell and Neill in 1994 and which remains pertinent in a recent study commissioned by the DfE, which reported that of 3,186 teachers completing an online survey, one-quarter of full-time teachers and nearly one-third of part-time teachers undertook work outside the school hours (DfE, 2017, p. 3). According to the Department for Education's workload challenge survey, there were two tasks that were most cited as unnecessarily contributing to workload. These were 'recording, inputting, monitoring and analysing data (56%)' and 'excessive/depth of marking – detail and frequency required (53%)' (DfE, 2015, p. 7–8). Respondents, indicated that both of these were exacerbated by 'accountability/perceived pressures of Ofsted (53%)' and 'tasks set by senior/middle leaders (51%)' (DfE, 2015, p. 8). The National Federation for Educational Research (NFER) analysed survey responses from 'at least 1000 primary and secondary school teachers' undertaken at three intervals over one year and twenty-one interviews of teachers who were considering or who had already left a teaching career in the state sector (Lynch et al., 2016, pp. 21–24). The analysis of these data supports the findings from the DfE workload challenge survey and suggests that inspection and changes in policy are perceived by teachers as critical factors in increasing workload. It is possible that more experienced teachers require less time to plan for and assess learning as they can draw upon a knowledge base informed by their practice. This was mentioned by one of the teachers; however, there is also a sense that this, in addition to an increasing array of middle management roles, may result in the proliferation of paperwork and procedures. Recruitment and retention of teachers has also been revealed as problematic with teacher numbers continuing to fall at a time when there are increasing numbers of pupils (Foster, 2018, p. : 4). Concerns regarding teacher retention and rates of attrition also seem to exist in other countries (Geiger and Pivovarova, 2018, Schaefer, Long and Clandinin, 2012).

Schaefer, Long and Clandinin (2012) have undertaken an extensive literature review drawing on research conducted across the globe and they arrive at the conclusion that there is a 'need to shift

the dialogue from the focus on retaining teachers towards a conversation about sustaining teachers throughout their careers' (2012, p. 118). Using a mixed method approach involving 1,400 teachers from thirty-seven Arizona public schools from 2011 to 2014, Geiger and Pivovarov (2018) also argue that improved 'positive working conditions, teacher involvement, and providing teachers with opportunities for professional development' were key elements to improving teacher retention (2018, p. 619). Issues that have been identified through discussion with education professionals in preparation for this chapter also illustrate how teachers might become morally disillusioned and overloaded with the pressures of paperwork and targets. As this situation reaches a crisis point in England, the Government appear to be formally tackling workload through the Ofsted education inspection framework (2019) along with reduced workload documentation and tool kits (DfE, 2019a). These measures are welcomed by educators but will require time to embed and have a measurable impact. Fundamentally, all of the interviewed teachers reiterated that making a difference to pupils' lives through creating positive learning experiences, supporting their overall development and their well-being was what brought them into teaching and was what they found most rewarding. It was this, alongside the values and support shared and provided with and between their colleagues, which effectively countered the challenges they faced. They recognized the relevance of assessment and record-keeping in order to gain a clear understanding of individual pupil's needs and to support progression but these comments were tempered by concerns which signalled perceived inconsistencies regarding what they believed to be the teacher's role and the demands made upon them in practice. Certainly, the discussions with teachers highlighted the many demands associated with accountability and performativity measures with assessing, marking and monitoring dominating conversations.

There were anxieties surrounding the intensified use of data, its expansion within the education sector and the challenges and tensions of data-driven practice. Roberts-Holmes argues that the demands placed on teachers to produce 'appropriate data' only serve to diminish and narrow the focus of early years teaching (2014, p. : 303); effectively, this would mean that the measurable and the measured become the priority –; this, at a time when the production and availability of data through technological developments is vastly accelerating and multiplying. In what has been described as 'the information society' (Webster, 2006), or in earlier literature as 'the knowledge society' (Hargreaves, 2003) and 'the knowledge-based economy' (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1996), the speed, capacity and arrangement of technology in a vast array of networks upon networks bring about a sense of instability and uncertainty. With attention placed upon economics, productivity and employability, the teacher is tasked with preparing pupils to live and flourish in this fast-paced climate of change where 'innovation, flexibility and commitment to change' are essential for economic prosperity (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 1). The digital revolution and technological change impact upon our understanding of who you are and how you act in what Barnett describes as a 'supercomplex world' (Barnett, 2000, p. 257). Teachers face challenges in finding an understanding of their roles often with a sense that the problems faced by society in a time of supercomplexity can only be resolved by the actions of the teacher. This, perhaps, has always been the case with education seen as a means of resolving society's problems. In the knowledge society, the teacher is required to not only prepare the workforce of the future, acting as 'catalyst' in forging a successful future, but also counter the vast and wide-ranging problems within such a society all of which are undertaken against a backdrop of performativity where high expectations generate the potential for teachers to become 'casualties'. Hargreaves presents this as 'The knowledge society triangle' where the teacher is placed centrally in a 'triangle of competing interests and imperatives' (2003, pp. 10–11). It is useful to contemplate the potential

tensions created by such demands; yet, arguably, the values and principles of the teacher in terms of pupils' development might be viewed as a critical element in navigating this challenging terrain.

Reflective Question

As a teacher, how might you seek to resolve some of the challenges you face, acting as a catalyst or counterpoint rather than a casualty? Resolving the conflict In contrast to Hargreaves's knowledge society triangle, Moyles's 'black hole model of early years practitioners' focuses upon their emotional commitment to supporting young children's development (2001, p. 88). In highlighting the perceived powerlessness and vulnerability of early years practitioners, Moyles offers a model which contains a 'black hole' signifying the pressures from a range of sources effectively nullifying a practitioner's emotional drive to adhere to their values and principles. Although focussing upon early years practitioners, the model could easily translate to other sectors where confidence in practice is diminished through an array of demands and expectations –; what Hargreaves might refer to as being a casualty. Teachers are finding themselves facing ideological tensions as they try to balance their knowledge and experience of how pupils learn and develop with the conflicting demands of curricula and assessment procedures. Bradbury and RobertsHolmes (2018) recognize that there has traditionally been a mismatch between the values and beliefs of the teacher and policy-makers;; however, the gap appears to be widening as social-constructivist pedagogy in the classroom clashes with the positivist method of assessment and performativity. As one early years teacher stated, 'I felt frustrated as I tried to meet the requirements of a data-driven climate and stay true to my philosophy of how children learn best which is underpinned by personal values, theory and reflection.' Research and theory has identified that young children have a natural exuberance and curiosity for life and that deep- level learning and development takes place when they are able to construct meaning of the world both independently and in collaboration with others (Edwards et al., 1998, Vygostky, 1978). Real learning occurs when they are actively involved;; building on prior learning and constructing knowledge (Piaget, 1929). This philosophy of child development underpins the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (DfE, 2017), as well as proposals for a reformed framework (DfE, 2019), with its play-based, child-centred pedagogy and assessment through observation;; yet, early years practitioners are faced with the dilemmas associated with the proposed introduction of the reception baseline assessment (RBA) –; a process that collects numerical data in the areas of maths, language, communication and literacy as a starting point for measuring pupil progress within schools. The RBA should take place within the first six weeks of the child starting school at the age of four. This is an important time when young children are in a state of transition and should be building social relationships that provide the foundation for all learning (Broadhead and Burt, 2012).

The RBA is in direct contrast to socio-cultural pedagogy and the principles of the EYFS itself and could cause ideological conflict for teachers as they consider their role as carer alongside that of a collector of 'high stakes' data (Bradbury and Holmes, 2018, p. 22). Wyse and Torrance (2009, p. 224) claim that this pressure on teachers is 'driving teaching in exactly the opposite direction to that which other research indicates will improve teaching, learning and attainment'. The teacher's sense of professionalism is challenged and at times undermined as they try to stay true to their values and meet the requirements placed on the school by measures of performativity and accountability. 'In the early years team we sometimes feel like lone voices within the school battling against imposed teaching and learning styles. Staff meetings can become battlegrounds as we fight for what we believe is best for children; shouldn't the children be our focus after all?' (EY teacher) Moyles and Adams (2001) concluded that this feeling of disempowerment reduced the vocational passion of the teachers in their STELs project, causing them to sink into 'the black hole'. However, before teachers reach the point of no return, 'pedagogical magic' can take place 'that keeps the romance of teaching

alive for great teachers' (Steinberg and Kincheloe, 1998, p. 228). When there is an interweaving of passion, reflective practice, intellect and negotiation teachers can begin to navigate the complexities of performativity and children's learning and development. When researching Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in areas of high poverty within Australia, Skattebol, Adamson and Woodrow (2016) allow the voices of practitioners to reveal the depth and detail of their practice. Beyond the performativity agenda, the accounts from practitioners refer to the importance of knowledge and understanding in child development and pedagogy. More than this, however, it is the application of this knowledge in context: recognising and critically reflecting upon the socio-cultural, political and economical landscape to address the needs of pupils and their families in order to negotiate and secure a socially just outcome.

Window on rResearch Skattebol, J., Adamson, E. and Woodrow, C. (2016). Revisioning professionalism from the periphery. *Early Years*, 36(2), pp. 116–131. This study presents an insight into the perspectives of those working in early childhood education and care with regard to professionalism and professional identity. The periphery is described as 'contexts of high poverty', which 'are frequently located on the periphery, sometimes geographically but always economically, socially and politically'. One of the main purposes of the research is to allow those living and working in such circumstances to have a voice. A mixed methods research design was employed with qualitative data from semi-structured interviews alongside quantitative data mapping the demographics of a neighbourhood. Overall, the researchers collected interview data from 'six sites across four Australian states', each of which was selected from the analysis of the demographic data. This article reports on the interviews undertaken with service providers alongside other 'key informants' in order to understand practitioners' perceptions with regard to their role and practice. The analysis of the interviews with service providers revealed three main competency-related themes, namely: rationality, emotionality and criticality. Referring to earlier research conducted by individuals such as Moyles (2001) and Osgood (2010), Skattebol, Adamson and Woodrow, the researchers, highlighted practitioners' views of the affective and emotional as being 'front and centre' to their role. More than this, the researchers revealed that the emotional was also tempered with a critical understanding of each family's context from a political, economical and sociological perspective. Beyond regulatory frameworks and standards, practitioners indicated the need to rationally identify and address the complex challenges faced by the families; drawing upon knowledge and understanding of child development and pedagogy. Skattebol, Adamson and Woodrow (2016) concluded that the combination of criticality, emotionality and rationality was important in the work of the practitioners. The interviews also revealed the need for flexibility in their approach, an alertness to the funding streams and policy context, an ability to be 'emotionally critical' to the circumstances and needs of the families and to possess rational skills associated with child development and pedagogy. Reaching beyond what they refer to as the 'education/care dichotomy', they argue that for those working at the periphery, 'ethical entrepreneurialism is at the core of everyday practice'. Implications for teachers

Although tensions are ever-present and the landscape of education is subject to a variety of challenges, the voices of teachers from existing research and within this chapter reveal the ways in which they navigate the tensions arising from this turbulence. There is evidence that teachers mediate between the demands, expectations and needs associated with a wide range of individuals; act as counterpoints to a fast-paced technologically -oriented world; and address perceived imbalances created by economical and political demands. Values and beliefs are critical and influential components to a teacher's practice and these are informed by their knowledge and understanding of child development. Critical awareness and reflection on practice in a given context contribute to the ways in which theory informs and is informed by action. Essentially, the education professional adopts a caring and nurturing approach but this alone does not define the complex and harder- to- capture role of the teacher. This was evidenced in the interviews of the teachers who demonstrated

awareness of the tensions and demands inherent in their role, maintaining a sense of moral purpose and a desire to contribute to society. In particular, their sense of responsibility to pupil's welfare and learning appears to have a significant influence on their ever-evolving professional identity and conduct. Recognizing that identity is subject to change with values and beliefs challenged through dilemmas brought about by a changing social and political climate within education, it is possible that teachers can experience 'identity dissonance' (Pillen, Den Brock and Beijard, 2013, p. : 86) resulting in internal conflict between their personal and professional values. Teacher autonomy in the decision - making of practice may be challenged, for example, when they struggle to adhere to what they believe and, at the same time, attempt to meet measures of performativity. In such circumstances, self-confidence and creativity may diminish as a teacher's judgement is questioned –; potentially leading to a compliant workforce that is risk averse and without an influencing voice (Sachs, 2016). In acknowledging this, the need to strengthen teachers' understanding of professional knowledge and their sense of professionalism might also increase the confidence of teachers in making their voice heard. This might alleviate the pressures that they experience on a daily basis and not only enable them to mediate, manage and resolve the many challenges that they face, but perhaps address and counteract that which causes such pressures. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) that challenges intellectual thinking and fosters self-awareness has the potential to transform professional identity, thereby enabling teachers to navigate their way around the 'knowledge society triangle' (Hargreaves, 2003). As highlighted by Moyles and Adams, teachers may already have diminished confidence and feel that they are in the 'black hole' (2001); however, current research (Sachs, 2016) and the voices of teachers involved in the interviews within this chapter indicate that positive action can be taken in order to tackle the current dilemmas and tensions within the profession. An alternative definition of the role of the teacher is 'researcher'. In recent years 'research-led practice' and 'evidence-based practice' have been promoted and evaluated through government documentation, with the aim of developing an ethos of continual reflection and improvement in schools (GTC, 2006; Coldwell et al., 2017,; GTC, 2006, Walker et al., 2019). Through CPD, some senior managers and teachers have aimed to develop a learning community that openly discusses and questions practice-related research, and, where appropriate, draws on school- or classroom-based evidence to inform new and existing initiatives. Through this medium it would be possible to challenge key issues such as datafication, workload and the general mismatch between government policies and teachers' pedagogical values. Moss et al., (2007, p. : 33) state that the education system is 'fragile and open to challenge'. A research literate community of teachers could redress the balance: reverting to a self-confident, adventurous team of professionals who create innovative curriculums and pedagogies (BERA, 2014, p. : 23,; Sachs, 2016). Teachers, as life-long learners and with the desire to keep pupils at the centre of their practice, can be agents of change. They can question and challenge procedures and initiatives that contradict their professional values and pedagogical understanding of how pupils learn and develop. Debate around the key issues summarized in this chapter should be encouraged and enabled so that teachers continue to feel empowered and motivated to develop best practice in their classrooms and cultivate a stronger sense of what it is to be a teacher professional.

Reflective Question

As a professional how do you engage with the core themes of this chapter: • that teachers enact practice having to navigate tensions that exist and • that teachers as 'researchers' might influence positive change.

Reflexive Question

As a professional how do you engage with these core themes in relation to your own emotions and assumptions and biases?

Annotated Bibliography

Cox, A. and Sykes, G. (2016). *The Multiple Identities of the reception teacher pedagogy and Purpose*. London: Sage. This book recognizes the emotional connection that reception teachers have to their work and does not seek to separate education from care. It explores the multiple roles undertaken by the practitioner with chapters examining a wide range of topics including child development, the teacher as a researcher and early childhood education.

Biesta, G., Priestley, M. and Robinson, S. (2015). 'The role of beliefs in teacher agency'., *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), pp. 624–40. Biesta et al., report on a two-year study that focuses upon teachers' beliefs. From an individual and collective perspective, the researchers examine the discourse, which affects the ways in which teachers take action during policy implementation within Scotland. The research reveals the apparent disconnect between the individual and the collective and argues that for teacher agency to be effective, a shared professional vision needs to be developed. their role and the factors that influence their values, identity and practice.