TEACHERS & SCHOOLING

Productive Pedagogies, Assessment and Performance

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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Foreword

Over the past three decades, we have learned a good deal about seeing education as a political act. We have learned to think *relationally*. That is, understanding education requires that we situate it back into both the unequal relations of power in the larger society and into the relations of dominance and subordination—and the conflicts—that are generated by these relations. Thus, rather than simply asking whether students have mastered a particular subject matter and have done well on our all too common tests, we should ask a different set of questions: Whose knowledge is this? How did it become 'official'? What is the relationship between this knowledge, and who has cultural, social and economic capital in this society? Who benefits from these definitions of legitimate knowledge and who does not? What can we do as critical educators and activists to change existing educational and social inequalities and to create curricula and teaching that are more socially just (Apple 2000; Apple 2001; Apple & Beane 1999)?

These are complicated questions and they often require complicated answers. However, there is now a long tradition of asking and answering these kinds of critical challenges to the ways education is currently being carried on, a tradition that has grown considerably since the time when I first raised these issues in *Ideology and Curriculum* (Apple 1979; see also

the new 3rd edition, Apple 2004). Over the past three decades the broad and diverse area of critical educational studies has made major gains in helping educators to understand the complex relationships between education and differential power. The intersecting dynamics of class, race, gender, sexuality, and how they are represented and struggled over in schools and the curricula, teaching and evaluative practices that go on in them, have been interrogated in powerful ways. Yet for all of the gains that have been made, too often these materials have been 'from the balcony'. They are often not sufficiently linked to the concrete realities of teachers' and students' lives and to the very personal pedagogic and political agendas of teachers, for example, who take the critical perspectives being produced and daily attempt to create a practice based on them (Apple 2001).

This situation is made much more complicated by the fact that in all too many nations what might best be called 'conservative modernisation' is now in the driver's seat in terms of educational policy and practice. Many of the rightist policies now taking centre stage in education, and nearly everything else, embody a tension between a neoliberal emphasis on 'market values' on the one hand and a neoconservative attachment to 'traditional values' on the other. For the former perspective, the state must be minimised, preferably by setting private enterprise loose; for the latter, the state needs to be strong in teaching *correct* knowledge, norms, and values. From both, this society is falling apart, in part because schools don't do either of these. They are too state-controlled and they don't mandate the teaching of what they are 'supposed' to teach. These positions are inherently contradictory, but as I have demonstrated elsewhere the neoliberal agenda has ways of dealing with such contradictions and has managed to creatively built an alliance that unites (sometimes rather tensely) its various movements (Apple 1996, 2000, 2001).

This new hegemonic alliance has a wide umbrella. It combines four major groups: (a) dominant neoliberal economic and political elites intent on 'modernising' the economy and the institutions connected to it; (b) economic and

cultural neoconservatives who want a return to 'high standards', discipline and Social Darwinist competition; (c) some working class and middle class groups who mistrust the state and are concerned with security, the family, and traditional knowledge and values and who form an increasingly active segment of what might be called 'authoritarian populists'; and (d) a fraction of the new middle class who may not totally agree with these groups, but whose own professional interests and advancement depend on the expanded use of accountability, efficiency and management procedures that are their own cultural capital (Apple 2001; Apple et al. 2003).

The sphere of education is one in which the combined forces of neoliberalism and neoconservatism have been ascendant. The social democratic goal of expanding equality of opportunity (itself a rather limited reform) has lost much of its political potency and its ability to mobilise people. In my own nation, for example, the 'panic' over falling standards, dropouts, illiteracy, the fear of violence in schools and the concern over the destruction of traditional values have had a major effect and have led to attacks on teachers and teacher unions and to increasing support of marketisation and tighter control through centralised curricula and national testing. These fears are exacerbated, and used, by dominant groups within politics and the economy who have been able to shift the debate on education (and all things social) on to their own terrain—the terrain of traditionalism, standardisation, productivity, marketisation and economic needs. Because so many parents *are* justifiably concerned about the economic and cultural futures of their children—in an economy that is increasingly characterised by lower wages, capital flight and insecurity—neoliberal discourse connects with the experiences of many working class and middle-class people.

It should be clear to all of us that in education symbolic politics counts. Diametrically opposite policies often are wrapped in exactly the same vocabulary, something neoliberal and neoconservative educational 'reformers' have recognised and used all too well.

A fine example today is the struggle over the very meaning of democracy. We are witnessing a major transformation of our understandings of democracy (Foner 1998). Rather than democracy being seen as a fundamentally political and educative concept, its meaning is being transformed primarily into an economic one. Thus, under neoliberal policies in education and in society in general, democracy is increasingly being defined as simply consumer choice. The citizen is seen as a possessive individual, someone who is defined by her or his position in market relations. (Think, for example, of voucher plans in some areas of the United States where parents are in essence given cheques to send their children to any school, including private, for-profit ones.) When private is good and public is bad in education and so much else in this society, the world is basically seen as a supermarket and democracy is seen as making choices in that market. The withering of political and collective or community sensibilities here has had lasting effects, many of which, as I have shown, have been disastrous.

Among the key concepts now sliding around the map of meaning is *standards*. Indeed, the two movements, markets and standards/testing, go together since markets can't work unless the 'consumer' has sufficient knowledge about whether a 'product' is good or bad. Taken together, they can be truly damaging. I can think of no one who believes that having 'standards' is bad, who believes that educators shouldn't have high expectations for all of their students or who believes that what we should teach and whether we are successful in teaching it shouldn't be taken very seriously. Thus, standards are 'good'. But basically this is a meaningless position. What counts as standards, who should decide them, where they should come from, what their purposes should be in practice, how they are to be used, what counts as meeting them—these are the real issues.

Many people almost automatically think that having standards and testing them rigorously will lead to higher achievement, especially among our most disadvantaged children. By holding schools' and teachers' feet to the fire, so to

speak, there will be steady improvement in achievement. Yet, like markets, such policies have been shown to just as often stratify even more powerfully by class and race, no matter what the rhetorical artifice used to justify them (Valenzuela 2005; Gillborn & Youdell 2000). In all too many cases the situation that has been created is the equivalent of an Olympic length swimming pool in which a large number of children already drown. The response is to lengthen the pool from 100 metres to 200 metres and give everyone an 'equal opportunity' to stand at the far end of the pool, jump in, and then swim the doubled length. But some children come from families who are affluent enough to have given their children swimming lessons or have sent them to expensive summer camps, while others couldn't even swim the earlier length because of not having such economic advantages. Yes, we guaranteed 'equality of opportunity', but basically all we really did was put in place another stratifying device that ratified prior advantages in cultural and economic capital. Given the historical role of Social Darwinist influences in education (Selden 1999), influences that were nearly always described in democratic language, we need to be cautious not to assume that the overt intent to use standards to improve schools will be what actually happens when they are instituted in institutions that are already starved for sufficient financial resources, have large numbers of teachers who are constantly treated as unworthy of serious respect, where the curricula and pedagogy are anything but responsive and where economic and social policies have literally destroyed the employment, health and housing of entire urban communities. Lengthening the pool in these instances may not have anywhere near the effect we desire, unless these policies are accompanied by serious economic and social policies that also change the life circumstances and chances of families and children in these communities. But, of course, this is exactly what current neoliberal and neoconservative policies are meant to have us forget.

Yet the movement for democratic schools, for critical curricula and teaching, and of publications such as the book

you are about to read give us reason for hope. Even though this is a time when the right is gaining power, it is also a time when thousands of educators, community activists, critical scholars, students, and so many others in multiple communities and nations have shown that success can be won. In *Teachers and Schooling Making a Difference*, Debra Hayes, Martin Mills, Pam Christie and Bob Lingard have produced a volume that clearly demonstrates that it is possible to build an education that takes a vision of a truly serious education as seriously as it deserves. They carefully detail how in real schools and communities a rigorous, critical and thoughtful curriculum can be constructed. They portray how forms of teaching that are respectful and caring and which bring out the best thinking of students can be enacted. And they do not ignore the importance of dealing with whether or not the education that has been built actually works in the ways educators hope it will. That is, unlike many other critical educators, the authors know how important public accountability is during a time of rightist resurgence. They construct models of authentic assessment that are helpful rather than simply part of the increasingly dominant forms of public 'shaming'.

Teachers and Schooling Making a Difference does all this in a refreshingly clear way. It takes seriously the question that teachers ask, 'What do I do on Monday?', and answers it by situating it within larger relations of inequality; but it does provide answers. I want to stress that this is of considerable importance. I mentioned above that critical educators have become very good at 'bearing witness to the negativity' of current educational policies and practices—and rightly so. As Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett showed in *Making the Difference* (1982), a book whose title the co-authors are playing off of, many existing policies and practices *create* differences. They play a role in reproducing the divisions that are central to the maintenance of inequalities. However, one of the reasons that so many people are turning to neo-liberal and neoconservative policies is because the right has been successful in providing answers to the question of

'What do I do on Monday?' Although there have been some successes such as those shown in the book *Democratic Schools* (Apple & Beane 1999), in general, educators who are committed to 'thick' democracy have been less successful in doing that. Life on the balcony may be a bit too comfortable.

The authors of *Teachers and Schooling Making a Difference* refuse life on the balcony. They portray a democratic and critical education in action. It is an education that does not deny the importance of 'official' knowledge (Apple 2000) in the lives and futures of our children. However, it illuminates what can be done when such knowledge is both reconstructed and made available in respectful and critical ways so that students can understand and act on the world.

Reading books such as this is heartening. They remind me of the importance of linking our critical scholarship with an informed set of critical educational practices that make a difference in the lives of students, teachers and communities. In the end I remain an optimist without illusions. A truly critical and democratic education will take hard and continuing organised work; but after reading *Teachers and Schooling Making a Difference*, we know that it is possible.

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Preface

One of the largest classroom-based research projects undertaken in Australia was funded by Education Queensland for an amount of $A1.3 million. The study commenced in 1997 and concluded with the completion of its final report in 2001, the *Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study* (QSRLS, 2001). This research is credited with the creation of the concept of *productive pedagogies*, which has become widely used nationally as a framework for describing classroom practice. We therefore refer to the study throughout this book as the Productive Pedagogies Research.

The members of the core research team who conducted this study were: Bob Lingard and James Ladwig (Co-directors); Martin Mills (Manager); Pam Christie, Debra Hayes and Allan Luke (Researchers); David Chant and Mark Bahr (Statistical Advisers); Merle Warry (Senior Research Assistant); Jo Ailwood and Ros Capeness (Field Researchers); and Jenny Gore (Consultant).

The lengthy and detailed process of coding student work samples and assessment tasks collected during the study was undertaken by two sets of teachers working in different cities. We are grateful to the Brisbane coders, Francine Barker, Carolynn Lingard, Glenda MacGregor and Noela Stark; and the Sydney coders, Susan French, Chris Greef, Anne Larkin,

Martin Lauricella, Celina McEwen, Jane Mowbray, Wolly Negroh and Nicola Worth.

While we recognise the contribution of the original researchers to many of the ideas contained in this book, the way these ideas have been developed and the opinions expressed are those of the four authors.

We often refer to our previous book, which focused on leadership and also drew on the Productive Pedagogies Research. Throughout, we refer to it as *Leading Learning* (Lingard, Hayes, Mills & Christie 2003).

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The cover art is a detail from Madonna Staunton's *Romantic Doubt* and was provided by Bellas Milani Gallery.

1 Introduction

> When a local public school is lost to incompetence, indifference, or despair, it should be an occasion for mourning, for it is a loss of a particular site of possibility. When public education itself is threatened, as it seems to be threatened now— by cynicism and retreat, by the cold rapture of the market, by thin measure and the loss of civic imagination—when this happens, we need to assemble what the classroom can teach us, articulate what we come to know, speak it loudly, hold it fast to the heart. (Rose 1995: 4)

The research on which this book is based has confirmed what most teachers and many other people probably always knew: that apart from family background, it is good teachers who make the greatest difference to student outcomes from schooling. Individual teachers have more impact on student outcomes than do whole-school effects; and particular classroom practices are linked to high-quality student performance. Based on a large-scale research project and a broad range of the educational research literature, we describe in this book the classroom practices that make a difference. We detail and name such practices as *productive pedagogies* and *productive assessment*. Our claim is that these practices are important for *all* students, and that *all* these practices are especially important for those students from what are often described as disadvantaged backgrounds. The good news from our

research is that quality teaching can improve outcomes for *all* students. The bad news is that it is not commonplace. And the reality is that quality teaching alone is not sufficient to bring about improvements in student outcomes. Indeed, there are limits to what teachers and schools can do, although they can make a difference.

We believe that in order to make a positive difference in the lives of young people, teachers need to share (with each other and with students and their communities) a common understanding of the types of student performances they are working towards. Such understandings are achieved in schools through rigorous engagement in a dialogue that displaces the more common fragmented monologues of teachers working in isolation in their classrooms. Our primary concern is to contribute to such dialogue by describing *what* makes a difference and suggesting *how* to make a difference in schools. The classroom practices we describe are our contribution to the former, and our description of alignment of these practices with performances is our case for the latter. Alignment is underpinned by context and a recognition that schools are located in places where people live. Schools that make a difference matter in these peoples' lives because they enrich and resource them, and they connect with their concerns and hopes. Alignment, then, is about teachers' pedagogies and assessment practices mediating the achievement of valued performances in the classroom.

This book reflects the process of alignment by detailing *productive pedagogies* in Chapter 2 and then showing how these may be linked to *productive assessment* and *productive performance* in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. The key to alignment is not so much sequence as linkage—that there are explicit and coherent links between pedagogies, assessment practices and student performances, all of which should be intimately linked to the specific purposes and goals of schooling. We add the term 'productive' to signal in a clear and precise way those forms that make a difference and that, to our best knowledge, work in classrooms. *Productive pedagogies* and *productive assessment* practices make

a difference to educational outcomes. Such practices in all classrooms will contribute to more socially just outcomes from schooling—*the* difference that is the focus of this book.

The pervasiveness of pedagogies

In countries where dental checkups are commonplace, lessons on brushing, flossing and whitening are now routine parts of such a visit. In other words, a trip to the dentist has become a clinical *and* pedagogical experience (often accompanied by a dose of product comparison). A similar pedagogical shift is experienced if we visit an art gallery or a science museum, shop for electrical goods or switch on the television or computer. Teaching and learning are permeating all aspects of life; pedagogical activity is spilling over from formal to informal spaces. This shift has multiple effects, not the least of which are new forms of marketisation and consumerism, but here we want to focus on its educative dimension. The spread of pedagogical discourse is evidence of the move towards what Bernstein (2001) has called the 'totally pedagogised society'. Pedagogy has moved out of the classroom; it has spread into other cultural and social spaces; and it is now an integral part of the practice of a wide range of workers other than teachers. Even family units have become sites of 'parenting skills', and the 'world of work translates pedagogically into Life Long Learning' (Bernstein 2001: 365). The imperative to keep improving reflects globalised labour markets and the insecurity of most employment today. As Rose (1999: 161) suggests:

> The new citizen is required to engage in a ceaseless work of training and retraining, skilling and reskilling, enhancement of credentials and preparation for a life of incessant job seeking: life is to become a continuous economic capitalization of the self.

Education and pedagogy are not constrained or contained by time and space in the way they once were. Individuals are

now the subject of 'continuous pedagogic reformations', to use Bernstein's (2001: 365) evocative characterisation of this situation. However, schooling as an institution and set of practices remains an important site of pedagogy, despite the fact that learning (apart from a thinned-out conception linked to standardised testing) has disappeared from view in much of the educational policy landscape that has emerged in recent years.

This book is about teaching and learning in schools and classrooms. Based on the findings of a large-scale study—the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS 2001)—we describe the kinds of classroom practices and organisational processes that make a difference to the academic and social learning of students. We refer to this study throughout the book as the Productive Pedagogies Research (see preface). While we are concerned with improving the learning of all students, our particular focus is on improving the outcomes of students who traditionally underachieve and under-participate in education. We acknowledge that by declaring our intention in this way, we venture into highly problematic territory that has been thoroughly explored and raked over by the well-established arguments of critical, feminist, poststructural, postcolonial, race and other theorists over a long period of time. Their persistent articulation of minority standpoints, in the face of silencing discourses and other erasures, exposes the false assumption that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach works with the same level of effectiveness for all students (Reyes 1987; Delpit 1995; Rose 1995). Evidence continues to show the effects of social class, and of other factors such as race, gender, ethnicity and locality with which it is interwoven, on students' participation rates in schooling, their school performance, and their subsequent life opportunities (Anyon 1995; Lareau 2000; Van Galen 2004).

In presenting our research and discussion of teaching and learning in classrooms, we recognise that we risk being interpreted as positioning ourselves as outside arbiters and assessors of teachers' pedagogical practices. We specifically wish to distance ourselves from what Ball (2004) has identified

as a discourse of derision of teachers that blames them for not doing their job properly. Rather, our intention is to take up the challenge to speak with teachers about their work—which centres on the day-to-day rhythms of teaching and learning in schools—while also speaking to a broader audience of principals, parents, policy makers, politicians and others about how to provide equitable and just schooling for all.

The relationship between research conducted in schools and the reform of teacher practices is a complex and ultimately political one. Suffice to say here that we reject a model that sees teachers as mere translators of research conducted elsewhere. In conducting the research on which this book is based, we sought to operate in ethical, open and collaborative ways in the research schools and with the teachers. In presenting our research and ideas, we are not seeking to provide a calculus of pedagogies and assessment practices that can simply be layered into schools or imposed on teachers. We do not wish to tame and regulate pedagogies at a time of 'multiplicity'—of multiple effects of globalisation and new technologies on identities, knowledges, practices, economies and nations (Dimitriades & McCarthy 2001). Rather, we report the research as a rigorously constructed but contestable map of pedagogical and assessment practices at a particular moment in Queensland government schools.

Schooling in Australia is ostensibly the constitutional responsibility of the state governments: there are some national developments but no national curriculum, for example, as in England; yet the state educational systems have much in common. While the research was conducted within one state educational system in Australia, and despite the contingent specificity of particular national and provincial schooling systems and indeed of individual schools, we argue that the research 'findings' have much broader applicability, given the common form of schooling across the globe (Meyer, Ramirez & Soysal 1992) and the emergent globalisation of educational policy developments (Lingard 2000). The issues facing schools and teachers in the Queensland research schools share some similarities with

those being experienced by schools and teachers else-where.

Our intention is that the research reported throughout this book be used by teachers to engage in substantive professional dialogue of the sort that improves their class-room practices and takes account of their specific systems and school populations. Indeed, one of the 'findings' of the Productive Pedagogies Research, which we reported on in our earlier book *Leading Learning* (Lingard et al. 2003), was the importance of a school culture of professional dialogue and responsibility, supported by dispersed and pedagogically focused leadership, for enhancing the effects of schools on student learning (see Lee & Smith 2001). Thus our intention is that the research story of this book should be used, rearticulated and recontextualised by teachers and schools. It is also our intention to engage policy makers in debates about class-room practice, so that learning in its fullest meaning is given a central place in the educational policy landscape from which it is so often absent.

It is our belief, and hope, that we provide compelling arguments in this book as to why teachers and their practices should be at the centre of educational policy. In some edu-cational systems this has been done—but in controlling and regulating ways, which have denied teachers the sort of space for professional dialogue that we are calling for here (Mahony & Hextall 2000; Ball 1994, 1997a, 1999, 2004; Apple 2001). Unfortunately, for the past decade or so policy has been done *to* teachers rather than *with* them. Perhaps the worst-case scenario is educational policy in contemporary England. As Ball (1994, 1999) has pointedly put it, teachers have been the objects rather than the subjects of recent educational policy changes, and multiple and competing discourses 'swarm and seethe' around the contemporary teacher. Mahony and Hextall (2000) have thoroughly demon-strated the deprofessionalising effects of such policy aimed at teachers in the UK context. Top-down imposed change works with a different logic of practice from that of classroom teaching, and pedagogical considerations are all too often

absent. We suggest that more trust of teachers and more support for schools are needed in contemporary educational policy so as to constitute schools as reflective and inclusive communities of practice. Such trust would enhance professional dialogue about productive pedagogies and more likely align outcomes with those most often articulated in statements about the purposes of schooling. Those policy makers involved in the regulation of pedagogies desire the achievement of such outcomes but, paradoxically, the practices they encourage often work against the achievement of high-level intellectual outcomes for all.

As well as speaking to educational practitioners—teachers, school leaders, systemic personnel and policy makers—this research speaks to another community of readers, that of educational researchers and theorists. At a later point in this chapter we give an account of our research procedures, to open them to scrutiny, debate and further engagement. Throughout the text we address the work of a range of educational theorists to locate ourselves in, and advance, debates on the nature and purposes of schooling. Thus, a central aim of this book is to contribute to a professional discussion about classroom practices and their effects, while also contributing to broader debates about schooling, including consideration of the relationships between educational researchers, schools and policy makers. Underpinning our position is a valuing of schooling and an appreciation of the complexity of its purposes.

'Making a difference'

In picking up the discourse of 'making a difference', we acknowledge a significant tradition of research on schools, inequality and social justice, to which the work of Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett (1982) in Australia made an exemplary contribution. In contrast to the optimism of early compensatory education programs, which assumed that educational interventions could redress the social inequalities

stemming from students' home backgrounds Connell et al. (1982) illustrated, through their empirical research and accessible analysis and argument, the complex ways in which social class, gender and family articulated with opportunities in schooling. This research appeared alongside the work of reproduction theorists—neo-Marxist and other—who provided compelling accounts of the ways in which schooling itself perpetuated inequalities, particularly those of social class. Subsequently, multiple voices from the margins—feminist, black, postcolonial, postmodern, gay and lesbian—have questioned whether mainstream schooling could ever valorise the nuances of difference without speaking over them. It is now clear that a plethora of institutional practices work to generate and reproduce inequalities in ways that are not easy to counter. Not least of these is the hegemonic or competitive academic curriculum at the core of schooling, and the ways in which it is taught and assessed.

Over two decades after Connell et al. published their research findings, more is known about schools and social inequality but possibilities for intervention remain as challenging as ever. While there is currently a more sophisticated understanding of schools and social inequality (Thrupp 1999), there is reduced state commitment to redressing it. Concern about schools and social justice has been shifted aside in current public debate by education policies that stress individualised responsibility for achievement, the importance of private contributions to school funding, and market approaches to school choice. In the current times of neoliberal globalisation, the gap between rich and poor within and between countries is widening; new patterns of dominance and marginalisation are developing around access to the network economy; identities are more fractured; and global violence and its visibility have sharpened with 11 September and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Though current patterns of inequality are complex as new forms of disadvantage intermix with old, it is clear that schooling is imbricated in these patterns of inequality. In Australia, both old and new issues of difference are not

adequately addressed through education. For example, Indigenous students are poorly served by schooling while asylum-seeker children are locked in detention with little priority given to their education. Arguably, here and perhaps elsewhere, the need for redistributive funding in schooling is greater than at any other time in the post-World War II period, while social justice frames are weaker. The same is true of public policies, which engage with difference in ethical and socially just ways.

This book is, then, in part a contribution to debates on schooling, inequality and social justice. A central concern of our research was to investigate classroom and school practices that might contribute to more equitable, improved outcomes for all students. The quality of teaching and learning experienced by students is a critically important social justice issue for schools today, and was a central underpinning value of the research on which this book is based. Of course, this is not to say that social justice issues can be effectively dealt with in the contemporary context through a focus on classroom practices alone. However, the quality of teaching and learning has to be one element of social justice approaches that aim to make a real difference. We also assert that, while schools are one important institutional basis of the sorting and selecting of individuals for different futures, a more equal distribution of the capacities and capabilities developed through education needs to be a goal of socially just schooling.

The recent school reform literature views the valuing of teachers, through strong support for their professional development in school and systemic policies, as the central element in effective school reform (Newmann & Associates 1996; Darling-Hammond 2000; Sachs 2003). Such reform seeks to spread the best classroom practices—pedagogies and assessment—across the whole school through certain leadership practices, culture and structures and support for teachers' professional development. Of course, such support must be accompanied by appropriate policy frames and funding at the systemic level. As with pedagogy, we stress that

social justice issues cannot be effectively addressed in the contemporary context through teachers alone.

Thus, while bringing classrooms into focus, we make the point that it is important not to decontextualise the work of teachers and schools. We distance our work from certain forms of school effectiveness research, which focus on school-level interventions without acknowledging broader social and economic influences, and which fail to recognise how these external features play out inside the school (see Chapter 5 and Thrupp 1999). We also recognise (though we do not develop this in our research) that spatial contexts influence schools in powerful ways. The spatial location of a school, both materially and metaphorically, has strong predictive influence on classroom experience, and this needs to be acknowledged in any study of teachers' practices. There is also a temporal component as policy contexts change, along with the patterns and nature of inequality. On the latter, research has shown how choice policies and educational markets, common in schooling systems around the globe today, tend to result in more homogeneous school populations, and 'school mix' in turn is known to have a strong effect on educational and social justice outcomes (Thrupp 1999).

Schooling today entails a complex interweaving of the modernist and postmodernist and the local and the global. Schools are modernist institutions *par excellence*, located in a postmodernist context. This is particularly so if we regard modernist institutions as those that contain the past in the present and seek to reconcile these (Augé 1995: 75). The physical and social architectures of schools speak most easily to standardised treatment of stable and predictable populations (see Macdonald 2003). In contrast, the postmodern floats free from the past, while the postcolonial that accompanies it constitutes multiple pasts and multiple yet always hybrid presents. Against this context, Dimitriades and McCarthy (2001: 21) have argued that mainstream educational thinkers and policy makers have tended 'to draw a bright line of distinction between the established school

curriculum and the teeming world of multiplicity that flour-
ishes in the everyday lives of youth beyond the school'. At
the same time, the creation of the imagined community of
the nation (Anderson 1983) and national citizens through
schooling becomes more complex in the context of globalis-
ation and the mix of national and postnational pressures that
accompany such processes.

Information and computer technologies are tied in with
these changes and contribute to the compression of time and
space, as well as the creation of new identities and new cyber
communities, especially for young people of school age.
Students in schools today are positioned differently in re-
lation to such technologies from the generation of their
parents. There is also perhaps a greater generational cleavage
between teachers and students today than ever before. This is
nicely picked up on in Green and Bigum's (1993) assertion in
relation to generations and new technologies: that there are
aliens in the classroom and they are not the students. While
new technologies hold real democratic potential in the free
flow of ideas and information, they also potentially exacer-
bate inequalities; not all students have easy access to these
technologies outside schools, and gendered and racialised
identities play out differently in these contexts. Moreover,
the scale and changing nature of learning throughout one's
life suggests that schools are increasingly places where
knowledge about learning and about how knowledges are
constructed becomes as important as knowledge acquisition.
These shifting conditions require even more from schools if
they are to mediate the inequities that exist in society
between those who are equipped to meet these challenges
and those who are not.

Schools as modernist institutions are/were 'spaces of
enclosure' (Lankshear, Peters & Knobel 1996)—in relation
to written texts in book form, the architecture of classrooms
and schools, and the written and constraining curriculum.
Lankshear and his colleagues (1996) suggest that new tech-
nologies, with their effects of compressing both time and
place, challenge these spaces of enclosure and thus challenge

the authority of the teacher and school-based pedagogies of enclosure. One effect is that the construction of literacy is broadened in the direction of what have been called multi-literacies (New London Group 1997), which include computer literacy. Edwards and Usher (2000) have also written most persuasively about the effects of globalisation on pedagogy and the resultant challenges for modernist educational institutions of all sorts. All of these challenges complexify the work of teachers and the issue of pedagogies in schools. The response to such complexity ought to be to seek to open up a dialogue about the purposes of schooling today, given the changes briefly alluded to here, and to think through appropriate and effective curriculum and pedagogies in this context, including—as Cummins and Sayers (1995) suggest—consideration of how computer technologies should be incorporated in classroom practices. We intend this book to make a contribution to those dialogues as well as informing school and policy practices.

As Bernstein (2001) has noted, however, a focus on pedagogies can elide considerations of what knowledges are of most worth, and thus elide pressing considerations of the curriculum of contemporary schooling. Today, in the contexts of change alluded to already, disciplinary knowledges are being challenged and new knowledge forms are being produced. This has significance for school curriculum. Against such developments, Bernstein thus suggests that a sociology of the transmission of knowledges might be a more useful theoretical and research development than a sociology of pedagogy (2001: 367–68). We acknowledge here his earlier work, which argues that any consideration of pedagogy requires consideration of curriculum and assessment. Our approach then is to examine these three message systems of schooling through an analysis of numerous pieces of student work, assessment tasks and classroom observations in diverse school settings.

The conditions we have outlined raise important questions about what schools should teach—questions about the curriculum at the core of schooling. We suggest that there

is need for informed public debate today about school curricula—a debate going well beyond considerations of what should be added to current curriculum offerings, which would simply further crowd an already crowded curriculum. An example of curriculum innovation related to our research on productive pedagogies is the New Basics project in Queensland (Department of Education 2001; Department of Education and the Arts 2004). The New Basics has developed an innovative curriculum framework around four new curriculum organisers: life pathways and social futures; multiliteracies and communications media; active citizenship; and environments and technologies. In its own words, the New Basics project is 'about dealing with new student identities, new economies and work places, new technologies, diverse communities and diverse cultures' (Department of Education 2001: 2). This project is significant in our view because it has sought to reconceptualise curriculum in a futures-oriented way and is thus one creative response to the curriculum questions facing educational systems around the globe. As a reconceptualist approach to curriculum, it recognises the globalised and changing contexts of schooling, as well as changes in the construction of knowledge. Systemic curriculum responses have tended to be much more incrementalist and add-on than this approach. Accompanying the New Basics is a significant form of assessment, Rich Tasks, which among other things seeks to maximise the collaborative use of new technologies. (See Macdonald [2003] for an analysis of one school's efforts in implementing the Rich Tasks.) An important intellectual resource for the New Basics and Rich Tasks was the Productive Pedagogies Research, which forms the basis of this book and which is considered in detail in the next section.

The research base

The Productive Pedagogies Research, one of the largest classroom-based studies ever undertaken in Australia,

commenced in 1997. Within a broad context of globalising change, and the more specific local context of a move towards school-based management (Lingard, Hayes & Mills 2002), the Queensland government commissioned a group of university-based researchers to evaluate the contribution or otherwise of school-based management to student learning outcomes. The research team, which included the authors of this book, spoke back to this research purpose by proposing an alternative design, starting with classroom practices. The team made a case for looking at classroom practices to see which were most effective at producing positive student learning outcomes, both academic and social, and mapping back to consider what school structures and supports along with systemic policies were necessary to encourage these classroom practices. There was an interesting politics here which enabled the research team to 'remake' the research problem as constructed by the commissioning state department (see Lingard [2001] for a discussion of the politics surrounding the commissioning and reception of the research).

Over three years from 1998 to 2000 a team of researchers conducted formal observations in 975 classrooms using a coding instrument. These data were collected from 24 schools, eight per year, selected on the basis of reputation for school reform and a number of other features such as location, size and demographics. Each case-study school was visited twice in a single year, each visit lasting four to five days. During each visit, classes in English, Mathematics, Science and Social Science, in Years 6, 8 and 11, were observed. Based on recommendations in each school, we also observed teachers whose classroom practice was highly regarded by their colleagues. Classroom observations were accompanied by extensive interviews, surveys and analysis of whole-class sets of student work samples and their associated assessment tasks. We interviewed teachers about their pedagogies, assessment practices, and a broad range of issues related to their understanding of their schools and education in general. Extensive interviews were conducted with principals and other key personnel in each of the research schools during

each visit. Data were analysed through a combination of quantitative and qualitative procedures. Throughout this book, we have attempted to preserve the anonymity of all teachers, principals and schools by the use of pseudonyms and the exclusion of identifying information. We reiterate the point we made in *Leading Learning* that there was an absence of student voice in the Productive Pedagogies Research. We would support further investigation into student perceptions of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy.

The Productive Pedagogies Research had direct intellectual links with the School Restructuring Study undertaken by the University of Wisconsin's Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools (CORS) in the USA between 1991 and 1994. The CORS study was a comprehensive examination of interrelationships among what Fred Newmann and his colleagues came to refer to as four 'circles of support'. These circles were diagrammatically represented as nested layers in a concentric circle model, with student learning at the centre, then authentic instruction, school organisational capacity, and external support. Newmann and Associates (1996) argued that school restructuring for the enhancement of students' intellectual outcomes required a focus on pedagogy. This claim ran counter to the move at that time in many educational systems towards greater levels of school-based management, which was predicated on the assumption that structural change—in this case the relocation of more management tasks at the school site—would *ipso facto* enhance student learning outcomes. The CORS work perceptively and with a deep empirical base re-emphasised that it was teachers and their pedagogies that made the greatest difference of all the in-school factors in terms of student outcomes. Complementary school reculturing certainly contributes to this (Lee & Smith 2001), as does leadership focused on learning (see *Leading Learning*) together with good systemic policies. However, if the desire is for better student outcomes, support for teachers and their pedagogies ought to be at the centre of school culture and external funding and policy supports.

The Productive Pedagogies Research rearticulated the CORS study to emphasise social as well as academic outcomes from schooling (as described below) and to take account of the Australian, and specifically Queensland, context of school-based assessment and recognition of the professional contribution of teachers. The centrality of student learning and its mediation in schools through classrooms appealed to Education Queensland, which had commissioned the research. Queensland had come later to school-based management than many of the other state systems in Australia, and had learnt from their experiences, particularly in relation to the central importance of teachers to effective educational reform.

As well as its derivations from Newmann and the US school reform literature, the Productive Pedagogies Research built on strong traditions of research in Australia into school effectiveness (e.g. see Caldwell 1998; Hill & Rowe 1996, 1998; Rowe & Hill 1998), school development (Crowther et al. 2002) and social justice (e.g. see Connell et al. 1982; Rizvi & Kemmis 1987; Connell, White & Johnson 1991; Connell 1993; Gale & Densmore 2000; Thomson 2002). The Productive Pedagogies Research claims its place in Australian research from the basis of a government-commissioned research study, which utilised quantitative and qualitative methods and large data sets, as well as interview data. Our position is that statistical evidence has been central in the documentation of inequalities in schooling and that a new political arithmetic is required to map inequalities in these changing times (Brown et al. 1997). However, we further support a principled eclecticism in respect of methodological issues in research. There also needs to be a 'fit' between method chosen and research purpose.

Drawing on this research background, the Productive Pedagogies Research team sought to determine the kinds of classroom practices that would lead to students achieving the high-quality outcomes necessary to equip them to meet the demands of contemporary society, and to identify the kinds of school reforms that would promote such learning. The

attempt to identify empirically which forms of classroom practice lead to improved outcomes for all students, especially those students who come from sociocultural backgrounds traditionally associated with weak school performance, is based on a deceptively simple question: *Which pedagogies will contribute to the enhancement of the academic and social perform-ance of all students?* This question framed our study by making equity a particular and core concern, a point which differentiates and distinguishes its interests and approaches. It also refocuses attention away from school structures and management in suggesting that what happens in the class-room is directly connected to the achievement of student outcomes. This relationship may be obscured by the day-to-day concerns of schooling, which often emphasise management and organisational processes over learning and teaching, and by systemic reforms that emphasise structures rather than pedagogies. While recognising that the link between teaching and learning in the classroom is heavily mediated by factors within the classroom and beyond it (a point we return to in Chapter 5), we were nonetheless con-cerned to bring classroom practices into direct consideration.

The team of researchers who conducted the Productive Pedagogies Research came together in the summer of 1998 to develop a coding tool for describing teachers' classroom practices. The aim was to link these practices to indications of improvement in students' academic and social perform-ances. An important influence on the development of this coding instrument was the work of Newmann and Associates at CORS. These US researchers had developed the notion of *authentic achievement*, which stressed the impor-tance of intellectual quality in schooling, based on the premise that 'all students deserve an education that extends beyond transmission of isolated facts and skills to in-depth understanding and complex problem solving and that is use-ful to students and society beyond the classroom' (1996: 18). In the CORS study, authentic achievement referred to 'intel-lectual accomplishments that are worthwhile, significant, and meaningful, such as those undertaken by successful

adults: scientists, musicians, business entrepreneurs, politicians, crafts people, attorneys, novelists, physicians, designers, and so on' (Newmann & Associates 1996: 23–4). The notion of authentic achievement was broken down into three main criteria, which in turn were translated into more specific standards for evaluating teaching. The main criteria for authentic achievement were: (1) student learning is focused on the *construction of knowledge* (producing, rather than simply reproducing, meaning and knowledge); (2) the cognitive work of the learning involves *disciplined inquiry* (the use of prior knowledge, developing in-depth understanding, and the expression of ideas and findings through elaborated communication); and (3) what is being done holds aesthetic, utilitarian or personal *value beyond school*. It is worth noting here that the CORS study of authentic achievement concluded that there was evidence that while authentic pedagogy did bring authentic academic performance for students, the overall levels of authentic pedagogy observed 'fell well below the highest levels on the proposed standards' (1996: 69).

In unpacking and recontextualising the notion of authentic achievement in an Australian context, the Productive Pedagogies Research team drew on its collective understanding of a range of educational research fields, with a particular focus on the literature that identified the pedagogical strategies and practices necessary for improving the academic and social outcomes of students from traditionally underachieving backgrounds. The literature included texts on school reform (Newmann & Associates 1996; Elmore, Peterson & McCarthey 1996; Darling-Hammond 1997), along with those in the fields of sociolinguistics and critical literacy (Cazden 1992; Freebody 1993; New London Group 1997); Indigenous education (Harris 1990; Groome 1994); constructivism (Daniels 2001); feminism (Davies 1993; Ellsworth 1989); sociology of education (Young 1971; Giroux 1989); and critical pedagogy (Shor 1980; Giroux 1983).

In designing its research instruments, the Productive Pedagogies Research team preserved the emphasis on intellectual outcomes developed by Newmann and

Associates, but added an emphasis on the social outcomes from schooling, such as responsible citizenship and the valuing of non-dominant cultural knowledges. Added to this was a range of classroom practices that were found by research to make a difference to student achievement, such as explicit pedagogy and the use of narrative. The result was the development of a classroom coding manual that included a larger range of classroom practices than those identified by Newmann and Associates (1996).

At the end of the first year of the study, and based on confirmatory factor analysis of classroom observation data in 302 classrooms, four underlying factors were constructed to form the four dimensions of productive pedagogies from the 20-element observation scale. These were initially called *intellectual quality*, *relevance*, *socially supportive classroom environment*, and *recognition of difference* (QSRLS 2001). After consultation with teachers and others during the course of the study, the term 'relevance' was changed to *connectedness* in order to reflect concern that relevance may lead to curricula that do not provide students with any cultural capital. After the conclusion of the study, the phrase *working with and valuing difference* was adopted in *Leading Learning* and here instead of the term 'recognition of difference'. This acknowledged teachers' concern that some individuals and groups claim to recognise difference—but for the purposes of discrimination and vilification; and that 'recognition' was not active enough in moving beyond a liberal multiculturalism of tolerance (also see Dimitriades & McCarthy 2001).

The 20 classroom practices that formed the basis of structured observations provided a lens through which researchers could consider existing teaching practices with a view to reconceptualising these in ways that would improve the academic and social outcomes of *all* students (see the Appendix for a more detailed discussion on the QSRLS research instruments). A major finding of the Productive Pedagogies Research was that, when holding all other factors constant, teachers' pedagogical and assessment practices *do* matter, and that they particularly matter for those students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Productive pedagogies, assessment and performances

Throughout this book we utilise the concepts of *productive pedagogies*, *productive assessment* and *productive performances*. Here we provide a brief description of how these concepts were developed by the research team and utilised in the research.

In the CORS study, 'authentic pedagogy' was considered to encompass both instruction and assessment tasks. The Productive Pedagogies Research team favoured the term 'classroom practice' to encompass these, and replaced the term 'instruction' with 'pedagogies'. While the word 'instruction' seems to have reductionist connotations in the Australian context, we recognise its use in North America as a synonym for pedagogy. We use the word pedagogy in this book, and indeed used it centrally in the Productive Pedagogies Research, because we enjoy its constructivist heritage derived from Vygotsky (e.g. see 1994) and the view that pedagogy in all its forms is a central expression of humanity and what it is to be human. We also see it as a term and concept that can be appropriated by teachers as central to and expressive of their specific professional practice, while not supporting an elitist view of the profession. Further, we like this constructivist heritage because Vygotsky emphasised that pedagogy was intimately linked to both cognitive and social purposes.

Additionally, the plural form, 'pedagogies', was preferred over 'pedagogy' as a means of indicating that the framework was not to be interpreted as a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Collectively, the classroom practices described by the coding instrument were called 'productive pedagogies'. As one line of research was to investigate how pedagogical and assessment practices influence student outcomes, whole-class sets of student work samples were collected from each of the teachers taking part in the study, along with the relevant assessment task. A coding manual was drawn up for analysing assessment tasks. This was based on the classroom

observation manual and sought to determine the degree to which productive classroom practices were reflected in assessment tasks. In turn, a coding manual was drawn up to analyse productive performances. This was used to code whole-class sets of student work samples. The concepts of *productive pedagogies*, *productive assessment* and *productive performance* were thus developed out of the research in both conceptual and empirical terms.

The term 'productive' was adopted in preference to the US term of 'authentic', as an indication that there was not a 'true' or 'real' form of performance, pedagogy or assessment. Its adoption also acknowledges that teachers (like other professionals) are increasingly subjected to market forces (Gewirtz, Ball & Bowe 1995; Marginson 1997; Whitty 1997; Ball 2004) and called to account for the differential between 'inputs' and 'outcomes'. Such pressure can work to thin out pedagogies and limit the possibilities for achieving high-level intellectual outcomes. Our conceptualisation of what it means to be 'productive' is intended to challenge and resist such moves and related pressure to blame teachers for poor educational standards, and instead to 'set the terms' for what might count as productive. It is also to recognise that teachers do produce outcomes through their classroom practices.

As mentioned earlier, the 20 elements on the classroom observation instrument were based partly on the CORS model, and partly on the researchers' analysis of the various texts on classroom practices that make a difference to student learning, and in particular make a difference to students from disadvantaged and marginalised backgrounds. Social out-comes were added as a means of reflecting their importance in Australian schools, and the need for this addition was corroborated by a large group of Queensland principals early on in the research. The framework evolved further from the analysis of structured observations during the first year of the study and was confirmed in the following two years.

The elements of the Productive Pedagogies Research coding instruments are shown in Table 1.1. Those derived from Newmann, Secada and Wehlage (1995) are marked with

Table 1.1 Elements of the Productive Pedagogies Research coding instruments

Dimensions	Classroom practices		Productive performance (Academic° and Social† outcomes)
	Productive pedagogies	*Productive assessment tasks*	
Intellectual quality	• Problematic knowledge • Higher–order thinking* • Depth of knowledge* • Depth of students' understanding* • Substantive conversation* • Metalanguage	• Problematic knowledge: construction of knowledge* • Problematic knowledge: consideration of alternatives* • Higher–order thinking * • Depth of knowledge: disciplinary content* • Depth of knowledge: disciplinary processes* • Elaborated communication* • Metalanguage	• Problematic knowledge° • Higher–order thinking*° • Depth of understanding*° • Elaborated communication*°
Connectedness	• Connectedness to the world beyond the classroom* • Knowledge integration • Background knowledge • Problem–based curriculum	• Problem connected to the world beyond the classroom • Knowledge integration • Link to background knowledge • Problem–based curriculum • Audience beyond school*	• Connectedness to the world beyond school*†

Table 1.1 Elements of the Productive Pedagogies Research coding instruments (*continued*)

Dimensions	Classroom practices			Productive performance (Academic° and Social† outcomes)
	Productive pedagogies	*Productive assessment tasks*		
Supportive class-room environment	• Students' direction • Explicit quality performance criteria • Social support* • Academic engagement • Student self–regulation	• Students' direction • Explicit quality performance criteria		
Working with and valuing difference	• Cultural knowledges • Active citizenship • Narrative • Group identities in learning communities • Representation	• Cultural knowledges • Active citizenship • Narrative • Group identities in learning communities		• Cultural knowledges† • Responsible citizenship† • Transformative citizenship†

an asterisk (even where they have been renamed). A more detailed description of each coding scale and its constiuent elements is provided in later chapters.

The features of schooling that support productive performance

The study was also concerned to ascertain what features of *school organisational capacity* (Newmann & Associates 1996) and what external supports from the various systemic levels support productive performances through these types of classroom practices. The findings of that part of the research have been recorded in the report (QSRLS 2001) and elaborated on in *Leading Learning.* Newmann and Associates used the term *teacher professional learning community* (Louis, Kruse & Marks 1996) to describe the relationships among teachers in schools where these practices were evident. As previously noted, while the Productive Pedagogies Research was conducted during a period of enhanced school-based management in the Queensland state system of schooling, this research was not a study of the implementation of school-based management within a traditionally bureaucratic state system of schooling. Rather, the study explored the ways in which student performances could be enhanced through particular assessment and pedagogical practices, and identified the kinds of school and systemic supports and structures necessary to initiate and sustain such practices.

The findings of the study suggest that in order to improve student outcomes from schooling through improved classroom practices, there is a real need to value teachers, their knowledges and ongoing learning (see Darling-Hammond 2000) as central to a school's organisational capacity, as well as a central rationale for systemic infrastructural support for schools (see Fullan 2001). The final report of the study found independent yet positive effects of professional development for teachers of an internal school-

focused kind and of an external type on the quality of classroom practices (QSRLS 2001). The provision of the money and time for such professional development in this study was a surrogate measure of valuing teachers and recognising their professionalism. In the research interviews when teachers were asked what they needed to enhance their practices, they inevitably answered 'more time' to think and to prepare.

Thus, given the centrality of teachers to effective school reform, there is a pressing need to place teacher professional practices—pedagogies and assessment practices linked to desired student outcomes—at the core of professional communities, both within and outside schools. Support for teacher professional learning communities in schools focusing on the links between student learning and teacher practice is one of the ways that has been explored to enhance whole-school effects on student outcomes. The key point here is that schools need to become real learning organisations structured around the ongoing relationship between teacher learning and student learning.

While teachers are the centrally important element of effective school reform, school leadership of a particular kind is also important—that is, the kind that disperses the practices of leadership across the school and creates a culture and structure linking ongoing teacher learning to the enhancement of student learning. Our conception here runs counter to that of heroic individual leaders as the way forward in school reform; it also recognises how dispersed leadership is almost the only way school leaders pragmatically can handle many of the increased demands made of them. Contemporary educational policy changes and restructuring have tended to pull school principals in the direction of being new managers rather than *educational* leaders (Ball 1994; Gewirtz 2002). At the same time, market pressure on individual schools in relation to enrolments has meant, in Apple's words (2001: 74): 'More time and energy is spent on maintaining or enhancing a public image of a "good school" and less time and energy is spent on pedagogic and curricular

substance'. Learning needs to be reasserted in principal practices, and while the relationship between principal leadership practices and enhanced student outcomes is minimal and mediated, such practices can create the structure and culture that position effective classroom practices at the centre of their purview. Thomson's (2000) observation that principal practices should be saturated in pedagogies is most apposite here, as is Smyth's (1989) talk of educational leadership as pedagogy. We reiterate that it is good teachers and good pedagogies that make a difference, and school leadership ought to be about establishing the conditions that support such pedagogies.

Indeed, our research has encouraged us to conceptualise school leadership as a form of pedagogy—with its own learning goals, approaches to assessment and pedagogical activities. This stems from an understanding of schools as places of learning for students, teachers, head teachers and others. Teaching takes place in the classroom and in other sites within schools, thereby addressing the needs of different learners. For example, the issues and questions faced by teachers as they develop learning programs for students translate into those faced by heads of departments as they support the professional learning needs of teachers, and translate again into those faced by school executives as they build the capacity of their department heads to support the learning needs of teachers (Hayes 2004).

We believe that in order to sustain a focus on learning in schools, the challenges faced by practitioners at various levels of schooling should reflect common sets of concerns—concerns associated with enhancing the conditions of learning in schools. This alignment of concerns is facilitated and supported by a shared language, to talk about curriculum, assessment and pedagogy, as provided by the frameworks of *productive performance*, *productive assessment* and *productive pedagogies*, respectively; and, by time, for sustained professional dialogue among teachers, as provided by professional learning teams structured by protocols (see McDonald et al. 2003).

However, and as alluded to above, there is a danger in reasserting the centrality of pedagogies in school reform because of the parsimonious funding situation that education now faces. In Australia, the proportion of GDP expended currently on all education is just under 4.5 per cent, a figure that can be negatively contrasted with the 6.7 per cent expended in the 1970s. In some ways, Australia has returned to the unacceptable levels of investment in education of the 1960s, when both government and Catholic school systems were substantially underresourced and under pressure from increasing enrolment. This underresourcing is also located within an unhelpful—indeed divisive—debate about the funding of government and non-government schools. While these issues of funding manifest in a specific manner in the Australian educational policy context, stress on efficiency, accountability and parental choice is evident in policy in schooling systems around the world.

Consequently, this book has to be read against a backdrop of the need for more social and economic investment in education. Aside from funding and equity matters, educational policy has most often worked through curriculum and assessment. Teachers' professional autonomy has been practised in terms of pedagogy—that is, the way curriculum and assessment have been brought together in classroom practice. Some current approaches to assessment and testing potentially at least thin out pedagogies in ways that narrow the goals and purposes of schooling. This is what Mahony and Hextall (2000) have clearly demonstrated in the UK context, and what McNeill (2000) showed to be an effect of standardised testing in her US research. Effective school reform demands that the message systems of schooling—curriculum, pedagogy and assessment—be aligned and not work at cross-purposes. For instance, if we want a focus on higher-order thinking or on fostering strong citizenship attributes, our assessment practices need to be focused in that direction, as well as our pedagogies.

Structure of the book

Alignment of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy does not require the application of a sequence or a formula, although we have previously discussed the benefits of backward mapping as a way of disrupting the common tendency to disconnect classroom practices from the goals and purposes of schooling (Hayes 2003; Lingard & Mills 2003; Lingard et al. 2003). This disconnection often manifests itself in the form of an emphasis on classroom activities and strategies that have no clear links to assessment or the curriculum. In this book we emphasise the importance of transparent and coherent links between curriculum, assessment and pedagogy. In this way, the starting point of planning is less important than the process of shunting between these three systems to establish explicit links between them. The frameworks of classroom practice and performance that we describe in the following three chapters are thus translations of the curriculum through pedagogy and assessment to performance. In Chapter 5, we focus on the school-wide and systemic supports that are necessary to support teachers in creating productive classrooms. In each chapter we draw on the Productive Pedagogies Research and incorporate various combinations of field notes, maps of classroom pedagogies, collected work samples and assessment tasks, interview transcripts and findings. We also go beyond the research and draw on our broader experiences in schools working with school-based colleagues to make suggestions about how these ideas might be taken up.

Chapter 2 provides a description of the theoretical underpinnings of the *productive pedagogies* framework of classroom practice. Drawing on a range of literature, it argues that in order for students to demonstrate particular outcomes they need opportunities to practise related performances. And in order for students to have this opportunity, teachers need to engage in sustained professional dialogue about classroom practices. The *productive pedagogies* framework provides a descriptive language to support and enrich such dialogue.

The chapter provides accounts of actual classrooms to illustrate the elements of *productive pedagogies*. Interview data with teachers who participated in the Productive Pedagogies Research are also included.

Chapter 3 outlines *productive assessment* and describes how *productive performances* are demonstrated. The chapter provides a sketch of the current state of play regarding assessment. It notes how standardised testing regimens linked to accountability measures and league tables have worked against the encouragement of *productive assessment* practices. It also identifies the ways in which the association of assessment with testing has served as a means of distancing teachers from detailed considerations of the purposes of assessment. The chapter thus seeks to address this matter by arguing that assessment literacy among teachers is critical in order for assessment to support students' learning. It draws on both interview data collected through the Productive Pedagogies Research and on assessment tasks collected in that research, as well as other assessment tasks collected since the research, to illustrate the ways in which teachers regard assessment and to illustrate examples of productive assessment.

In Chapter 4 we contend that the purposes of schooling need to take into account the academic and intellectual development of students as lifelong learners. However, we also take a broader view of the purposes of schooling to argue that students need to be made aware of the ways in which they, as active participants in their world, can make a difference, for the better, to that world. Located within these purposes is a commitment to teaching for and about social justice. It is our contention that if these purposes are to be valued throughout the schooling process, then students need to be expected to demonstrate them when completing assessment tasks. While we acknowledge that many of these outcomes are often present in student activities that do not constitute the formal curriculum, for example in Amnesty International groups, environmental groups and the like (see Mills 1996; 1997b), it is only by incorporating them in the curriculum that they are given officially sanctioned status

within schooling. Thus we outline *productive performance*, which encapsulates such outcomes, and in so doing we draw on actual student work to illustrate these performances.

Underpinning Chapter 5 is a recognition that teachers alone cannot make *the* difference to students' learning and that there has to be a consideration of the contexts for learning, including funding and policies. It argues that certain whole-school practices need to be set in place in order to produce more equitable student outcomes, and to support teachers as they work in classrooms to improve learning for all students. The chapter thus looks at how school organisation, teacher professional communities and school leadership can support and spread *productive assessment* and *pedagogies* across the whole school and at the same time recognises how different socioeconomic locations of schools affect their internal culture and operations, and thus their capacities for implementing such practices (Thrupp 1999). The chapter further recognises how the contemporary educational policy ensemble in many systems limits the possibilities for the sort of structural supports (funding and policy) being argued for (Apple 2000b; Ball 2004). It also considers the importance of locating the call for improved student performance, and concomitant classroom practices, alongside broader considerations of policy and funding support for schools. The central argument in the chapter is that the contexts in which teaching and learning occur matter, thereby stressing the need for a culture that recognises *and* values teachers through appropriate support structures.

Chapter 5 confirms the central argument of the book: that schools can make a difference and that quality of pedagogies and assessment practices, including their intellectually demanding character, are social justice issues. As Bourdieu (1973: 80) observed, 'By doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give'. The corollary of this is that all students, but particularly disadvantaged students, require intellectually demanding classroom practices. The research on which this

book is based demonstrated the high levels of social support offered by teachers, but more than this is needed if schools are to make the difference in respect of socially just outcomes. Social support for student learning is a necessary but not sufficient condition in this respect. The chapter then analyses the school and systemic level changes that are required for schools to enhance their social justice effects, while simultaneously recognising the centrality of teachers, as well as broader social policy changes, to the achievement of this agenda.

In emphasising the importance of pedagogies as one central element of a socially just approach to schooling, we are not suggesting that teachers or pedagogies alone can achieve the sorts of schools or outcomes that we desire. Here we acknowledge the possibilities, as well as the limitations, of the critical pedagogies tradition within the sociology of education (Ellsworth 1989; Apple 2000b; Darder, Baltodano & Torres 2003). In providing a sociology *for* education, this book describes what critical pedagogies—what we have called *productive pedagogies*—look like in real classrooms while recognising that they can make *a* difference as one component part of a social justice project in education.

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