Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe

Educational research has been typically carried out within a discourse of change: changing educational practice, changing policy, or changing the world. Sometimes these expectations have been grand, as in claims of emancipation; sometimes they have been more modest, as in research as a support for specific reforms. Are these expectations justified? How have these discourses of change themselves changed over time? What have researchers meant by change, and related concepts such as reform, improvement, innovation, progress and the new? Does this teleological and hopeful discourse itself reflect a particular historical and national/cultural point of view? Is it overpromising for educational research to claim to solve social problems, and are these properly understood as educational problems? Thus far a number of the issues addressed within this collection: *Educational Research: Discourses of change and changes of discourse*. The book is part of a series publishing the 'results' of the annual meeting (since 2000) of a group of philosophers and historians of education who see benefit in complementing each other's stance in dealing with issues belonging to the discipline of education more in particular concerning educational research (see e.g. Smeyers and Depaepe 2015). It is indeed difficult to imagine changes in the educational context which are not also surfacing as changes in the discursive sphere.

Ulrich Herrmann (1993) claimed concerning the Enlightenment that there is a close relationship between educational theory and politics. On the one hand, in

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itself the Enlightenment project can be qualified as educational because of its many implications; on the other hand the rise of educational theory as a discipline is typically an Enlightenment phenomenon. Although education played a vital role in the generation of the nineteenth century 'Nationstates' almost everywhere in Europe, the result of this process was not necessarily what the protagonists expected or predicted. Similarly, this can be argued for educational changes which manifested themselves as 'new' in the nineteenth and the twentieth century. Often a so-called Copernican revolution was predicted; an illustration of this is for example Claperède's belief that education would evolve from teacher-centred to learner-centred (Benner and Kemper 2001–2007). A closer look at such international movements to change did not result in the hoped for (and predicted) upheavals, in any case not in regular education (see Cuban 2013); instead of surfacing at the level of educational practises, it surfaced much more in the discursive demarcation of the alleged 'old'. Educational practice adjusted itself to modernity, but its manifestations were hardly different from those that preceded. Much more continuity can be observed (see Depaepe et al. 2000)—something also to be noticed when educational theory itself is scrutinised. Investigating for example the subdisciplines of history and philosophy of education Jarausch (1986) wrote on 'old' and 'new' history of education and one of the co-authors of this chapter labelled philosophical and methodological questions 'old wine in new bottles' (Smeyers 2008). Jarausch claimed that the so-called 'new' history of education of the 1960s which aimed to connect the social and cultural components of society with general history, was already carried through in several German projects of social/cultural interpretative approaches, some of which go back to the 1930s and even before. We leave aside to what extent these concern real changes in research rather than only paying lip-service to the programme and/or theoretically embraced stances. But one thing is clear: that there are changes at the discursive level is obvious for all those who glance at the many books and journals dealing with the educational field (in its broadest sense). It can hardly by avoided to notice the occurrence of fashionable trends, paradigmatic preferences (typical arguments, typical argumentative structures) and, not in the least, the popularity of particular authors. This amongst other things is addressed in this collection including its effects on the educational practice.

The first two chapters offer a refinement of the scene. In 'Technology, Education, and the Fetishization of the "New"' *Nicholas C. Burbules* observes that there is in education a constant fascination with the 'new.' Education, because it is an intrinsically challenging and imperfect practice, is always looking for ways to improve, and this has led to a constant cycle of reform, optimism, disappointment, and then new reform. This is a very particular, and limiting, discourse of change. Most recently, he claims, this fascination with the new has shaped the ways that new digital technologies, and the affordances they provide for rethinking teaching and learning, have been talked about and incorporated into education. Outsized claims for 'new and improved' pedagogy have led to hyperbolic boosterism on the one hand, and criticisms about the unfulfilled promise of these new technologies on

the other. He argues that these errors derive from misunderstandings of what the discourse of the 'new' actually means, and misunderstandings about the nature of technology. New technologies are not in themselves improvements, but at best an opportunity for changed thinking and changed practices that are themselves the source of potential improvement; but these potentials are always also accompanied by the risk of harms and other unintended consequences. In the end, so he concludes, that it is the very fetishization of 'the new' that constitutes an impediment to actual change for the better in education. In the same vein *Richard Smith* starts from the observation that talk of the importance of 'the management of change' is widespread in education and other dimensions of public life. Such talk usually implies deterioration in the working conditions of teachers and other professionals, and tries to persuade us that committing fully to change rather than resisting it will make our lives more meaningful. In this it resembles various other historical movements for change in identifying the process or means of change with its ultimate end. While it often pays lip-service to the mutability of the world it is usually more concerned with making transitions from one stable condition of things to another. He claims that a different way of thinking about change and a different language and literature for doing so might help us grasp the limitations of many of the ways in which we are currently being asked to respond to educational change and reform.

The next chapter is by *Lynn Fendler* who describes three frameworks commonly inscribed in current educational research as discourses of change in educational theory: agency, actors, and affect. For each of these frameworks, she summarizes a robust version of the theory, and examines their respective assumptions about how is it possible to make a difference. Derived from the political theories of Marx, *agency* has been cast in dialectical opposition to structure, but sometimes also in relation to functionalism or determinism. This part of the chapter summarizes Frankfurt School assumptions about agency, analysing the implications for how change is possible. In Latour's Actor Network Theory, there is no dialectical relationship between structure and *agency*. ANT stipulates a difference between actors (which act) and actants (which are acted upon), which can be either human or nonhuman. ANT explains change in terms of associations in networks of human and nonhuman actors. Rejecting both agency/ structure and actor networks, non-representational theories of affect jettison all previous classification systems that may imply structures or differences between actors and actants. Non-representational theories include people, objects, atmospheres, feelings, tones of voice, ambient noise, machinery, serendipity, and constitutional law as potentials for change. This portion of the chapter performs the sort of difference *affect* makes.

In the next three chapters particular discourses are the main focus. *Naomi Hodgson* addresses the changes of discourse that can be identified in the language of policy related to the recasting of Europe as an Innovation Union, and the changes to the way in which the university and the researcher are discussed in this context. In contrast the ways in which the researcher is asked to articulate herself—in terms of leadership, excellence, and impact—Hodgson considers the language in which

115 researchers often describe themselves in the day to day life of the university: as
116 tired, stressed, and not feeling at home in the university. Tiredness, stress, and
117 homelessness are then considered with reference to philosophical sources to
118 explore them not as barriers to productivity and thus to be overcome but as part
119 of the work of study and as having educational potential. *Ian Munday* considers the
120 claims representatives of the 'creativity movement' make in regards to change and
121 the future. This will particularly focus on the role that the arts are supposed to play
122 in responding to industrial imperatives for the twenty-first century. He argues that
123 the compressed vision of the future (and past) offered by creativity experts suc-
124 cumbs to the nihilism so often described by Nietzsche. In the second part of the
125 paper he draws on Stanley Cavell's chapter 'Philosophy the Day After Tomorrow'
126 (from a book with the same name) to consider a future oriented arts education that
127 may not fall victim to nihilism. Further *Paul Smeyers* starts from the observation
128 that there is since a decade or so a new hype in educational research: it is called
129 educational neuroscience or even neuroeducation (and neuroethics)—there are
130 numerous publications, special journals, and an abundance of research projects
131 together with the advertisement of many positions at renown research centres
132 worldwide. After a brief introduction of what is going on in the 'emerging
133 sub-discipline' a number of characterizations are offered of what is envisaged by
134 authors working in this field. In the discussion that follows various problems are
135 listed: the assumption that 'visual proof' of brain activity is supposedly given, the
136 correlational nature of this kind of research, the nature of the concepts that are used,
137 the lack of addressing and possibly influencing the neurological mechanism, and
138 finally the need for other insights in educational contexts. Following Bakhurst and
139 others a number of crucially relevant philosophical issues are highlighted. It is
140 argued that though there are cases where neuroscience insights may be helpful,
141 these are scarce and that in general not a lot may be expected from this discipline for
142 education and educational research. A reminder is offered that the pitfalls of going
143 along that road of neurophilia is just another neuromyth which needs to be
144 addressed.

145   In their chapter on the plurality of mathematics discourses, *Karen François*,
146 *Kathleen Coessens and Jean Paul Van Bendegem*, deal with the discourses of
147 change related to mathematics and the way the changes of mathematical dis-
148 courses and practices are discussed in philosophy of mathematics. They analyse
149 two main questions. The first question is about the plurality of mathematics and
150 the possibility of the simultaneous existence of culturally different mathematics;
151 the second about the respective value of the different mathematics and its means
152 of power in terms of 'disciplining' discourse. In order to investigate these ques-
153 tions they use a theoretical toolkit that borrows the concepts of 'language games'
154 and of 'family resemblance' from Wittgenstein, the concepts of 'discourses' and
155 of 'disciplining' from Foucault and the concept of vertical and horizontal dis-
156 courses, and recontextualisation from Bernstein. One of the most challenging
157 tasks in present-day philosophy of mathematics is to defend the thesis that 'real'
158 mathematics is a long distance away from the idealized core of its practices,
159 called the 'skeleton' in this paper. Nevertheless, this skeleton serves to identify

what is mathematics proper, i.e. mathematics performed in the academic area. All other elements in the mathematics discourse are ignored, shifted to the background to increase its skeleton's visibility. Such a strategy must lead to the rejection as being mathematical of a huge set of cultural practices that, according to many, do include mathematical aspects. If instead of a skeleton idea, family resemblances are called into play, an interesting multiplication and diversification of mathematics discourses and practices occurs, and it will include 'street mathematics', as well as ethnomathematical or other educational and pedagogical discourses, strongly or weakly related to academic mathematics. The necessity of the plural of mathematics discourses will force us to abandon a Foucauldian view that stresses the control and power of a unique discourse in favour of a more layered perspective. Because mathematical practices happen in diverse local, temporal and spatial contexts, multiple recontextualizations of what the flesh around the skeleton might be will occur. These will prevent one unique fixity and allow for multiple versions of the game.

In 'Learning to love the bomb: The Cold War brings the best of times to American Higher Education, *David F. Labaree* claims that American higher education rose to fame and fortune during the Cold War, when both student enrolments and funded research shot upward. Prior to World War II, the federal government showed little interest in universities and provided little support. The war spurred a large investment in defence-based scientific research in universities, and the emergence of the Cold War expanded federal investment exponentially. Unlike a hot war, the Cold War offered a an extended period federally funded research public subsidy for expanding student enrolments. The result was the golden age of the American university. The good times continued for about 30 years and then began to go bad. The decline was triggered by the combination of a decline in the perceived Soviet threat and a taxpayer revolt against high public spending; both trends culminating with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. With no money and no enemy, the Cold War university fell as quickly as it arose. Instead of seeing the Cold War university as the norm, we need to think of it as the exception. What we are experiencing now in American higher education is a regression to the mean, in which, over the long haul, Americans have understood higher education to be a distinctly private good. *Lynda Stone*'s chapter takes a different approach to the topic of discourse and change in theorizing that discourse means change. They emerge and decline and change occurs even as they change within themselves. Her study is situated in particular, current US institutional and societal contexts. The central focus is this: Using an event in US teacher education of students learning silent seat signals as discipline and control, she turns to discourse theories from three significant scholars. These are James Gee on identity in new literacies, Hayden White on use in literary style, and Ian Hacking on function in philosophical kinds. Foucault's influence is evident throughout. The chapter warns against taking discourses and their practices for granted in teaching-and-learning reform. *Rebecca Rogers* continues with the chapter 'From the French Republican educational reforms to the ABCD de l'égalité : Thinking about change in the history of girls' education in France'.

The essay examines the way historians as well as educational administrators have presented the need to reform girls' education from the 1870s in France until the very recent debates in 2013–2014 about the introduction of sex equality education in pre-school and elementary classes. Initially she explores how arguments about progress, civilization and the education of women for change were translated in institutional terms, highlighting the contradictions and limits of Republican girls' education. She then turns to the debates of the twentieth century around the right to pass the same degrees and obtain the same wages (essentially focusing on the interwar period). Finally, the essay charts how the spread of coeducation and the hopes that it generated have measured up in the efforts to establish the equality of education for boys and girls. The public debate provoked by the experimental introduction of educational tools described as 'ABCD de l'égalité' reveals the hiatus that exists within educational discourses between an ostensible commitment to equality in education between boys and girls and public understanding of what equality entails.

In the next chapter *Ethan Hutt* starts from the observation that by definition, 'a crisis' suggests a rare and acute problem that demands a swift and, perhaps, bold response. But far from an exceptional time, so he claims, crises have become the normal state of American education discourse over the last half century—the period in which education policy research has come of age. Rather than serving as a potential brake on the use of crisis rhetoric in education policy, education researchers have accepted the crisis frame and used it to justify their own role in providing any number of—untested—educational solutions. In this respect, the idea of crisis during the last half-century has shaped not only the context in which education research has taken place but also the criteria by which it has been judged. Thus, crisis as a discourse of change has, in turn, coloured the lens through which researchers consider, perform, and evaluate research: abetting action-bias, shifting risk calculations, and contributing to the harried search immediate solutions—all in the name of addressing the crisis. In his chapter *Jeff Bale* sets two metaphors for change within educational research against each other. The first, *colour-blindness*, is related to racial equity, specifically the policies and pedagogies that claim to foster equitable outcomes for racialised students. Scholars, especially those with commitments to critical race theory, have used this metaphor to define a conceptual spectrum bounded by race-neutral and race-conscious education policies. By plotting specific policies along this spectrum, scholars have historicized claims to colour-blindness in an effort to better understand racial (in-)equity at and through school. This paper extends that metaphor to introduce the notion of *tone-deafness*. Similar to colour-blindness, tone-deafness foregrounds the question as to whether a given education policy is language-neutral or language-conscious. This paper explores tone-deafness in two ways. First, and similar to colour-blindness, the metaphor helps to historicize the development of language education policy, and to understand the sharp contradictions of contemporary education policies that are formally language-neutral and yet negatively affect speakers of minoritised languages. Second, the paper uses the notion of tone-deafness to analyse contemporary educational research on English language education.

The penultimate chapter 'A Belief in Magic. Professionalization in Post Second World War Forced Child Protection' is by *Jeroen Dekker*. Before the Second World War, he claims, child protection was mainly carried out by volunteers or experienced but uncertified experts. This was true for family guardians, the composition of Guardianship Boards, with only the secretary, often a lawyer, being paid, and with the personnel in re-education homes. An exception on the rule was the juvenile judge, one of the few professionals within child protection. After the Second World War, a constant urge to change of discourses resulted into professionalization and a child protection characterized by scientific research. In this period, child protection seemed to be in a continuous crisis with in the 1960s, with the number of child protection measures dramatically decreasing, satisfaction with the work diminishing and pride of the job fading away. The numerous reports and publications published on reorganization and uplifting the quality of child protection proposed further professionalization and further research as the only option for the solution of the many and fundamental problems diagnosed. Such proposals also appeared in the proceedings of congresses celebrating the 1905 child acts in 1955, 1980 and 2005. The belief in professionalization and research, and thus in discourses of change, was based on high expectations of changing behaviour of children and parents. The belief in the magic of change continued also when those expectations failed so he concludes.

Finally, in 'It's all about interpretation: discourses at work in education museums. The case of Ypres', *Marc Depaepe and Frank Simon* deal with their years of work as scientific advisers to Municipal Museum of Education in Ypres. They can easily link their experiences to the idea that writing and representing histories is above all a matter of making interpretations, and even of making interpretations of interpretations. Evidence for this point of view is to be found in association with the craze of the 2014 commemorative education on the occasion of the centenary of World War I, in which the normative content of the accompanying history-making machine can hardly not be recognized. It is obvious that contemporary interests play a part in this—as is the fact that these interests are easily projected on the past. This is certainly the case in Ypres, which holds on the one hand the historical world heritage of the battlefields and massacres of 1914–1918 and possesses on the other hand the most important education museum of Flanders. The history of this Municipal Museum of Education is, moreover, complexly linked to that of the flourishing In Flanders Fields Museum (IFFM) which main purpose is to propagate the message of peace as the bottom line of commemoration. In their article they investigate, at the basis of their own experiences, how all these in fact educational discourses interact and conflict with each other, and to what extent they are affected by extra-scientific motives, such as for example the defence of one's own institutional positions.

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