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FLIPPING THE SYSTEM

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FOREWORD

BY JELMER EVERS, JL DUTAUT AND LUCY RYCROFT-SMITH

Education is at a perilous point in history. On the one hand policy makers, but also we – as in 'everybody' – understand the importance of good education, be it for the strength of the economy, the strength of our democracy, or even if you believe that education is its own merit and value. Education must be good, in many senses.

But an education system that boosts the economy and invigorates democracy by assembling perfect citizens doesn't originate miraculously or even organically. For a number of decades governments across the world have approached this challenge in a similar fashion: that proper education requires proper markets, proper targets, and proper accountability, and also plenty of 'proper' testing.

It hasn't worked. Investments have disappeared in the Bermuda triangle of market-based decentralisation; performance-based accountability and incredible stress has pushed many out of the teaching profession. In some countries, strong, countervailing, democratic institutions have been broken down, and teacher professionalism has hugely suffered as a result. Now that many countries look down a road, or have started down one, of falling public expenditure on education, they face the impossible challenge of doing a great deal more with lots less.

Is there really no alternative, as Thatcher used to claim? It seems we are in dire need of one. In 2013, we published a book in Holland, cheekily titled *The Alternative*, on how to build an education system around the notion that good education requires professional teachers. It became a breakthrough success and a new international version was released in 2015 called *Flip the System: Changing Education from the Ground Up*, published with the help of Education International. A local adaptation came out in Sweden in 2017, and an adaption for the United Kingdom is – obviously – right here in front you. And more are in the works.

Flip the System UK stays true to the series' formula: co-edited by teachers, with contributions by teachers building knowledge with researchers. It is as much about the need of teacher voice on the policy level as it is that same voice. It is as much about teacher emancipation, as it is that emancipation. In this free ebook you will find several chapters in the series: the introduction and conclusion of Flip the System: changing education from the ground up. But most importantly you will find the five-part Flip the System UK Manifesto by the editors JL Dutaut and Lucy Rycroft-Smith. As well as four important contributions to the book by David Weston, Phil Wood, d'Reen Struthers and Howard Stevenson.

FOREWORD

BY JELMER EVERS, JL DUTAUT AND LUCY RYCROFT-SMITH

Even though many education systems suffer from poor strategy and policy, it is teachers that have made it work and continue to make it work. The crucial question for governments, parliaments and policy makers is how they can support and help those teachers to do the best job they possibly can, because in the end teachers will – or kill themselves trying.

Certainly, that requires structural change, long-term plans, and strategic investments.

Just as certainly, it is far from impossible for whoever has the heart and spirit.

INTRODUCTION

JELMER EVERS AND RENÉ KNEYBER

> It is said that Mithridates trained himself to drink poison. Like him we learn to swallow, and not to find bitter, the venom of servitude.
>
> Étienne de la Boétie, Discourse on Voluntary Servitude, 1548

There was a time, perhaps not even forty or fifty years ago, when education was not the subject of furious political debate. Education and the people who made it happen, the teachers, were regarded with trust. There was hardly any external accountability, no teaching decision or learning outcome that needed to be justified, there was nobody telling teachers what to do. As we might call it now: old professionalism.

But under the influence of political and social changes, the teaching profession has been transformed. During the last couple of decades many countries have engaged in educational reform. Clearly most of these reforms started through the identification of a crisis: the high trust placed in education and teachers had suddenly become unfounded. For instance, in the USA we can see this identification in the shape of the influential report from 1983, 'A Nation at Risk' (Gardner, 1983), which opened with the ominous words: 'Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world.' Education, it was claimed, was failing: 'We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament.'

A similar pattern can be seen in the publication of The Black Papers (Cox & Dyson, 1971) in the UK in the '70s, which sought to address that country's educational failings, and in the '80s in New Zealand in the influential reports 'Administering for Excellence' (New Zealand Government, 1988) and 'Tomorrow's Schools'. However, the sense of crisis turned global when OECD began publishing its PISA survey in 2000 (OECD, 2001). Although the PISA results are intended to be used for comparing systems in order to provide countries with system information, they have led, especially among politicians, to a feeling of pressure and fear of 'falling behind'. Indeed, the international rat race that has ensued has even caused top performers such as Holland to address the growing concern, with its 2008 report 'Time for Education' (Dijsselbloem, 2008), and Finland's fall in 2013 on the international ranking has led to heated discussion there. A key feature of this crisis mindset is that egalitarian or other motives are being replaced with economic, even economistic, ones, probably due to the explicit PISA focus on linkage between learning outcomes and labour market needs.

The perceived crisis is then used to push an agenda of 'raising the bar', of improving the 'quality' of education through raising the performance of tests on certain

subjects, and similar to the areas PISA tests: language, mathematics and science. Sometimes this narrowing of aims emerges because of political opportunism, but also because raising the bar in subjects such as history proves complicated: a redesign of the curriculum around these subjects can lead to heated debate and be politically fraught (see for example Ravitch, 2010).

NEOLIBERAL REFORMS

If we ignore the debate on the relevance of international benchmarks such as the PISA results – including whether the raising of this bar is a desirable one, and whether it is being raised in the proper direction for its intended purposes – at least for now, we can start to see a highly similar approach in the means in which countries intend to improve the performance of their systems. In many countries, governments turn to neoliberal-looking reforms, under the assumption that an education system that resembles a market will, through the checks and balances inherent in such a 'market constellation', push schools to achieve higher results. That through the spirit of competition, where schools contend for students, these schools become driven to perform better, become more innovative and more focused on student learning. Of course this is never more than a semi-market, as it is still state funded. However, not content with just the introduction of parent choice, and voice, and pitting schools against each other as competitors, governments nudge schools further into privatization through the use of high-stakes accountability, looking for ways to calculate a teacher's 'added value'. Those schools or teachers that are not found to add enough value, are deemed to be 'failing', and a government may shut them down or lay them off, or may publicly shame schools or individual teachers, whilst rewarding those that are seen to be 'succeeding', so as to 'improve' education. Some countries even go the extra mile and turn parts of their education systems into actual markets, attempting to dismantle public education altogether, something we can see clearly in the highly privatized education system of Chile.

Whenever these 'markets' of education fail, or reveal their inherent short-comings, the neoliberal 'solution' to this is a further attempt to increase the privatization of education. For example, a recurring problem within privatized systems is that these systems widen the achievement gap because parents who are higher educated make better decisions in terms of school choice and can make better use of the transparency provided by league tables than lower-educated parents. Furthermore, schools tend to become more opportunistic in terms of which students they select in order to uphold their market position. A neoliberal reaction to this 'issue' could be to form strong brands of schools, in the spirit of the McDonald's copy–paste approach to

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fast food, using brand reliability to provide market information to poor choosers (Ball, 2013). Another reaction could be to further regulate the market to restrict parental choice to some extent, and to restrict the selection of students by schools.

In any event, it is clear that this neoliberal approach to reform makes education less accessible to all, and benefits some more than most. More troubling perhaps is that it views education as a commodity rather than a public service; not as something of the public, but something that is delivered to the public. This economistic focus ignores the democratic and educational dimensions of education.

THE DEATH (AND LIFE) OF THE TEACHER

In summary, it is clear that the neoliberal shift in reform has led, in a more postmodern sense, to the death of the teacher (Biesta, 2013): the death of the very idea that a teacher has something to contribute, the very idea that the teacher has a meaningful voice in regard to his work, to what he wants to achieve through his work and by which means he achieves it. Although it is a common and oft-cited belief that the quality of a system is determined by the quality of its teachers, that particular belief is of no benefit to teachers. In the neoliberal perspective, the teacher is viewed as a trained monkey, and it is simply a question of finding the right stick to beat him with, or the right brand of peanuts, to make him do the desired dance in front of the audience. The teacher is no longer viewed as a professional, but as a labourer who simply has to follow evidence-based methods in order to secure externally determined goals. In some countries he is even perceived as disposable: give someone a crash course in education, teach him a number of evidence-based methods and let him grind in the machine until he is either burned out or eager to work in a different field of work after two or three years. Worryingly, to some this is even a desirable perspective on the teaching profession.

So clearly, the old days, where teachers decided on matters of curriculum and delivery without any kind of accountability, are over. By and large, through neoliberal reform, teachers' professional identities have been monopolized in many countries by aspects of managerial professionalism. As Judyth Sachs wrote in her book *The Activist Teaching Profession* (2003, p. 26):

> Where devolution and decentralization have been at the core of reform agendas teachers are placed in a long line of authority in terms of their accountability for reaching measurable outcomes through the principal, to the district/regional office, to the central office.

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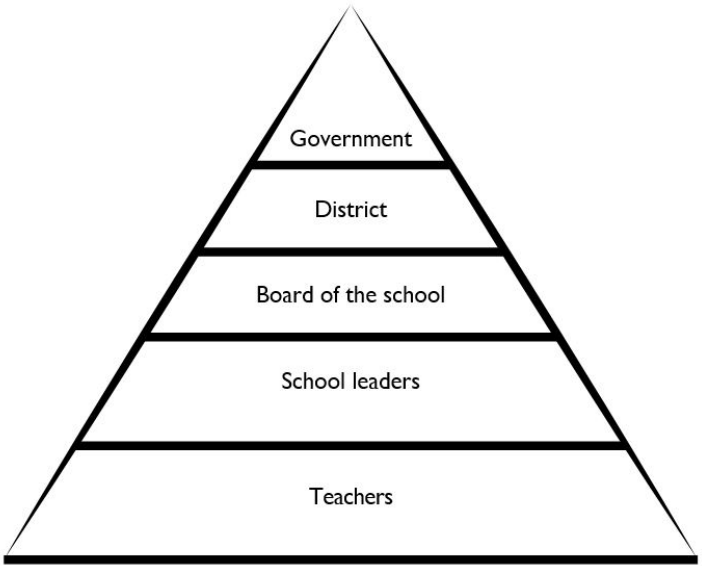

Figure 0.1 • 'Teachers are placed in a long line of authority in terms of their accountability for reaching measurable outcomes through the principal, to the district/ regional office, to the central office' (Sachs, 2003, p. 26).

So under neoliberal reform the professional identity becomes populated with aspects of corporate professionalism, working efficiently and effectively to meet standardized criteria for success for both students and teachers.

There are many issues with this view of teacher professionalism. Most importantly, with its sheer focus on measurable results that once produced will – somehow, in some way – benefit the nation in a global economy, one might argue that teaching is no longer upheld as being a profession. Rather, the term 'voluntary slavery' – a term first coined by the 17-year-old Étienne de la Boétie – comes to mind, with teachers losing their moral agency. The question as to whether teachers perceive that the outcome of their work – or the methods through which to acquire those results – is desirable has no part in the equation. When we take this point even further, we can see that is exactly why this take on teaching, as a managed profession, won't work and isn't working. Good education requires professionals who reflect and make judgments and act upon what is educationally desirable. Ultimately education is not about preparing individuals for their place in the global economy, but rather for every child in every other circumstance something else, something more, could be at stake. Consequently, high-quality education does not necessarily equate with high performance on (standardized) tests, or – on a system level – equate with high

performance on international benchmarks. But if that is not the definition of high-quality education, or 'good' education, then what is?

We view the failure of the teaching profession (as a global entity) to answer this question as one of the major reasons for the rapid expenditure of neoliberalism across the globe. As the saying goes: 'If you stand for nothing, you will fall for anything.'

THE EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONAL

Interestingly, some are opting for a more democratic take on teacher professionalism (for instance, see Apple, 1996). Apple suggests that the alternative for state control is a democratic professionalism that seeks to demystify its work and build alliances between teachers and other 'stakeholders'. The major benefit of this particular view is first of all that it allows for actual moral agency, and secondly that it allows for a broader kind of accountability that values internal accountability – between teachers or schools – as well as external accountability – to external stakeholders, but certainly not exclusively to the state – within which all groups come to understand the nature and the limitations of each other's work and perspectives. This is in stark contrast to the 'free for all' professionalism of old, but without the arbitrary restraints of the neoliberal paradigm: now its limits are continuously defined through democratic conversation and negotiation.

Yet, a similar 'democratic' case could be made for any other profession. So even if democratic professionalism is the contemporary answer to the issues of neoliberal reform, there is still the question as to what dimension of the teaching profession actually makes the teacher educational. So, as an antidote to neoliberalism, there is a strong need for teachers to connect and to reflect on the purposes of education, and to think and act coherently in terms of their teaching methods. That is: we believe teachers as a profession should generate a new 'language of education', to strengthen education against external forces that threaten a good education for every child. Democratic professionalism as an answer therefore calls also for educational coherence, a thorough alignment with the purposes of education.

'FLIP THE SYSTEM' AND THE ISSUE OF POWER

So if high-quality education cannot, by definition, be produced through a managed version of the teaching profession, how should the system position itself towards the profession, and how should the profession position itself towards the rest of the system?

Our answer to this is that the educational system requires to be flipped. Replacing top-down accountability with bottom-up support for teachers.

Whereas in the left pyramid of **Figure 0.2**, teachers answer to every layer above them – where the question 'What can the teacher do for me?' resonates throughout the system – the pyramid on the right details the complete opposite situation. Here teachers answer to themselves as a collective profession and to the rest of society on an equal level. The questions that resonate throughout this flipped system are: 'How are teachers doing? What do they want? And what can I do to support them?'

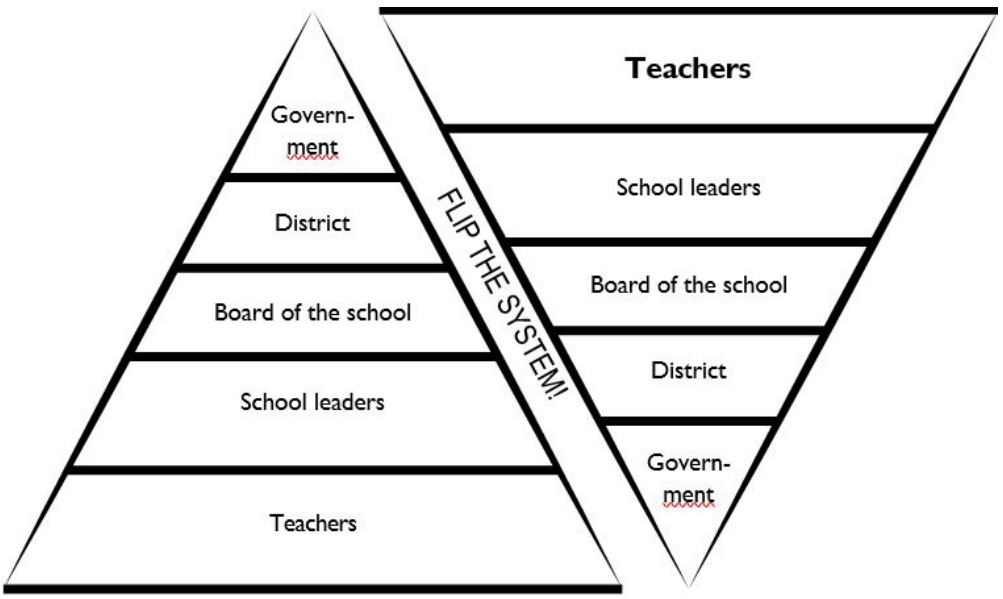

Figure 0.2 • Flip the System!

It also means that because they are supported, the teachers in a flipped system are obligated to take the lead. Teachers do not wait to be told what to achieve and how to achieve it; instead they show leadership in regard to the how and the what. And this is where teacher leadership fits into our flipped model of education. In educational terms, teacher leadership is a relatively new concept. It is, however, a slightly confused concept, with differing definitions, and expectations abound (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). Even if we take a thoughtful definition from the book Awakening the Sleeping Giant by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009), it stills leaves plenty to be desired: 'teacher leaders lead within and beyond the classroom; identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders; influence others toward improved

educational practice; and accept responsibility for achieving the outcomes of their leadership.' The biggest question of all is who decides when the teacher leader has 'achieved' his 'outcome' and who decides whether someone is a teacher leader or not. Although the teacher leadership concept shows promise, within this definition it can as easily become another tool for domestication: not an instrument for deregulation and professionalization, but an instrument for reregulation and deprofessionalization.

Therefore we'd like to extend this definition. First of all, we believe teacher leadership should not be locked into formal positions. To 'awake the sleeping giant', so to say, every teacher should attempt to impact in and outside of their classroom, to identify with and contribute to the community of teacher leaders, to influence improved educational practice and to accept responsibility for achieving the outcome of their leadership. It should not become, to put it more bluntly, a new aristocracy in which some teachers are leaders and some teachers are followers. Secondly, teacher leaders should have the capacity to reflect on the purpose of their work, so that they can judge individually and as a profession whether what is required of them and their students is desirable or not. Third of all, all teacher leaders should strive towards a collective professional autonomy. In order to acquire the trust that is essential for a collective autonomy to function, teacher leaders should actively strive for professional honour, not only through the development of high professional standards, but also through building active trust with other stakeholders, such as students, parents, the municipality and the state.

The major issue when we view a flipped system as a desirable outcome of system intervention, is that we have to consider how we would move there. Moreover, particularly problematic is that in some countries teachers have deprofessionalized to such an extent that they act as if they were 'dead', using government pressures and regulations as a sort of 'safety blanket' to justify their lack of professional–ethical behaviour.

Therefore, flipping the system should more resemble a process of emancipation than a 'system intervention', a process where the 'voice' of teachers is given a meaningful place, whereas before it was considered to be just 'noise' (Rancière, 1999). However, the process cannot originate from a starting point of inequality, with teachers attempting to overcome this inequality. Teachers should instead act on an assumption of being equal, refusing and interrupting the working of powers in the educational system and laying claim to positions and discretional space that they have not previously been entitled to. To initiate this process, it is not simply a question of the government telling teachers to emancipate. It is rather a question of teachers initiating this process themselves.

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

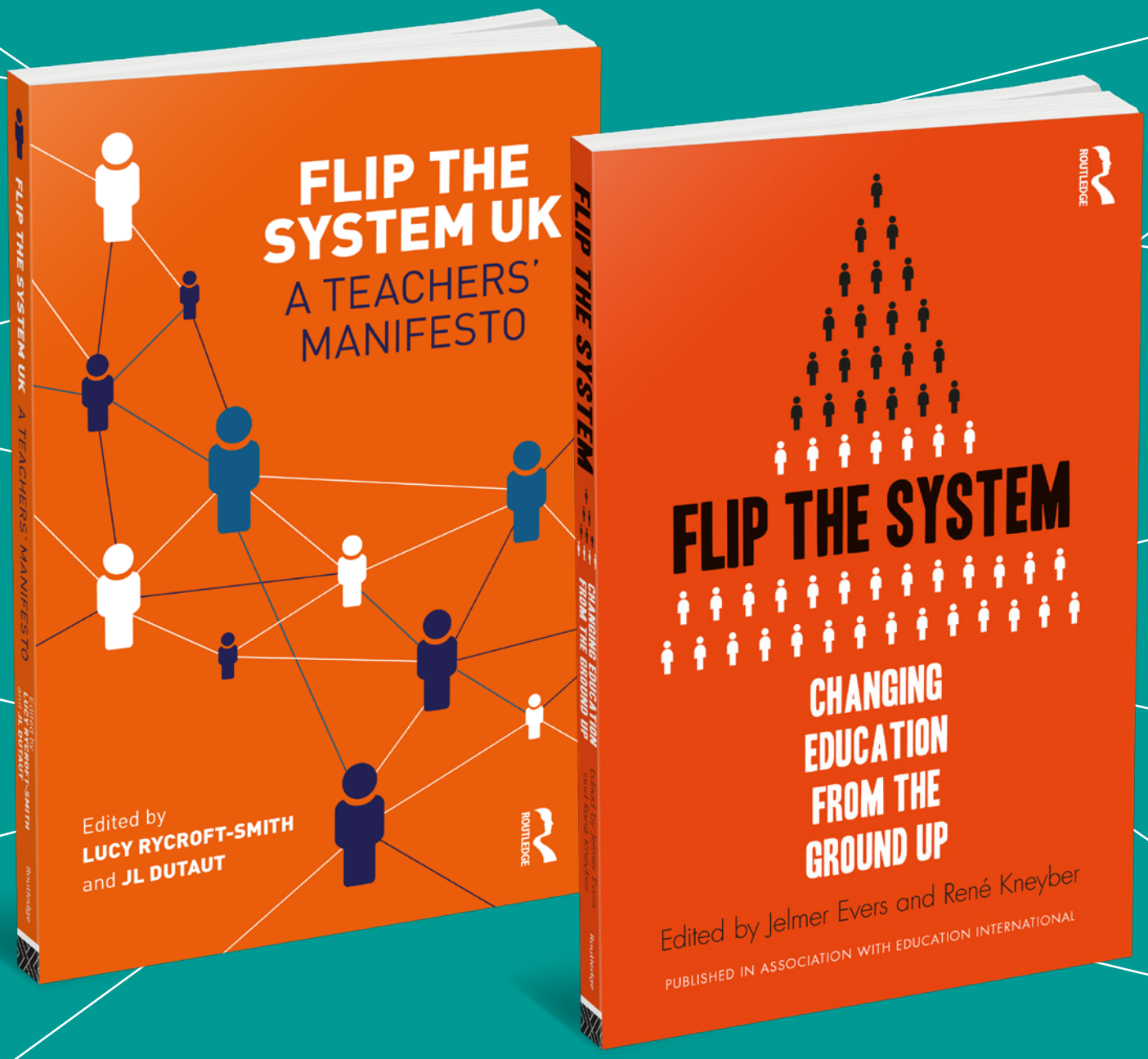
It is from this standpoint that we want to view our book: a book initiated and coordinated by two teachers, in which we have invited researchers and teachers alike to discuss the neoliberal issues that plague education on a global scale. We didn't ask anyone for permission to write this book: we just started; we don't care whether some might view it as marginal 'noise', because we perceive it as a meaningful voice. On the one hand, we've chosen to include some in-depth articles on the subjects we have touched in this introduction – from the problems with neoliberal policy to how to organize collective autonomy – but we have also made room for small vignettes and interviews from around the world, to show that teachers not only share the same struggles on a truly global scale, but that they share a common thing: a universal pride and passion for that thing called education, an inspiring potential that needs fostering in order to unfold, but that cannot be squeezed by government demands.

Note to readers: References from the original chapters have not been included in this text. For a fully-referenced version of each chapter, including footnotes, bibliographies, references and endnotes, please see the published title. As you read through this FreeBook, you will notice that some excerpts reference subsequent chapters - please note that these are references to the original text and not the FreeBook.

Offering an exciting and hopeful perspective on education,

FLIP THE SYSTEM

urges teachers to work together and challenge policy makers to help facilitate change...or get out of the way.



Visit our website for more information on
›› Flip the System UK: A Teachers' Manifesto, and
›› Flip the System: Changing Education from the Ground Up

CHAPTER

1

THE TEACHERS' MANIFESTO
COGNITIVE AGENCY

THE TEACHERS' MANIFESTO

COGNITIVE AGENCY

JL Dutaut and Lucy Rycroft-Smith

KNOWLEDGE INPUT

As teachers, we are called upon to know and make use of a range of information, from student data, through curriculum, to pedagogical knowledge. While an exhaustive list of all the things we need to know in order to function effectively in our education system is beyond the scope of this book, our premise is that all knowledge that is necessary to our performance is equally valuable and valid as professional knowledge, be that the family circumstance of this or that pupil, or the latest research in cognitive psychology. Further, as professionals with agency, it is our contention that it is incumbent upon us, in active collaboration with each other, school and system leaders, to produce new knowledge, and to make decisions about prioritising it. The unchallenged imposition of knowledge input (what teachers ought to know) is in fact an act of prioritisation taken out of our hands, and a restriction on our professionalism with devastating consequences for our ability to teach.

In this part, we chart the development of new forms of powerful teacher knowledge through research engagement that is grassroots and, if not totally unmediated, at least more so than has previously been the case. **Tom Bennett** describes the research revolution he and thousands of teachers have lit the fire under. **Peter Ford** tracks the atrocious policy-making that led to the need for this knowledge revolution and reminds us of the importance of universities in developing the research revolution. For too long, he argues, the relationship between schools and universities has itself been mediated by policy-makers. **Jonathan Firth** charts developments in education research that present new powerful knowledge for teachers, and argues that the research itself demands teacher agency in order to be adequately implemented.

KNOWLEDGE OUTPUT

Some forms of knowledge are more valued than others by the education system. Ironically, these most valued datasets are often the least useful in terms of improving outcomes – being, as they are, summative in their nature. From data gathering for half-termly reports that say little to parents about their children's true performance to government-mandated data collection for the purposes of monitoring, league ranking and policy justification, this knowledge, albeit valid and valuable, is given an importance well beyond its true worth. Indeed, it often hampers the development of other forms of knowledge that could have more impact. Our contention is that this form of policy-making is nothing more than the imposition of practices of knowledge output (what teachers ought to communicate). It is a further de-professionalisation of our role, with equally destructive effect.

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Here, **David Weston** argues that schools should be more than data-rich – swimming in piles of data as Scrooge McDuck does in piles of cash. Schools, David argues, should be data smart – leaner, but investing shrewdly for development and growth by allowing teachers the autonomy, the agency, to prioritise the data that is of use to their practice.

Here, too, **David Williams** describes the Welsh experience of mandated practices that bear little relevance to the job of teaching. As a case in point, David looks at reforms in assessment, and the perverse incentives of policy-making that prioritise political accountability over school and teacher accountability.

David Williams goes further. As a thought experiment, he proposes an entirely new way of conceiving of and carrying out assessment. Our contention, and his, is not that it is necessarily right, or right for everyone. As editors of this book, though, we are entirely convinced that teachers will not only offer different solutions, but different types of solution altogether, to the problems facing education in the UK today.

Julie Smith and **Zeba Clark** offer this section on cognitive agency two concrete examples of teacher-generated, teacher-centred solutions to developing and nurturing professional knowledge. As a senior school leader, Zeba makes the case for internal over external accountability in a forthright, evidence- and experience-based way. Julie, a director of teaching and learning, describes the transformative power of practitioner-led research.

In this way, the following contributions not only demonstrate that the education system undermines the professionalism and status of teachers in the sphere of professional knowledge, but that teachers like Tom, Peter, David, Julie and Zeba exercise that professionalism regardless, often despite it. The UK deserves better for its teachers and their students.

DEMAND COGNITIVE AGENCY

The teachers' manifesto demands that teachers develop and be empowered to develop their professional knowledge, continuously and according to their own priorities, in collaboration with their colleagues. This must include:

- Teacher involvement in academic research as consumers and producers;
- Qualifying and professional standards that require evidence of research engagement;
- Working conditions that make possible the continued attainment of such standards;

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- Teacher involvement at every level in the design of policy that requires:
- Any reform of the standards themselves;
- Any reform that impacts on the knowledge required of teachers to perform their duty, especially with regard to curriculum, pedagogy and monitoring;
- Any reform that impacts on the knowledge required of teachers to account for the performance of their duty, especially with regard to data collection, assessment and monitoring.
- Accountability measures for all stakeholders and policy-makers that require a commitment to, and the monitoring of performance in, upholding the professionalism of teachers with regard to their cognitive agency as defined above.

FROM DATA RICH TO DATA SMART: EMPOWERING TEACHERS, NOT MONITORING TEACHERS

BY DAVID WESTON

> "At the heart of these scenarios is the eerie sense that everyone has to play the game. Data is king, even if it doesn't really represent a recognisable reality."

"It's all take, take, take. I can't remember the last time someone asked me what I need," she said, as she burst into tears in front of me. We both looked nervously at the classroom door, wondering if a member of the management team might come in and ask what was happening. She looked at me with a fearful expression that said, "I'm supposed to keep this hidden, I'm supposed to toe the line. This is what being a professional means these days."

I visit schools in England regularly to talk to teachers about how they are learning and growing. The conversation above was not, sadly, a one-off. I speak to so many people in schools who spend their lives looking nervously over their shoulders, wondering if they are about to be 'caught out.' It might be a teacher nervously entering their latest set of test scores into the data management system. It might be, like the colleague who burst into tears, an experienced head of department who has been asked to deliver training sessions on 'Outstanding Teaching.' It might be a

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headteacher putting on a brave face as she feels the 'school improvement advisor' breathing down her neck.

At the heart of these scenarios is the eerie sense that everyone has to play the game. Data is king, even if it doesn't really represent a recognisable reality. Everyone is monitored and your job is to attempt to exceed your minimum targets at all times. Perform, deliver, be measured. Play your part, prove your worth, don't fall behind.

It doesn't have to be this way. I have visited schools filled with joy. Places of learning where teachers are scholars of research, where intellectual rigour and debate are cherished, where management efforts are focused primarily on growth instead of monitoring. These are schools filled with a sense of collective efficacy, where everyone works together to examine evidence of learning, rather than places of judgement and 'us versus them.' The challenge levels are high and professional accountability is strong; these are not necessarily always relaxing places to work, but they are endlessly stimulating, nourishing and, above all, professional environments.

One such school is Cleveland Road Primary School in East London. It's a large primary school with four classes in each year. I visited the school to discuss the way that staff there engage in professional learning and development. I asked one teacher about his working week.

> Him: "Well, every week we meet as a team of teachers to do planning. We have a look at what's coming up in the curriculum and review whether there are any difficult areas for the pupils which have come up in the last week. It's a great way to share ideas and get on the same page with each other. We have our team of Teaching Assistants with us too, and that helps them work across the classes."
>
> Me: "So, it's a professional development session?"
>
> Him: "Oh no, that's not CPD, that's just the way we work."

Everything about this school showed that teachers saw learning as threaded through every activity. They had embedded what Dame Alison Peacock calls the 'holy trinity' of curriculum knowledge, professional dialogue and constantly gathering evidence about pupils' learning (i.e. formative assessment).

This is a teacher-led approach to running a school. School leaders are not engaged in monitoring and telling, but they create an effective and challenging environment

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where every teacher is stretched to learn and contribute. As Cleveland Road's headteacher, Veena Naidoo, put it: "We know our staff and we know them well. We prioritise excellent conversations and we develop our team leaders to have exceptional subject knowledge and expertise."

Veena, like most of her senior colleagues, has had training in being a coach. She knows that great professional conversations aren't mandated through systems but also don't happen by accident. They work hard to model and develop supportive discussions. These conversations are rooted in the evidence gathered from the classroom and also in the aims embedded in the curriculum. They are empowering, not fear-inducing.

Like Cleveland Road, many of the most effective schools I visit focus on learning and on empowering teachers. While there is a quiet, background process of checking on effectiveness, most of the evidence gathering is targeted, to empower teachers and teaching assistants to make smarter decisions. Data systems are designed to enable teams to explore patterns and issues, to give visibility and clarity to staff about the effectiveness of their practice.

This approach is light years away from what is seen at the other end of the spectrum. Many schools design burdensome data systems with a view to rapidly identifying 'weak performance' and to otherwise allow senior leaders to make decisions about the training that should be given to staff based on test scores or one-off observations. Staff are asked to input data on six or more occasions per year, built on the mistaken underlying assumption that all the numbers are comparable and generalisable across teachers, classes and subjects.

Teachers are monitored through lesson observations and scrutiny of samples of pupil work. This is undertaken by generally untrained observers, despite the evidence showing the unreliability of this approach (Coe et al., 2014). Generic and often highly subjective judgements are made about aspects of practice that need to be improved.

Philippa Cordingley from the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE) led a piece of research into the difference between successful and less successful schools. She noted that all schools "undertook intense monitoring," but that

> in the absence of steps to ensure that everyone understood the principles/ rationale behind the practices that were being monitored, this tended to erode into an unhelpful emphasis on compliance. By contrast, Exceptional Schools placed a great

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> emphasis on building a shared understanding of the school's model of pedagogy and its underpinning rationale. By ensuring that all development focused on identifying and removing barriers to learning and building a shared model of and language for teaching and learning, the extensive monitoring in Exceptional Schools worked to build coherence for learners and develop a commitment to collective efficacy.
>
> (Cordingley, 2016)

Exceptional schools are not just data rich, but data smart. They recognise both the uses and the limits of that data. They ensure that the right information is used at the right levels. They are wary about aggregating entirely different sets of numbers in an attempt to create something superficially comparable. They recognise that data collection and appraisal observations can improve a workload burden which must be minimised. They create cultures where the most important user of information is the person who can act on it most rapidly and who has enough other information to contextualise and interrogate it. Others ask tough questions, provide alternative perspectives and inject expertise.

This surely makes sense. If I collect assessments that suggest that a pupil in my class has underperformed, then the person who can act most helpfully on that is me. I know the backstory of the pupil; I can immediately act to tweak my next lesson, to seek the right support from my colleagues and to have the right informal discussion with the pupil.

By the time that this has been aggregated to a team level, passed up to senior leaders, re-aggregated and discussed, then not only is there a huge time lag from the moment of learning, but the data has lost all of its nuance and context along the way. Anything suggested from class-level analysis will more likely be transformed into a sledge-hammer approach to deal with a complex and nuanced mix of statistical, psychological and pedagogical issues.

Every school can be data rich. That's the easy bit, but if we stop designing systems and cultures that funnel data to the top of the tree and push decisions and training back down, we can flip the system. We can enrich and empower teachers with approaches steeped in autonomy, professionalism and genuine expert accountability. We can make every school data smart.

CHAPTER

2

THE TEACHERS' MANIFESTO
COLLECTIVE AGENCY

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COLLECTIVE AGENCY

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Teaching is a social act. We teach because we are entrusted by our society – our communities – with the role, in loco parentis, of educating young people. While this may seem like a truism, even the most superficial experience of the education system will show – despite pockets of excellent practice – that the communication and collaboration between schools and their broader communities is not only mediated by the incentives placed upon them by accountability measures, but actually undermined by them too. This pattern is repeated across the education sector in the ways teachers relate to each other within and between schools, to their students, to policy and reform, and indeed, as we will see in Part III, even to themselves.

NORMALISING RELATIONS

Rob Loe shows that the relational element of teaching can be measured. Indeed, he argues that such measurement can be a powerful, transformative policy lever, yet suggests that this genie should be kept in its bottle. In line with many others across the book, Rob perceives the danger of unintended consequences with regard to the over-simplifying force of policy-making, and of measurement for accountability alone. Instead, he challenges us to conceive ways to favour the relational and communal, while forcing policy-makers to abandon their addiction to the notion of immediate system feedback. Speaking to that notion of immediacy and impatience for change, **Jeremy Pattle** takes us through a teacher's life-cycle to show the destructive effect of valuing experiment over experience and revolution over evolution. He entreats us to put relationships with our colleagues at least on a par with our relationships with remote policy-makers and still-developing research. Speaking to the ill effects of over-simplification, **Debra Kidd** urges us to consider that the values of democracy and tolerance aren't simply taught – they are modelled, embedded and enacted in the very way we teach.

Together, Rob, Jeremy and Debra show that education policy is a mediator of relationships, that the act of measurement itself is corrosive to collaboration. While we would not suggest that measurement should be disposed of wholesale, it seems evident to us that the pace of the political cycle, especially in the accelerated phase it seems to be in presently, is fundamentally at odds with the pace of good education reform.

INSTITUTIONALISING SOLIDARITY

Here, **Steve Watson** shows how democracy, scholarship, activism and solidarity are all collective enterprises, undermined by the education system as it exists, and necessary to bring about a new relationship between teachers and their profession. **Ross McGill** goes on to identify a rich seam of opportunity for solidarity rising from

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the ashes of a broken system of professional development. Further, headteacher **George Gilchrist** shows how even well-intentioned policy fails when it doesn't take into account the collective strength of professional teachers; **Howard Stevenson** proposes a reinvention of teaching unions as mass-participation organisations to facilitate that collective strength; and **Alison Peacock** develops her vision for the Chartered College of Teaching as a new collaboration-led professional body, based on human principles of openness and empathy.

What transpires from these contributions is that only when teachers can work together, in as unmediated an environment as possible, can true change be effected. Indeed, this is not only true with regards to improving the working conditions and professional status of teachers, but also crucially true with regards to the implementation of policy; 'buy-in' from teachers is the sword upon which all education policy, be it school or national-level, eventually falls. As a result, it is incumbent upon teachers to create and to invest themselves in the institutions that will magnify their voices, and upon policy-makers to empower them to do so. We contend that it is insufficient for the latter simply to listen. They must devolve that power, and allow teachers themselves to lead.

DEMAND COLLECTIVE AGENCY

Therefore, the teachers' manifesto demands that teachers create and be empowered to create their professional institutions and to nurture their collaborations to lead the education system and its reforms. This must include:

- Teacher representation in policy-making at every level – school, trust, regional, national and international;
- Qualifying and professional standards that require evidence of collaborative practice;
- Working conditions that make possible the continued attainment of such standards;
- The creation, or reform, of institutions that represent, employ or otherwise affect teachers in their professional roles, so that they:
    - Are shaped by practising teachers themselves;
    - Foster collaboration across all aspects of education;
    - Are democratically run, open, diverse and fair;
    - Are evidence-informed and ethos-led.
- Accountability measures for all stakeholders and policy-makers at all levels that require a commitment to, and the monitoring of performance in, upholding the professionalism of teachers with regard to their collective agency as defined above.

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LESSON STUDY: AN APPROACH TO CLAIMING SLOW TIME FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

BY PHIL WOOD

> "Teaching's intellectual nature has been replaced by a simplistic, technical one – to deliver predetermined and packaged materials created by others."

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 15 years, policy development in English education has seen an ever-more acute acceleration. This acceleration was first identifiable under New Labour and 'deliverology', an ideology which demanded ever-faster rises in national examination results. Driven by this need for higher attainment, increasing numbers of complex policy initiatives were developed, including school self-evaluation, personalised learning, curriculum innovation and diplomas. Since 2010, government has continued to accelerate policy development. Much of the educational landscape has seen radical change, sometimes untried and untested, sometimes not even making it to final implementation before being abandoned or changed. This chapter begins by arguing that more time is needed to encourage 'slow thinking' through professional discussion, curriculum and pedagogic development. Lesson study is then outlined as a potential vehicle for such slow work, based on collaboration and debate and focused on improving teacher practice.

Paul Virilio, urbanist and cultural theorist, defines social and political acceleration, particularly relating to technology, as 'dromology' (literally 'the logic of speed'): a compression of time as a consequence of changes in geopolitics, technology and the media. Virilio sees greater generation and use of data as a recipe for disinformation and confusion. Politicians are able to hide, embed or control issues, as "speed is power itself" (Virilio, 1999, 15). As policy generation compresses over time, those outside of government are in a constant state of reaction, attempting to understand and analyse new sets of ideas as the next policy is already being announced. By instigating reform at a very fast pace, a Secretary of State essentially creates a 'power-grab' – the sheer velocity of change eroding debate, ensuring less resistance and short-circuiting the democratic process. In addition, the media become the dromological troops of politicians (Eriksen, 2001), feeding off the accelerated context in which they work.

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Eriksen reflects on the dromological impacts of modern society by arguing that what he calls 'fast time' increasingly drives out 'slow time'. The former is in part characterised by a need to react to, and prioritise, increasing flows of information. The latter allows for deliberation, thought, debate and reflective ways of working, which are integral to the educative process, yet are slowly disappearing from our education system. Eriksen identifies six problems with this shift. Speed is addictive. It leads to over-simplification and a loss of precision in favour of Taylorist assembly-line processes. Paradoxically, speed demands space (consider your email inbox!), so it saves no time. As a result, it spreads like a contagion, killing off slow time.

In education, these effects are all too obvious. Recourse to ever-more complex data systems allows rapid generation of targets and tracking sheets, as a result of which quantitatively tracked 'learning' and 'progress' have in some instances displaced professional dialogue and reflection. Data systems are 'fast' processes; they give simplified snapshots of a complex process, but from a process philosophical perspective, this leads to the problem that a series of flows are collapsed into simplistic 'events'. The consequence of these developments is that the acceleration of education has in part gone hand-in-hand with ever greater reliance on numeric data, both internal and external.

The dromological impact of social and political change might lead us to believe that we need to make faster, better decisions and changes. The constant speeding up of reform, demands for rapid progress and an increasing focus on the short-term have served to blunt critical capacities, to surrender professional and community debate to ever more rapid production of – and enslavement to – numeric data. This analysis supports Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012, p. 14) description of the 'business capital' model of education. They argue that the focus on data and adherence to an 'outputs' model of education may lead to a view of teachers and teaching which assumes that good teaching:

- may be emotionally demanding, but it is technically simple;
- is a quick study requiring only moderate intellectual ability;
- is hard at first, but with dedication can be mastered readily;
- should be driven by hard performance data about what works and where best to target one's efforts;
- comes down to enthusiasm, hard work, raw talent, and measurable results;
- is often replaceable by online instruction.

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The business capital model makes sense of teaching's de-professionalisation: its intellectual nature has been replaced by a simplistic, technical one – to deliver predetermined and packaged materials created by others.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) offer an alternative view of the process of education, both in school and at policy level, through the concept of 'professional capital'. This educational perspective is based on seeing teachers as valued professionals who require time and resources to develop and perfect their professional skills and thinking. This approach is developed through the exercise of particular approaches to professional learning, which includes the emergence of collaborative endeavour. Professional capital is not driven by a top-down model dictated by senior leaders fulfilling their own agendas or those of government, but is facilitated by senior leaders giving teacher groups the space to exercise their own professional judgement. In short, it is a dialogic approach which attempts to make great pedagogy a community asset, overcoming the deadening hand of pedagogic solitude' (Shulman, 1993), where teachers work independently and rarely discuss pedagogy with others. From this perspective, data are still important, but act as the starting point for discussion and development, not as a numeric yoke under which teachers are expected to toil.

Teachers need to operate in fast time – it is inherent to the job – but they also need significant opportunity for periods of 'slow time' to act individually and collaboratively to affect positive change in the contexts in which they work. There are a number of different ways in which the utility of slow time can be realised: creating professional learning communities, coaching and mentoring or practitioner investigation. Here, I explore lesson study as one possible approach to utilising slow time, using focused, collaborative activity to develop professional practice and pedagogic literacy (Cajkler and Wood, 2016), rather than pressuring individual teachers to perform better, often to a prescribed formula.

THE CASE OF LESSON STUDY

Lesson study is an approach for improving student learning and teacher pedagogy through the collaborative development of lessons (Dudley, 2011; Fernandez et al., 2003; Lewis, 2009; Lewis et al., 2006). The basic method centres on a group of teachers working together to identify a learning challenge faced by students, which then becomes the focus for improving teaching and learning in that area, opening up the "pedagogic black box" (Cajkler and Wood, 2015) for discussion, reflection and evaluation.

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Lesson study originated in Japan over 100 years ago, and developed as an approach to pedagogic development. Initially, it remained unknown beyond Japan but has since developed across the world as a teacher-led method for gaining pedagogic insights and developing expertise (Stigler and Hiebert, 1999). It is now widely used in Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, the USA and many parts of Europe. There is no single, correct way to carry out lesson study, as even in Japan variations emphasise different parts of the process. However, some core aspects of the method appear to be invariant and necessary. These include the idea of collaborative work, deep consideration of learning and pedagogy, the productive use of observation and opportunity to evaluate both the process and evidence for changes in student activity and learning.

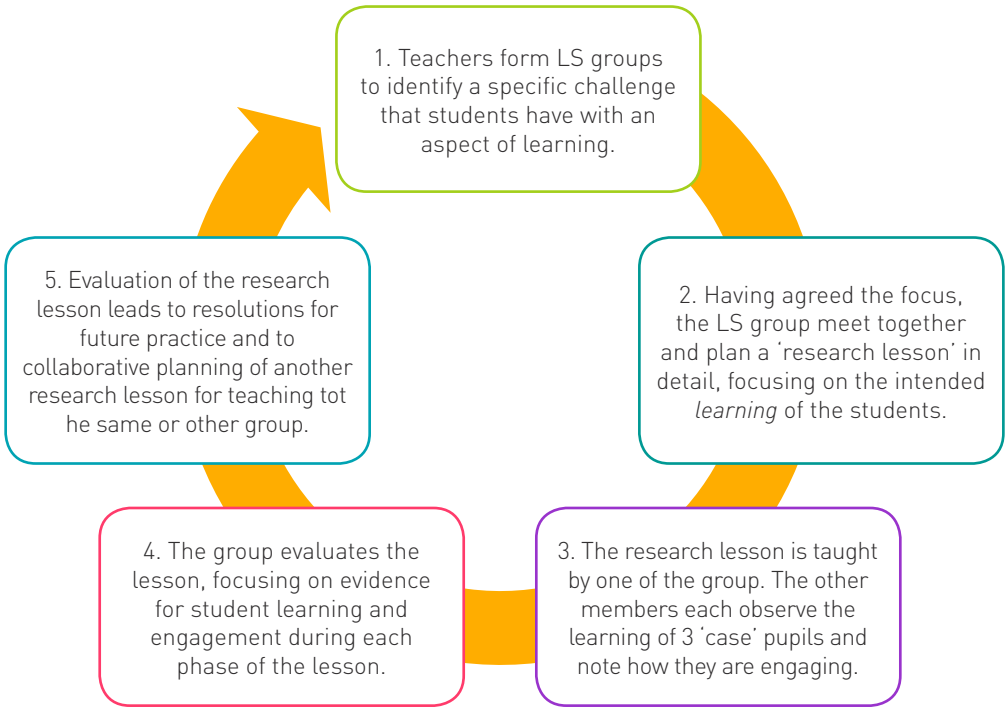

Figure 17.1 • Shows an outline of the stages of a basic lesson study cycle.

This basic lesson study cycle can be altered for use in different contexts and with different age groups. Our own research has covered work with colleagues from primary, secondary, college and university contexts. In each case professional and learning cultures differ, and as such, the detail of the process changes to fit those cultures. However, central to the use of lesson study is the opportunity for teachers

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to work together to understand and develop learning, based on collaborative endeavour and dialogue. Importantly, the cycle often occurs over several weeks, and as such allows for reflection and debate; it is a process which establishes the opportunity to operate in slow time and thus open up opportunities to extend human capital, through a decisional and collaborative focus. This brings with it the opportunity for greater professional agency in developing understanding of student learning through greater decisional capital in planning and evaluative work.

The research carried out by the Lesson Study Research Group at the University of Leicester has shown several positive impacts emerging from teacher engagement with lesson study.

MAKING SPACE AND TIME FOR DISCUSSION ABOUT LEARNING AND TEACHING

In a system that constantly relates work to data and outcomes, critical space and time for teacher-determined discussion of teaching and learning can be lost. Establishing regular opportunities for reflection and development – unhindered by performative narratives – can have high value, allowing for deeper critical engagement with pedagogic issues. Because the emergence of new insights within lesson study can take place over an extended period, multiple ideas are shared by different members of the group. The collaborative meetings, central to planning and evaluation, allow for rich dialogues to occur, leading to sharing good pedagogic practice beyond the specific approaches finally chosen for the lesson. Participants in our research regularly comment on the positive impact that having time to discuss pedagogy, focused on a point of common interest, has had on their wider practice.

REASSERTING A SENSE OF PROFESSIONALISM AND AGENCY

The acceleration and volume of work in schools can result in a feeling of reduced agency and professionalism as teachers become passive recipients of rapid and constant changes in policy, often filtered and mediated by senior leadership teams. The use of approaches such as lesson study can begin to redress this balance to a degree by devolving to teachers more opportunities for decision making, especially in identifying challenges faced by their students. In turn, these insights act as the basis for professional discussions concerning planning, execution and evaluation. This greater professional freedom helps, over a period of time, to build greater pedagogic expertise and allows new insights relevant to practice to emerge. Crucially, as the value of these insights is realised, so the process is reinforced and leaders disincentivised from interfering. Any decay in decisional capital to meet organisational requirement

rather than pedagogic need will erode the process. Conversely, effective lesson study erodes leadership by diktat.

MAKING FORMATIVE AND POSITIVE USE OF OBSERVATION

Recent changes within the school system and Ofsted have led to a move away in (some) schools from linking classroom observation to performance management. However, there is still widespread use of observations focused on teachers and teaching. There is no doubt that this can be important in helping colleagues develop practice, and can be both positive and supportive, particularly as part of mentoring and coaching frameworks. Lesson study, however, uses an almost diametrically opposed approach to observation, with learning and student activity being at the core of the process. As such, it is a basis for the growth of both human and social capital.

In some of the schools we have worked with, the introduction of lesson study has brought a wider cultural shift in the perception of observation, even when lesson study is not being used. Where previously teachers were reticent towards observation, having mainly experienced it as a performative tool, many have come to see it as a formative opportunity to discuss and support colleagues. The use of observation, in these schools, has become far more discursive, more reflective and more focused on improving practice, rather than as a tool for measurement.

AFFECTIVE IMPACTS ON TEACHER GROUPS

Across a number of the projects we have worked on, a recurring theme has been the affective impact the use of lesson study has had as a slow education process. There is anecdotal evidence of more general teacher talk concerning pedagogy in informal times and spaces, and a greater feeling of 'togetherness' as shared interests and approaches begin to develop.

OPENING UP THE PEDAGOGIC BLACK BOX

Within a lesson study approach, teachers are not only afforded the opportunity to engage with colleagues in a deep and consistent dialogue about learning, but are also encouraged to offer suggestions, leading to a legitimate and active input to the development of the pedagogy for research lessons. In this way, lesson study is a process which opens up the 'pedagogic black box', identifying and discussing pedagogy as a complex, emergent, holistic set of processes, better understood through in-depth discussion between collaborating teachers, each of whose experience and ideas are afforded credibility and potential.

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CHALLENGES

As the reflections above suggest, lesson study as a vehicle for pedagogic development – conceived as slow time for professional reflection and discussion – is an effective way to develop professional capital. However, whilst these positive impacts have been reported by teachers, it is no panacea. There are a number of issues of sustainability and approach which present challenges to using lesson study. Firstly, across all our research, the issue of time is a recurring theme. Lesson study is not a quick process; this is one of its key strengths. It takes time to identify an area for development, to develop a collaborative approach, to carry out the resultant lesson and evaluate it. With the time pressures inherent in the English education system, this can make using the approach problematic. If lesson study is to thrive, there needs to be full support from a school's leadership team to protect this time and space for such debate and development. This requires an initial effort of professional trust, and where lesson study is at its most successful is where it has been embedded into the culture of the school progressively.

Another potential problem which traditional lesson study may suffer from is an over-reliance on observation as a tool for capturing and understanding the process of learning in a lesson. In the basic cycle outlined above, the majority of the evidence for an evaluation comes from observation of students during the lesson, and whilst some practitioners and researchers attempt to develop research lessons which will make the learning process 'visible', much will remain hidden. As Nuthall (2007, p. 158) argues,

> how students learn from classroom activities is not simply a result of teacher-managed activities, but also the result of students' ongoing relationships with other students, and of their own self-created activities or use of resources.

As a consequence, we always advise participants in lesson study to triangulate their observations with other sources of evidence. Where possible, either informal or formal interviews with students are a useful source of information – stimulated-recall interviews the most useful – but even this approach is imperfect. Student work and attainment remain the all-important benchmark. With this caveat in place, the technique can still open up useful reflections on the processes undertaken by students.

The third, and perhaps most important challenge for lesson study, is embedding it into the culture of a school. Perhaps one of the reasons the process appears to offer so much in schools in Japan is because it is an embedded element of the school

system. When new initiatives are presented by government, lesson study groups often play a role in establishing the changes at school level in a coherent fashion. Teacher professionalism and slow time are integral to the Japanese education system in a way that they aren't in England.

CONCLUSION

Education in England has been under dromological pressure at least since the inception of the National Curriculum in 1988, with more and more policy used as a lever to bring faster and faster change. But how far has this brought us in terms of increased academic achievement? With ever greater incursion of private interests into education too, the education system is breaking apart organisationally, professionally and politically. We are accelerating into an uncertain future, with little reasoned debate or consensus-building. At such a juncture, when the only clear message is that reform is needed, it is important that we provide time for teachers to gain sustained opportunities for professional growth, that we invest in their professional capital. To do this well, we need to expand the amount of slow time available for focused reflective and constructive activity. When so much of the work in schools is carried out by necessity in fast time, it is the investment in slow time and professional growth which will give firm foundations for action. This approach will not feed an event-hungry political class, and it does not promise increased examination outcomes in a matter of weeks, but if developed through the adoption of frameworks, of which lesson study is but one example, it will form a better basis for our country's education system than anything dromology has to offer.

CHAPTER

3

THE TEACHERS' MANIFESTO
ETHICAL AGENCY

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Despite the connotations of a manifesto, this book has aimed throughout to stay above Left/Right divides. This manifesto is equally suited to the collective, grassroots tendency of Leftist politics and to small-government principles of the Right. Equally, we have steered a course that transcends the traditionalist/progressive rift of educational philosophy. It calls on the empowerment of all teachers, regardless of their persuasion in this regard. Chiefly, if we have achieved these aims at all, it is because our stance is one of pluralism and our objective is to make education more democratic, which supersedes the strictly political and promotes a philosophical pragmatism.

As we have argued so far, flipping the system must be founded on the empowerment of every teacher as an evidence-informed and collaborative professional. The third dimension of this professionalism is an ethical agency, an active stance towards the forces that shape education. Teachers, as professionals, are or ought to be engaged with educational purpose as much as they are with its outcomes. Indeed, how else to evaluate outcomes except in the context of a stated purpose? But if we are to be a profession, then we must have agency in determining these purposes (for they are, in fact, plural).

THE POLITICS OF CHANGE

With regards to political forces, **d'Reen Struthers** explores the deleterious effect upon teachers of being trapped between a state of resistance – opposing mandated practices that bring no benefit to themselves or their students – and one of resilience – acquiescing to those same practices to focus their efforts on managing their effects on workload and students. As a teacher–educator, d'Reen describes the disempowerment felt by many as they qualify to become teachers, and the hope that qualification will bring a change.

Phil Wood goes on to describe the dromological pressure created by the political cycle, and to offer school-based solutions to slow down time through lesson study. In this way, he argues, at least at school level, new policies and initiatives can be implemented thoughtfully and sustainably.

Headteacher **Rae Snape** reflects d'Reen's and Phil's concerns as she describes how constant political reform brings precious little positive change in teachers' professional status, and precious little time to manage change in teachers' mandated practices. She urges her colleagues in leadership to protect their staff by investing in their professional development and putting the school's ethos at the forefront of its practice.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF ACTION

In philosophy, an action is always performed by an agent, with intention. In a sort of Cartesian turn, **Simon Gibbs** explores the beliefs teachers hold about themselves as agents, and about their students, and the impact these have on their work and students' outcomes. Having shown the importance of self-efficacy beliefs, Simon suggests that the current paradigm of reform focused on performativity is a case of the treatment killing the patient.

Ross Hall offers an alternative: an education founded on principles of empowerment and wellbeing, with schools returned to their communities to be more adaptive, more inclusive, more human. In her view from a pupil referral unit, **Jackie Ward** charts the effects of failing to change course, with rising exclusions and dwindling resources for support.

Simon Knight shows us what we can learn from special schools – from their innate ethos of inclusivity, and from their necessary embrace of both progressivism and traditionalism to meet each student's needs. Simon shows that schools and school systems need not mandate a philosophical direction. On the contrary, he argues, our philosophical direction must emanate from the students themselves, and professionalism comes from remaining flexible in our thinking and in our practices.

With examples from their work through the HertsCam Network, **David Frost**, **Sheila Ball** and **Sarah Lightfoot** round off this section by showing how an ethos of non-positional teacher leadership offers a practical means to bring about change at the institutional level through greater professionalism.

DEMAND ETHICAL AGENCY

The teachers' manifesto demands that teachers engage and be empowered to engage in the political and philosophical dimensions of their work, with the power to choose and amend their actions accordingly. This must include:

- Teacher engagement with professional ethics, including the creation of an ethical code of practice;
- Qualifying and professional standards that require evidence of engagement with educational purpose;
- Working conditions that make possible the continued attainment of such standards;

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- Teacher engagement at every level in the design and implementation of policy that requires any change in:
  - The political or philosophical framing of their practice;
  - Measures impacting on workload and cognitive load;
  - The manner of their being held accountable for their performance.
- Accountability measures for all stakeholders and policy-makers at all levels that require a commitment to, and the monitoring of performance in, upholding the professionalism of teachers with regard to their ethical agency as defined above.

PROFESSIONAL RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING

BY D'REEN STRUTHERS

> "We should be aspiring to a situation where teachers are encouraged to take ownership of their professional position and wellbeing to 'thrive in' rather than simply 'survive' the profession."

As a teacher educator observing the challenges faced by primary student teachers out in schools on teaching placements or on employment-based routes, it is worrying to see that even in their initial year of 'training' [sic] there are signs of doubt about teaching as a profession; time and time again, their resilience and wellbeing are tested. I watch as new entrants struggle with authoritarian regimes in schools that demand accountable performance of them, measured via the output of their pupils. One minute, the school wants every pupil to have evidence in their books from a lesson (the rumoured advice for Ofsted visits), and the next, a new maths scheme is to be introduced, in the full knowledge (presumably) that there is book monitoring next week. All the while, the phase leader is changing the scheme for reading and there is the pressure of spelling and phonics testing trickling down to pupils to also perform to the test. And so, life in a primary school goes on …

This exercise in plate-spinning, which also includes completing assignments to demonstrate that they are meeting the standards expected to achieve qualified teacher status, leads many of these young graduates to struggle. Their health and work–life balance is often at risk. I work regularly with people perplexed at what they experience as poor leadership and management in schools. They find themselves

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caught in the trap of wanting to protect their pupils from the consequences of these demands, while feeling the pressure to be compliant and accountable for their actions. Yet, they continue to perform at the necessary standard consistently across the year to be accepted into teaching, in the hope that professional status will eventually free them from this incessant performativity. These are moral dilemmas, experienced daily by new teachers who feel torn between maintaining a job and maintaining their professional integrity. These experiences of stress are described by Zukas (2011), as "crossing, transitioning, translating" role-defined boundaries. In essence, they are part of the process by which trainees learn to identify as 'real' teachers, but are they necessary?

Once considered part of the classical professions, teachers' domains of work have traditionally (1) had an orientation towards the promotion of human wellbeing – what I shall term 'othering' and will return to later; (2) drawn on a highly specialised body of knowledge and skills; and (3) been contextualised in relation to concepts of authority and trust (Freidson, 1994). It is easy to see how this definition applies to traditional professionals (doctors, lawyers, priests), and why, over time, there have been moves to make the professions more democratic and accountable, including in the field of education. Perhaps uniquely, though, the neoliberal language, values and practices perpetuated by the free-market and competitiveness-at-all costs economy (Apple, 2000; Hursh, 2007) have led to a prevailing policy view of teaching as a technical craft, easily learnt on the job, without need to engage with a critical theoretical body of knowledge. There has been a 'policy turn' away from "a predominant focus on specifying the necessary knowledge for teaching, toward specifying teaching practices that entail knowledge and doing" (McDonald et al., 2013, p. 378). Authority and trust have been eroded too, so that with the marketisation of education, students or pupils have become clients, knowledge a commodity to be 'transferred' and all sight of the 'public good' dismissed in favour of global economic considerations. Biesta (2016) reminds us that turning schools into small businesses distorts what education is about and significantly undermines the ability of teachers to be teachers and of schools, colleges and universities to be educational institutions (p. 87).

Still further, externally imposed school accountability systems have become a common element of the UK education system, with central government-led policies tied closely to the OECD's PISA data. With test scores disaggregated to students, teachers and schools, there is evidence that they directly affect the morale of teachers exponentially (Dworkin, 2009). This disaggregation of results frequently means that praise or blame can be ascribed to individual teachers and schools.

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Underlying assumptions suggesting that low student achievement is a product of incompetent teachers have led to high-stakes accountability initiatives to end failing schools; a narrative of raising teacher 'quality' has impacted directly on policy approaches to teacher recruitment, training and curricula, resulting in increases in teacher workloads (Hargreaves, 1994) and what Apple (1987) termed the 'deskilling' of teachers. However, to attract high-quality teachers, recruitment drives the promotion of the job as 'inspirational', a chance to 'give something back' and an effort in social justice (DfE, 2017), while brushing aside the significant everyday challenges teachers face. Despite the rhetoric, the latest figures suggest attracting new teachers into the profession with such promises is not working (Ward, 2017).

With the tension between what is healthy and sustainable for individual teachers increasingly set against the needs of the institutions they work in, teacher educators must also grapple with resilience's counter-concept: resistance. The question for my colleagues and me is whether we teacher educators should be seeking to prepare teachers for the way schools are (adapting to institutions) or focus on preparing new professionals for the ways schools could and should be (transforming institutions)?

Evidently, an overemphasis on resistance could leave teachers and teachers-to-be unable to find or hold a position in schools (Ingersoll, 2001). At a time of concerns about teacher retention and sustainability, this is of vital significance. Certainly, there are concerns that the hyper-focus on resilience within international teacher education research and practice is detrimental to both individual teachers and the teaching profession as a whole (MacBeath, 2012). Surely what we want are teachers who can both work in the current teaching profession and improve it: this calls for a clarity about how we use the terms 'resilience and wellbeing' and requires us to create and engage in opportunities to go beyond the mere replication of practice to a more critical engagement with the contexts of practice.

Ratner (2013), drawing from the field of cultural psychology, describes this as a macro–micro phenomenon, where conditions that are often perceived to be intra-psychological (e.g. stress and depression) are actually rooted in social and institutional structures and processes. It is evident that already too much focus, responsibility and blame is placed on teacher characteristics, and not enough on the power of the environment, structure and the array of situational factors that impact the work of teachers.

Specifically, teacher burnout and resilience can be viewed from two different perspectives. The clinical (or psychological) approach argues that some teachers have

better coping skills or personalities that allow them to resist the negative effects of stress. Burnout is seen as a personal malady resulting from the inability to cope with stress and the stressors associated with the role. What arises from the tendency to 'blame' the victim of burnout is the need to suggest ways to enhance coping skills, offering stress management, holistic health care and even yoga (Celoline, 1982; Pines, 1993). By contrast, the sociological approach considers how not only structural and organisational variables themselves can serve as stressors to induce burnout, but also that change in structures and organisations may be necessary to promote teacher resilience. If burnout is seen as a form of work role alienation, then ways schools as organisations can mitigate stress and facilitate coping might seem a more strategic response. However, school environments can diminish teachers' perceived self-efficacy, threatening wellbeing (Johnson et al., 2014), especially when educational reforms mandate excessive conformity (Alexander, 2011).

When seen as an umbrella term for the ability to bounce back and manage conflicts, adaptability, commitment, flexibility, motivation, positivity and optimism, teacher resilience can easily become the goal of teacher retention. However, when over-emphasised by teacher educators and system leaders, this definition can too easily be presented as a set of coping mechanisms to promote wellbeing, while in fact it primarily benefits the institution at the expense of the teacher, leading to unsustainable professional tensions. When resilience is explained as "positive adaption despite adversity" (Bottrell, 2009), almost inevitably, individualised explanations of human problems and their suggested amelioration, as a consequence, lead us to psychologise and pathologise human problems. For the purpose of this article, I use the definition from Pemberton (2015, p. 2), who describes resilience in relation to human behaviour as

> the capacity to remain flexible in our thoughts, feelings and behaviours when faced by a life disruption, or extended periods of pressure, so that we emerge from difficulty stronger, wiser and more able.

Significantly, here is explicit reference to positive change for the betterment of the individual, as opposed to compliance to the status quo for the needs of the institution.

Teacher wellbeing, too, can be viewed from both an individual and social perspective. While wellbeing can be associated with an innate desire to reach one's full potential (Ryan and Deci, 2001), it has also been noted that individual satisfaction and wellbeing can influence others, contributing to a more collective, inclusive sense of

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the concept (ibid.). The psychological concept of wellbeing is often accompanied in education by an emphasis on physical, emotional, mental and spiritual fulfilment. Mental wellbeing, specifically, is linked to a limited conceptualisation of perceived stimulation in teachers' professional lives.

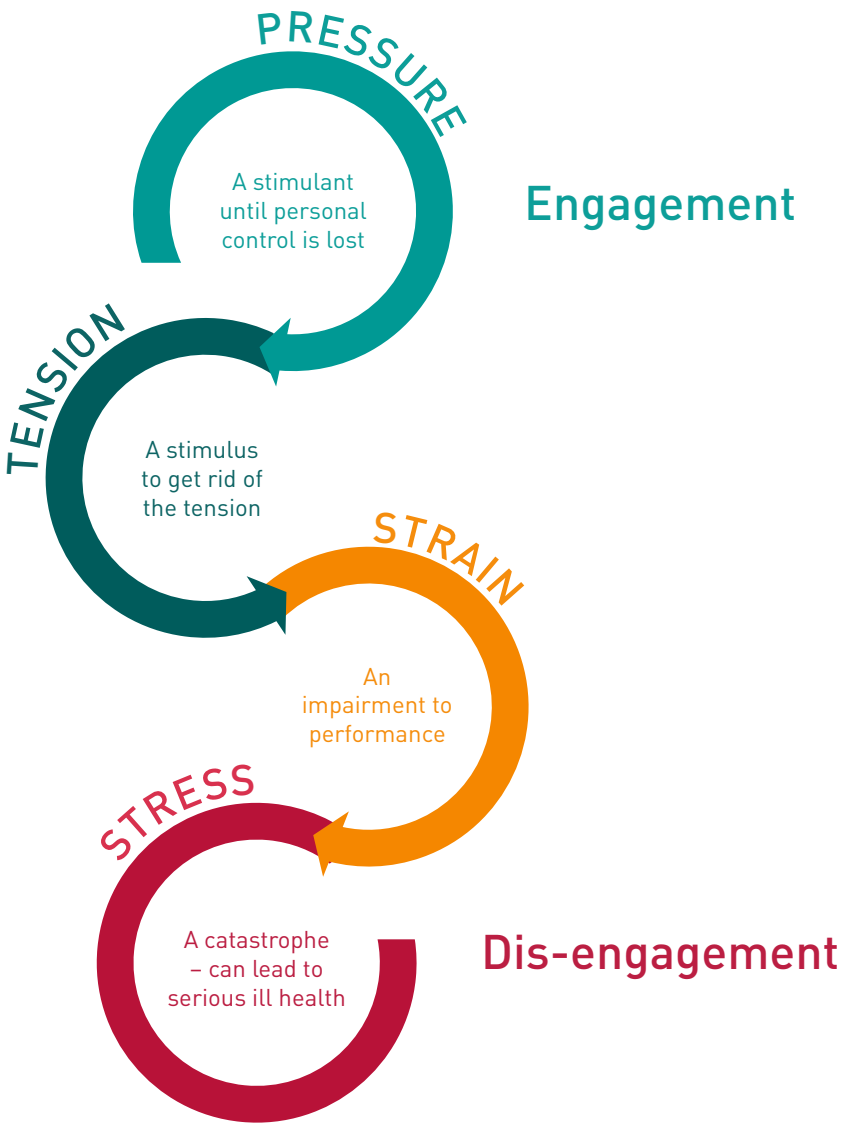

Figure 16.1 • Psychological distress is at the wrong end of deteriorating psychological wellbeing (Mowbray, 2008).

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THE POSSIBILITIES FOR TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATORS

The challenge for teacher educators is how to support and promote teacher wellbeing: should they encourage teachers to own their professional responsibilities or support them to manage and cope with them? Often, it can feel like suggesting the compartmentalisation of the 'professional' and 'personal' selves, which runs the risk of teacher burnout, of physical and emotional exhaustion, coupled with a mental distancing from one's professional life. This is relevant to the English context, where educational reform initiatives demand excessive conformity from teachers, supplanting efforts to continually renew the practice of teaching (Alexander, 2011). There are now a plethora of routes into teaching, with a predominance of school-led programmes of ITE. By implication, this means the focus is on inducting a new teacher into a particular school culture and habitus, rather than the teaching profession more generally, as offered by the traditional university routes (Struthers, 2013). Thus, the ultimate determinants of a teacher's success and the implied expectations of a professional educator remain malleability and resilience, while any focus on their work situation is effectively negated. This typically exemplifies instances where "teachers are expected to manage their professional responsibilities rather than developing their own professional judgement" (Margolis et al., 2014, p. 394).

We should be aspiring to a situation where teachers are encouraged to take ownership of their professional position and wellbeing to 'thrive in' rather than simply 'survive' the profession (Johnson et al., 2010). Underlying this approach is the belief that teachers need to develop their 'voice' and to have more agency in their workplace. While there are clinical strategies to support teachers to adopt a sense of agency and to depersonalise negative experiences, which usually involve one-to-one approaches to the development of coping skills, many teacher educators would not be trained for this work; nor does this approach attack the organisational or structural problems that teachers experience in school. More cost effective would be for schools to introduce social support networks and practices that did not stifle teacher enthusiasm. Perhaps changing the measure of school accountability to a more value-added approach rather than using test pass rates could be one approach, especially as we know that some pupils do less well on standardised tests. However, what is obvious is that blaming and holding teachers to account for shortcomings in the learning outcomes of their pupils ignores the reality that factors outside the control of the schools often exert a significant effect upon pupils' knowledge acquisition. While teacher educators can support this, ultimately the school as the employing institution may not choose to engage with their workforce in these ways,

instead feeling the pressure to put their best teachers with those pupils who are struggling, further impacting on teacher morale.

From Australia, a Framework of Conditions Supporting Early Career Teacher Resilience, arising from research with new teachers and coordinated from across the continent, offers a refreshing social constructionist approach to resilience by disrupting and diverting attention away from concerns over early career teachers' individual problems. Instead, it takes a positive view about what it is that enables professional competence to develop, looking at the "factors and transactions of individual experience and tracing their constitution in social relations, societal discourse and ideological positions" (Johnson et al., 2010, p. 533). There is also an explicit challenge to the normative criteria used to assess so-called resilience in newly qualified teachers. The framework identifies five themes: policies and practices, teachers' work, school culture, relationships and teacher identity. Both teacher educators and teachers can therefore contemplate the way a teacher's reality is located in the context of policy and ideological demands, and framed by teachers' own moral qualities, which drive their interactions with their pupils.

To understand why this is an important step in the right direction, it is necessary to return here to the idea of 'othering' as a fundamental aspect of teaching as a profession. Like healthcare workers, priests and counsellors, the job of teaching involves putting the interests of others at the forefront, scaffolding the learning and development of pupils. Framing teaching in a technocratic context poses a moral challenge to teacher–pupil relationships, and restricts individuals' ability to make informed, professional judgements drawn from research-informed practice. When teacher agency is silenced and, as shown in Figure 16.1, the stimulant pressure shifts beyond personal control to become an overwhelming stress, not only is it harder to employ individual strategies to solve problems, but even when deployed, these strategies are less effective. Collective practice, through professional learning communities, peer groups, mentoring, coaching and other forms of social networks, can offer useful support, and hint at the kind of system within which professionalism in education can thrive.

In this context, it is evident that school–university partnerships are necessary for the development of a rigorous academic framework to develop innovative programmes of initial teacher education. Such programmes should take as a starting point the link between individual and institutional wellbeing. They must make critical engagement with the very idea of professionalism in education a consistent aim and give more

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prominence to transition. Finally, their focus must be unwaveringly on developing pedagogies consistent with sustainable workload and long-term effectiveness. Only such criticality has the power to unite voices in mutually supportive networks, and to protect education from policy decisions and political agendas whose purpose or effect might be to undermine the purpose of education in a democracy.

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Having defined teacher professionalism, the next stage is to develop how a flipped system might facilitate such cognitive, collaborative and ethical agency. Political decisions that affect teachers' working conditions are taken at every level – in schools, regionally, across partnerships and multi-school trusts, nationally and internationally – every day. We have found that the devolved nature of education policy across the UK's four nations provides helpful comparatives, but that trends toward marketisation of provision and de-professionalisation of teaching are constants. Unequal effects reflect differing stages of implementation. Within each nation, inequality of standards is effectively a consequence of the same process of combining commendable decentralisation with unnecessary competition.

DECENTRALISATION WITHOUT COMPETITION

Setting the parameters of what he perceives as a societal tipping point, **Andy Hargreaves** argues that education must adapt, as it will increasingly be called upon as a political lever for inclusion in an atomising age of identity. This adaptation impinges upon teachers assuming a fully fledged professionalism. Drawing on his experience as a teacher and as a writer for an exam board, **Darren Macey** demonstrates how top-down accountability can never provide the adaptability Andy says is necessary. Meanwhile, in Northern Ireland, head teacher **Gary Farrell** argues that while their system is more open to teacher input, much of his most effective work still happens despite government, not because of it. Many habits remain, he argues, from historically centralised Westminster bureaucracy, one **Julian Critchley** is familiar with. As a DfE civil-servant-turned-teacher, he exposes the multitudinous reasons education policy is poorly devised and implemented.

Back in Northern Ireland, **Tony Gallagher** describes the development of an initiative to bring schools together, circumventing traditional political challenges. So successful was this ground-up, teacher-led collaboration that it is now enshrined in law. Consider, by contrast, England's challenges in dispelling pernicious 'psycho-babble', as explored in Part I. **Gareth Alcott** suggests the key reason grassroots movements and Teaching School Alliances here have not yet created a full-scale flip to teacher-led professional development is lack of synergy. Further to her work on the Carter Review of Initial Teacher Education, **Sam Twiselton** echoes Gareth's call for synergy, this time between schools and universities, to circumvent the counter-productive polarisation that invariably results from politicisation.

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ACCOUNTABILITY WITHOUT LIMITS

Pulling on a host of contributions to this book, it is clear that one of the key drivers of poor policy is top-down accountability, which reduces those most directly involved in implementation to voiceless delivery agents. Teachers must, as we have argued, have agency with regards to the ethical dimension of their work, but that is not to say they can refuse to implement policy. Politicians are elected to set an ideological direction of travel and to deliver promises they have made to the voting public, to whom they are accountable. So far, so democratic. Regional Schools Commissioners, trust executives, headteachers, their deputies, assistants and middle leaders are appointed to oversee the continued provision of excellent education for each child in their charge. They are accountable for that to their managers and stakeholders. So far, so professional. Yet, in this model, accountability flows but one way.

As editors, we acknowledge a danger that the critique of top-down accountability permeating this book could be construed as a pie-in-the-sky wish for less, or no, accountability. In fact, our manifesto calls for smarter accountability – an accountability without limits, to borrow from Alison Peacock. There is only so much professionalism we can wrest back through demands, and anything we do can as easily be wrested back. To sustainably flip the system, for a better education environment for all, it is necessary both that we hold each other to account, and those who direct us. As professionals with collaborative agency, the former is ensured, but as long as our managers are not accountable to us, they will not be accountable for us, and even the best curriculum reform will continue to face the prospect of poor implementation. Top-down targets for teacher wellbeing, in this regard, are a mirage. Indeed, if such targets were imposed all the way down from the Secretary of State in a chain that reached our classrooms, it would only be as strong as its weakest link. It is necessary that we embed, across the education system, a philosophy and practice of reciprocal accountability. Only this will seal our professionalism and protect it into the future. Only this promises to slow the pendulum swing of education policy, and offers the prospect of better policy, better implemented.

DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY

The teachers' manifesto demands that professionalised teachers be trusted and supported to make education policy at all levels. This must include:

- Teacher activism in the creation, implementation and evaluation of policy;
- Qualifying and professional standards for system leaders that require demonstration of reciprocal accountability with regards to policy implementation;

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- Working conditions for system leaders that make possible the continued attainment of such standards;
- Teacher evaluation of leadership performance at every level with regards to:
  - Support for teachers to generate, implement and evaluate policy;
  - Consultation with teachers prior to, during and after top-down policy implementation;
  - Consideration for, and appropriate actions to support, teacher wellbeing.
- Accountability measures for all stakeholders and policy-makers at all levels that require a commitment to, and the monitoring of performance in, upholding the professionalism of teachers with regard to their political agency as defined above.

FLIP THE SYSTEM? GET ORGANISED

BY HOWARD STEVENSON

> "The state has consistently sought to marginalise the collective voice of teachers."

When teachers feel the need to self-organise around a project called *Flip the System*, it should be obvious that something deep within our education system is wrong. That this project first developed outside of the UK, and received support from Education International (the international teacher union federation with more than 170 affiliates from over 400 countries), highlights that the issues are global in scope and not unique to the UK. That said, it is important to recognise that England (and not the UK) can be considered to be in the vanguard of a 'reform' movement in which democratic control of education is being removed, whilst power is being centralised in the hands of a tiny number of politicians and their powerful, but largely unelected, friends. There may be a language of autonomy, but the reality is very different, with decentralisation often used as a smoke screen to break up a public system and hand assets to the private sector. England has become the world's laboratory for this global experiment.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

That the English school system is one that is not at ease with itself is best illustrated by an examination of the labour market. Markets are not good ways to provide high quality,

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high equity public services, but as signals of the relative attractiveness of particular jobs and occupations, labour market data tells a story that cannot be ignored. Teaching is struggling to recruit new entrants (TES, 2016); it is really struggling to retain those who enter the profession (Schools Week, 2016a), and very few people in the system want to take on senior leadership roles within it (Schools Week, 2016b). It seems as though the current approach to these problems is to adopt a 'bring in – burn out – replace' (and repeat as necessary) model to teacher supply (see England's data in TALIS 2013). This is systemically unsustainable and morally indefensible. A more sustainable approach will only be adopted when the root causes of the problem are tackled.

The first problem that needs to be addressed is workload. Pay is clearly a factor, but it is workload that is the key problem in the pay-for-effort exchange. A super-competitive school system, combined with an inadequate employment contract, means that there is a relentless pressure to drive workload up, and too few safeguards to keep it down. The result is a workload that offers no realistic prospect of securing a decent work–life balance. Too often young teachers look to the future, see no prospect of change and decide to bail out whilst their skills have value in other labour markets (Lee-Potter, 2016).

However, the issues are more complex than workload (and pay) alone. Teachers also experience their work as an endless series of policy impositions from above, whereby they have little or no opportunity to influence decisions key issues - for example relating to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Sometimes these impositions come from government, other times from within teachers' own schools, as senior leadership teams try to second-guess what Ofsted wants, and impose it across the school in the name of 'consistency' (witness the debacle that is 'triple-marking').

All of this takes place in a context where education policy is more and more driven by the needs of the globalised economy. We have lost sight of education as a public good, with ambitious aspirations for all and underpinned by democratic values. Rather, students must be educated for the market, by a school system that looks like a market. In due course, the trajectory is an incremental shift towards a fully privatised system in which tax payers' money funds private sector for-profit providers in a system that is public in name only.

This is the political project that has characterised over 30 years of education 'reform' in England. One of its objectives has been to weaken the collective voice of teachers, thus making the pathway to privatisation easier to pursue. This is why the state has consistently sought to marginalise the collective voice of teachers, and why it has favoured conflict over consensus in relation to the development of policy. If teachers

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want to flip the system, this must start from an alternative narrative about what is possible, and how teachers can be engaged in change.

WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE?

There are many aspects of education that must be addressed here, but I want to focus on a way of thinking about teacher professionalism that may be considered as fundamental to 'flipping the system'. At the heart of this approach to professionalism is the concept of agency – a complex concept when discussed fully, but for my purposes explained as the ability to exercise judgement, make decisions and act in ways that bring about change. In other words, to have, and experience, control.

For agency to be considered meaningful in respect of teachers and their work, it is important to think about the concept in relation to different aspects of teachers' professional lives. Most obviously, it is in relation to the learning conditions of students and the working conditions of teachers, but it is vital to understand these also with regard to different system 'levels' – recognising that teachers need to be able to assert influence and control in their own classroom and institution as well as at higher levels in the system such as local authority, Academy Trust or Government. In a globalised system, we might also think of agency in relation to international bodies such as the OECD. In a system where teachers have little control over their work, they are reduced to 'implementers' of ideas and initiatives developed by others: what Harry Braverman (1974, p. 79) described as the "separation of conception from execution". Nowhere is there a clearer illustration of the de-professionalisation of teaching than the impetus of top-down change, which many don't question openly for fear of the impact on their career (Stevenson, 2016).

Secondly, it is fruitful to think about questions of agency and control in relation to professional knowledge and professional learning. Being involved in framing the knowledge base that underpins teaching, and having control over one's own professional learning, can be considered core aspects of teacher professionalism. However, too often teachers feel they have no time to engage with pedagogical knowledge, whilst they feel they have no control over their own professional learning. Rather, this is driven by institutional imperatives and then pushed through the system in the form of performance management. Even teachers' own learning becomes instrumental and target focused.

It is vital we see agency in relation to both of these aspects of teachers' lives and work. To focus on one without addressing the other fails to give a holistic vision of

teacher professionalism. For me, 'flipping the system' means, simply, that as a teacher I feel I can exercise agency in relation to both aspects of my work identified above. This is why agency is central, but it cannot be conceived of purely in individual terms ('my agency'). Rather, it is essential to recognise that I both acquire individual agency, and assert it, by acting collectively. Indeed, without collective agency, my individual agency is likely to be hugely circumscribed. This is precisely why so many teachers today are quitting. Not only do they not experience individual agency, but not enough see the possibility of exercising it collectively.

HOW TO GET FROM WHERE WE ARE TO WHERE WE WANT TO BE?

It follows from the argument above that, if teachers are to assert their professional agency, they need to (re)discover the power of collective action. Some teachers see this power being exercised through social media, and there is no doubt that social media as a means of networking teachers is an exciting development. One teacher, well known through her tweets and blogs, recently went so far as to assert "Twitter is the only place ordinary teachers can have a powerful voice" (@HeyMissSmith, 2016). This is some claim, and there may be some element of truth in it. Social media is exciting, fast, engaging. It is also individualised, dispersed and unrepresentative. For those who live in the Plato's cave that is Twitter, it can be hard to remember that the vast majority of teachers do not. Moreover, precisely because it is individualised and unaccountable, it is open to co-option – witness the way Michael Gove and Nick Gibb have sought to use their favourite Twitterati to convey support for their ideas. This is not to deny the power of social media, but it is to caution against viewing Twitter, or other forms of social media, as the way we flip the system.

Others may see new bodies, such as the College of Teaching, as providing a voice for teachers, and thereby offering the possibility of collective agency. Again, I can see merit in such an initiative, particularly under its current CEO, Alison Peacock. However, it remains important to be alert to its limitations. Whilst the idea may be a good one, and sincere people in the profession will claim its independence, there can also be no denying that the College is a body that has been actively encouraged by a political party which, on at least four occasions in relatively recent history, abolished bodies where teachers could claim to have a genuinely independent voice. (I developed these arguments in a blog for The Conversation – see Stevenson, 2014).

If teachers want to assert their collective agency, then that is best achieved through bodies that are independent, democratic and inclusive of all the profession. Those bodies already exist, and are the unions that represent the overwhelming majority of

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teachers (NFER, 2012). Teacher unions are not the only bodies that need to be involved in 'flipping the system', but teachers must recognise there can be no flipping the system without them.

Given the scale of the challenges that confront teachers, and all those working in schools, then there is a particular responsibility on unions to lead this project, but, if this is to happen, unions themselves must rise to their own challenges. First, and most importantly, they must help articulate a different vision of how education can be. Unions must speak for teachers across all the dimensions of professional agency set out in this chapter. Governments often want nothing more than to see unions pigeon-holed into a narrow 'working conditions' remit (hence the promotion of the College of Teaching as an alternative pole for 'professional issues'). Restricting unions to pay-and-conditions issues gives governments free rein on the bigger questions, which ultimately shape all else, including working conditions. There can be no escaping the reality that the professional in education is always political.

Second, teacher unions must create the broadest possible alliances amongst teachers, across all those working in education and across all those with an interest in education, including parents. Working with others is also much more difficult than we like to think. It requires listening to others at least as much as talking to them.

Finally, if unions are to become the mass-participation organisations they need to be (rather than the mass-membership organisations they are) they must work hard at creating cultures that welcome engagement, value participation and offer invigorating spaces to develop collective agency. This in part requires unions to recognise the diverse interests and experiences of their members. Unions are necessarily about forging unity, but that also has to be based on a recognition of diversity – of interests and identities.

At this point, and in relation to all the above points, there can be no doubt that the formation of a new union, the National Education Union, marks a significant and exciting opportunity. If ever there was a moment for teachers who have not previously engaged with their union to get involved, now is that time. A union of nearly half a million educators will be a very powerful voice. Of course, teacher unions are no more than an organisational shell in which individuals come together to assert collective agency. If teachers want to flip the system, then they must flip it themselves. Teachers must organise, and unions provide the vehicle for that – independent, democratic and inclusive. We must all face up to our responsibility to get involved, participate and bring about change. As long as we say we don't have

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time, we will have less and less of it. As teachers, we must make time to act collectively and say enough is enough. Flipping the system opens up the possibility of system transformation in which teaching is experienced as a sustainable career – balanced, creative and making a difference to young people's lives without having to sacrifice one's own. There is nothing worth fighting for that is not gained without a struggle. When teachers organise and engage with their unions to assert their collective agency, flipping the system shifts from possibility to reality.

CHAPTER

5

THE TEACHERS' MANIFESTO
GLOBAL AGENCY

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This book has had as its aim to look at the state of educational policy and teacher professionalism across the UK. In doing so, we have sought to gather evidence from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with limited success. While all four of the home nations find representation in the book, it is undeniable that the limited vantage point of classrooms in the South-East has made this a challenging aspect of the work. Nevertheless, we feel that useful comparatives have been made, and yet more can be drawn by its readers in each nation. Two points emerge for us from this endeavour. The first is that, while international comparisons are a powerful lever to shape our national policies, the possibilities for classroom teachers to engage with and critique them is highly limited. Second, for all the individualisation caused by the current working conditions of teachers, that there exists a broad range of opportunities to connect beyond our immediate circles.

COMPARE

Jelmer Evers opens this section on global agency with an overview of the international climate shaping our national educational weather patterns, and forecasts two alternative futures for the teaching profession. **Alma Harris** and Michelle Jones follow him with a worrying critique of the unintended outcomes of PISA's global comparison and rankings. They outline these outcomes as the erosion of public education, the devaluation of context and culture, the circumvention of the issue of poverty and the validation of top-down educational management, positioning teachers as recipients of change. One such recipient of change, **Natalie Scott**, describes her disillusionment with UK education, and how a stint teaching some of the world's most vulnerable children, in a place so poor no systems bothered to reach, re-connected her with her professionalism. Natalie's chapter is a testament to the power of comparison, and the importance of owning its method and its results.

CONTRAST

Testifying to the devaluation of context and culture, **Deborah Netolicky**, **Jon Andrews** and **Cameron Paterson** outline some of the ways in which Australia, like the UK, has succumbed to policies that could just as well have been carbon-copied from others described in this book. Their call for a *Flip the System* of their own is echoed by **Per Kornhall**, who describes the ravages of a particularly unfettered experiment with New Public Management in Sweden, where a *Flip the System* title has recently been published. In stark contrast to this model of system management – one we hope to soon see wholly discredited – **Joe Hallgarten** and **Tom Beresford** offer Creative Public Leadership as a framework to imagine a teacher-led education system, one

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that is quicker to adapt, less likely to marginalise, and can make use of the global context of policy-making as a positive force for support, rather than as the lever of a competitive ideology ill-suited to public education.

CONNECT

We end this book with a personal favourite. In Sweden for a second visit, we hear from **Sara Hjelm**, who urges each of us to take ownership of our professional development, and to reach out beyond our contexts and constraints to collaborate in true networks. Hers are the book's last words and its last image because they illustrate perfectly why the system must be flipped, and how it will be flipped.

DEMAND GLOBAL AGENCY

The teachers' manifesto demands that teachers develop and be supported to develop the professionalism of all their colleagues. This must include:

- Teacher activism that promotes and develops professionalism in education locally, nationally and internationally;
- Qualifying and professional standards for teachers and system leaders that require demonstration of the promotion and development of professionalism in others;
- Working conditions for teachers and system leaders that make possible the continued attainment of such standards;
- Teacher involvement in the development and implementation of contextually and culturally specific measures of professional status with regards to:
    - Their access to, use and creation of professional knowledge;
    - Their access to, participation in and creation of professional networks;
    - Their access to, engagement with and creation of professional cultures;
    - Their activism for and impact upon education policy.
- Accountability measures for all stakeholders and policy-makers at all levels that require a commitment to, and the monitoring of performance in, upholding the professionalism of teachers with regard to their global agency as defined above.

CONCLUSION: FLIPPING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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> The way out is through the door. Why is it that no one will use this method?
>
> Confucius

In this book we have moved from a critique of neoliberalism and its managerial perspective on professionalism to a more democratic, even educational, professionalism.

In these final words we want to voice some final advice on how to 'flip the system' using six guidelines for future action: trust, honour, finding purpose, collaboration, support and time. Depending on the differences between all systems, this might be advice linked to the government level, to the union level, to the level of school leadership or the professional level, or even to students and parents. Yet, just before we do so, we want to highlight a point we've made before that is, that we can liken the process of 'flipping the system' to a process of emancipation. We could of course understand emancipation in a more modern sense – as a process of demystification whereby the teachers who are to be emancipated wait for someone to emancipate them, a situation aptly described by Jacques Rancière as 'The Emancipator and His Monkey' (Rancière, 1991). Rancière proposes a different approach to emancipation. He doesn't see emancipation as a possible end point of a social trajectory, brought about by the successful intervention of others, but rather, as he points out in *Nights of Labor*, it is a process of 'self-emancipation' which is 'self-affirmation as a joint-sharer in a common world' (1981, p. 49). At the heart of this 'new idea of emancipation' lies the notion of 'equality of intelligences as the common prerequisite of both intelligibility and community, as a presupposition which everyone must strive to validate on their own account' (ibid., p. 51). As Biesta (2014) reflects:

> [Rancière] argues that we must start from equality – 'asserting equality, assuming equality as a given, working out from equality, trying to work out how productive it can be' – in order to maximize 'all possible liberty and equality' … The one who doesn't start from here but instead starts out from distrust, and 'who assumes inequality and proposes to reduce it' can only succeed in setting up 'a hierarchy of inequalities … and will produce inequality ad infinitum'.
>
> (Ibid., pp. 51, 52)

So as a teacher, it's not enough to 'wait' until someone gives you your autonomy, and it is not enough to persuade your 'neoliberal oppressor' to lift you from your minority status. The only thing that will make a difference is to act under the presupposition of being equal and to see how far it takes you. With that said, we want to move from this

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teacher perspective to a more general perspective. As we've mentioned before: trust and giving autonomy to teachers are hardly contentious notions. Yet 'trusting teachers' is too often understood as 'trusting that teachers will do as they are told', and autonomy is either falsely understood as 'anything goes' freedom for teachers, or teacher autonomy is so limited that it can hardly be called autonomy. So here we want to voice some advice on focal points for educational policy. If we truly want to reposition teachers at the heart of education, what should we do?

1. TRUST

> Trust should be guarded to the end: 'without trust we cannot stand'.
>
> Onora O'Neill

Testing, accountability, rankings, they are all the product of distrust and the cause of further distrust. Teachers mistrust their school leaders and their governments, governments mistrust teachers and their unions. And even if mistrust is not that apparent, there is certainly a culture of suspicion.

But without trust, an educational – or one could argue any – system will not be able to function, as Hargreaves has rightfully pointed out in his article. We daresay it is not so much trust in teachers or students, but trust in the government that is pivotal to a successful educational system, and it is something governments should actually pursue. A DfE might pursue questions such as 'how do we get teachers to employ evidence-based practices?', or 'how do we score higher on PISA tests?', but what should be on the policy agenda is 'how do we gain trust?' and 'how do we raise confidence in (public) education?' It is something the Department of Education in Ontario, for example, has understood remarkably well. Apart from wanting to raise achievement, one of their other pillars has been to *raise public confidence*. During their investigations they found that many parents wanted class sizes to be lower, and even though 'evidence' is limited (see, for example, Hattie, 2008) and it is an extremely expensive intervention, they still felt it was important to limit class size to 21 pupils, because parents voiced their concern on the matter.

It is a perfect example of what Giddens (1994) might refer to as generative politics. A space that links the state to reflexive mobilization in the society at large. Generative politics work through providing the actual material conditions and organizational frameworks that enable people to take collective charge. These spaces should not have an agenda that is developed 'top down', but should be organic, they should

enhance active trust, they should enhance professional autonomy to those groups affected by the outcomes, and they should lead to a decentralization of political power (Sachs, 2003, p. 145).

So in order for trust to rise, there should be spaces where teachers, students, the state, teacher educators, politicians and so on actually meet. Not having these spaces, for example in the situation of a managerial approach to professionalism, 'hinders rather than facilitates dialogue among them. It does not allow the development and facilitation of networks' (ibid., p. 146). It is precisely here where the idea of 'professional capital' takes its meaningful place in a flipped system, not just to enhance student learning, but also in order to generate trust and confidence within the system.

2. HONOUR

> Pride is something you can have, but honour you must receive.
>
> Thijs Jansen, Gabriël van den Brink and Jos Kole

For teachers, there is something more at stake in engendering trust. And if they want to earn trust, they will have to start addressing the issue of professional honour. Having pride as a professional is not enough, but professionals should deliberately strive for honour, by raising and upholding a high professional standard for each other, in order for the profession as a whole to be taken seriously by the rest of society. A structure this might assume is that of the General Teacher Council in Scotland, wherein teachers record their professional learning, and which has parallels with how other professions, such as lawyers and accountants, make sure that members of their profession keep developing.

Another way to increase professional honour could be to strengthen horizontal accountability: teachers assess other teachers, and schools assess other schools. The benefit of this is twofold: first, by using horizontal accountability the need for vertical accountability is lessened, and it allows for the use of standards that come from within the profession. Secondly, professional assessing of colleagues from within the school and in other schools allows great opportunities for inspiration, motivation and professional learning.

A third important part of increasing professional honour is through strengthening teacher preparation. Teacher preparation should never be a training, but should be an

actual education, where teachers are inserted in a profession. So teacher preparation should be about more than learning practical teaching skills: it should also be about focusing on learning to reflect on educational purposes, on how to structure and influence the work environment either at a school level or a national level.

A final part of improving professional honour would be, although we tend to be hesitant in terms of systemic context, to create a strong professional organization that reflects on matters that involve teachers. It could also provide a useful space for policy makers and teachers to meet, albeit that a strong union would have to support its efforts.

3. FINDING PURPOSE

> If you stand for nothing, you will fall for everything.
>
> Unknown

We have mentioned before that because there was a pedagogical void in the first place, because teachers did not have a coherent and rigorous perspective on what they wanted to achieve and how they were meant to achieve it, the 'door was left open' for something so completely alien to education as neoliberalism, with all its economic intent and managerial lingo, to invade education so totally. The first thing that should happen, therefore, is teachers reconnecting with the purposes of education, as Gert Biesta has argued in the second part of this book, and to give this new reconnection fitting words with which to convey through a fresh language a new established feeling of purpose. We of course do not want to prescribe what this pedagogy should look like, or what this language should entail, as each country should strive to establish a new language based on its own broader culture. But as Biesta's three-dimensional model of 'good' education effectively demonstrates, even the simplest model can provide effective arguments against one-dimensional reforms.

On the other hand, we do want to explicitly warn that teachers should not allow themselves to be divided over how to teach. Teachers have to acknowledge that there is no pedagogical creed, no canonical way of teaching and learning. The teaching profession has weakened itself by being divided over issues like direct instruction versus self-directed learning. The so-called 'math wars' in both the United States and the Netherlands exemplify this. Teaching and learning isn't that clear cut. Teaching requires a constant and rigorous look at a context of the child in time and place and at yourself as a teacher. What should always be the case, however, is that

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professional discourse is intense and rigorous to such an extent, i.e. its voice should ring so loud, that it reduces the 'political voice' to a smaller, yet equal level.

4. COLLABORATION

> By three methods we may learn wisdom: first, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.
>
> Confucius

Whether it be to spread professional capital, or to inspire and motivate teachers, there is wide consensus between the contributors to this book that collaboration is pivotal to successful teaching. We believe that it is important that teachers collaborate as widely as possible, within schools, between teachers and schools, between teachers and researchers on a regional and a national level. This collegial collaboration should never take the form of contrived collegiality, but should always be development focused, with unpredictable outcomes (for example see Datnow, 2011). The most revolutionary approach to utilizing the strength of collaboration is the teacher-powered school that Lori Nazareno and Kim Farris-Berg and Ed Dirkswager propose. By removing formal management from the school and replacing it solely with non-positional or distributed leadership, non-contrived collegiality can start taking full root at a school level. Indeed, creating strong relational networks seems paramount to increasing teacher agency.

But we also believe in a network of a new sort. One area of major concern, as mentioned by Stephen Ball in Part I, and also in the research he has published, is that 'more and more states are losing the ability to control their education systems – something we can refer to as *denationalization*.' Through networks of international organizations, corporations, NGOs and philanthropist organizations, policies are no longer bound by national borders. At the same time there is an increasing discomfort amongst teachers against the standardized accountability reforms. If these reforms are boundless, universal and global, so should the alternative be that this book proposes. Therefore the teaching profession should strive for a global awareness that there is a universal tenet despite our cultural differences. To achieve this, the easiest road would be for teachers to connect through social media such as Twitter and Facebook, as is happening already. But as we have made a plea for 'spaces', there should also be physical places in terms of time and physical space, where teachers from around the world meet to discuss the issues they are dealing with on a national level.

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5. SUPPORT

> To lead people, walk behind them.
>
> Lao Tzu

Talk to any teacher and they will have small and great ideas on how to improve their practice; some will not extend further than increasing the well-being of the children in their classroom, but other ideas might be grander, such as the notion of Maker Education as presented by Arjan van der Meij in Part IV of this book. Some will be content with improving their own practice, for their own specific situation, but sometimes ideas will flourish and will want to move outside of the classroom.

Who should support these grassroots initiatives? It is without question that they are in need of support, lest what grows withers and shrinks away, leaving a disillusioned teacher behind. But it's also a case in point for a flipped system: do we support teachers – with great ideas – or do we force them to execute the ideas of others? In Part II, Howard Stevenson and Alison Gilliland made a passionate plea for unions to take up the opportunity to support initiatives of teachers who have started moving bottom up, but in Part IV Ann Lieberman, Carol Campbell and Anna Yashkina have shown through the Ontario example of TLLP that a collaboration between the ministry and unions is equally capable of supporting teachers with great ideas through an innovation fund. Another course of action could be that a school or a board will provide support for teachers with great ideas. It is, however, crucial that teachers are not only supported, but that they are also supported in engaging and building a network of teachers, or researchers, around them.

6. TIME

> When teachers are surviving, they are not focused on student learning.
>
> Kai-Ming Cheng

When we view teachers as professionals, rather than as labourers, we say 'no' to teachers with a toolkit of prescribed methods and content, with little to no preservice training, and very little to prepare, reflect and collaborate, who spend a lot of their working hours in front of the classroom. If we believe that teachers should have time to collaborate, build trust, assess their peers, innovate and construct a new language of education, we are also saying 'yes' to less time in front of a class. If we do not, it is not a real 'yes', it is simply asking too much. John Bangs and David Frost made a

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similar point in this book when they noted that teachers' job satisfaction is a fundamental component of good education, to the extent that they propose that 'all policies should be evaluated to see whether they enhance teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction.' We believe that systems that grant teachers time to develop, to collaborate, to influence policy, to support one another, are of the utmost importance. An interesting approach to this could be to generate new teacher positions, the key idea being that you do not take ambitious teachers out of the classroom but let them combine being a teacher with another role. Such a hybrid role could be that of 'teacher/policy maker', where teachers still spend time in front of the classroom but also are spending time at the policy-making level, or the 'teacher/ scholar', or the 'teacher/adviser', all constructed through a similar approach. But even for those who want or have to work full time in a school, spending more than 19 hours in front of a class per week seriously hampers the capacity to place teachers in the lead.

IN CONCLUSION

This book is by no means an end point: we want to view it as a 'beginning' in the Arendtian sense. What we hope is that through the notion of 'flipping the system', we have offered a new and fresh take on the development of the teaching profession, and have laid down its potential benefits, providing sketches of a road map that can help teachers, school leaders and policy makers to improve on their system.

We know, of course, that change in education is complicated, messy and slow and does not happen overnight. Therefore we would like, in conclusion, to recollect the words of Hillel the Elder, the very same words that we used to end the preface of this book:

> If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
> But if I am only for myself, who am I?
> If not now, when?