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Edited by Jeanne Allen , Simone White
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LEARNING TO TEACH IN A NEW ERA

SECOND EDITION

Entering the teaching profession in the twenty-first century comes with many challenges and even more opportunities to meet the learning needs of Australian students. *Learning to Teach in a New Era* provides a fundamental introduction to educational practice for early childhood, primary and secondary preservice teachers. Closely aligned with the Australian Curriculum and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, this text builds on foundational knowledge and provides guidance on professional development throughout your career in education.

Organised in three sections – professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement – and thoroughly updated, this text introduces preservice teachers to educational policy and the legal dimensions of education; encourages the development of practical skills in pedagogy, planning, assessment, digital technologies and classroom management; and supports effective communication and ethical practice. This edition features a new chapter exploring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing, enabling teachers to create respectful and culturally responsive classrooms.

Each chapter contains teacher reflections, short-answer, critical thinking and review questions that encourage further discussion, and research topics that provide extension on contemporary themes. Additional information boxes and classroom scenarios connect preservice teachers with relevant and practical information.

Comprehensive in scope and practical in nature, *Learning to Teach in a New Era* is an essential resource for all preservice teachers entering the teaching profession.

Jeanne Allen is Associate Professor and Higher Degree Research Convenor in the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University.

Simone White is Professor of Education in the Faculty of Creative Industries, Education and Social Justice at the Queensland University of Technology.

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FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION 1

Teaching is a complex process. Becoming a teacher is a life's journey which is demanding, ubiquitous, challenging, rewarding and complex. How can we help preservice teachers both grasp the complexity of teaching and acquire the skills to enact a rich pedagogy? The tendency has been for teacher educators to focus in their specific courses on one aspect of the teaching/learning process or on their discipline rather than positioning the topic in a broader approach to teaching; while in practice teaching, preservice teachers are often preoccupied with classroom management or receiving a good evaluation in order to secure a teaching position upon graduation. The narrow goals for courses and the configuration of practice teaching can lead to program fragmentation and preservice teachers being unaware of the many facets of teaching, leaving them ill-equipped for teaching.

Teacher educators occupy a difficult 'place' because they face a number of unique challenges: working with preservice teachers who often feel they already know the teaching process, having been students for many years (Lortie, 1975); deciding if they are preparing preservice teachers for the schools we have or the schools we want (Williamson, 2013); recognising that preservice teachers come to their programs from markedly different backgrounds (Kosnik, Beck, Dharamshi & Menna, 2017); and responding to the many stakeholders in education (Furlong, 2013). Further exacerbating the situation is the inconsistency in programs, which range from six weeks to five years (Whitty, 2014). This churning cauldron of teacher education is not for the faint-hearted. Teacher educators must be resilient and determined. In our study of literacy/English teachers, some of the terms used to describe their work were: entangled, exciting, stressful, complicated, joyous and soul-destroying (Kosnik, Menna & Dharamshi, 2017).

Researchers such as Darling-Hammond (2006) and Loughran (2008) have advanced our understanding of teacher education by arguing that a specialised process – a pedagogy of teacher education – is required. Recognising and naming the process were first steps. Developing the pedagogy itself has been taken up by the contributors to *Learning to Teach in a New Era*. They have developed a unique text for preservice teachers and teacher educators. Typically, in teacher education programs, preservice teachers have one text that deals with diversity, another with program planning, another about professionalism and identity, and so. While each text in its own right has merit, preservice teachers are left to make sense of this vast array of fragmented knowledge, which often has competing priorities. Often they graduate from teacher education without a clear vision of education or an adequate repertoire of skills. When they are faced with the realities of teaching, they often default to teaching as they were taught (Kosnik & Beck, 2009).

Learning to Teach in a New Era identifies many of the key elements of learning to become a teacher, which in itself is a huge accomplishment – the implicit is being made explicit. The authors of the individual chapters address many elements of teaching; by using a consistent format the text has a high level of coherence. The uniformity among the chapters is truly one of the strengths of the book because it is clear to the reader the goals for and structure of each chapter. Each chapter includes an opening vignette, gives links to online resources, provides the history of the topic, and addresses current Australian expectations, all of which make it an invaluable resource that can be supplemented with other texts. *Learning to Teach in a New Era* is like a road map for preservice teachers that will help them navigate the complex process of becoming a teacher.

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From our longitudinal study of teachers (Kosnik & Beck, 2009), which began in their preservice program and will be following them for 12-plus years, we found that although in teacher education important topics were covered, the preservice teachers did not learn what we expected they would. Part of the problem may be that they lacked the experience of teaching needed to appreciate the information being presented, but I suspect that part of the issue may be our language. *Learning to Teach in a New Era* is written in a language for preservice teachers, avoiding jargon, explaining terms carefully and providing examples of concepts. Accomplishing this measured tone is difficult because it is a balancing act of being both respectful and informative. The scenarios in each chapter are relevant for preservice teachers because they help induct them into the profession of teaching. The vignettes at the start of each chapter pose the types of questions preservice teachers ask (or should be asking). Having taught and studied teacher education for two decades I feel the tone, examples and content are authentic. So often preservice teachers want us to give them the 'right answer' and are quite surprised when we respond to their questions with: 'it depends' or 'in some circumstances' or 'what do you think?' Of course, those of us in education know there are no exact answers that work in every context. However, preservice teachers need something more substantial than a disconnected array of articles and teaching strategies if they are to thrive rather than just survive in the first years of teaching. *Learning to Teach in a New Era* will help them come to realise that teaching is both an art and a science. No text or collection of articles can make explicit all that teachers need to know, but providing them with a firm foundation will help them grow and learn.

Learning to Teach in a New Era systematically reveals some of the secrets of teaching. Kennedy (2006) disentangled the process of teaching by showing that each teaching event has at least six aspects: (1) covering desirable content, (2) fostering student learning, (3) increasing students' willingness to participate, (4) maintaining lesson momentum, (5) creating a civil classroom community, and (6) attending to their own cognitive and emotional needs. *Learning to Teach in a New Era* will help preservice teachers appreciate schooling in the complexity identified by Kennedy, guide them in developing a vision, support their learning in how to plan, raise their awareness of the multiple forms of diversity, show ways to use technology to support learning and situate teaching within the political context. So often preservice teachers are blissfully unaware of the political forces at play in education – if we want teachers to be professionals they must be aware of the broad landscape of education.

One does not become a teacher at graduation – it takes time, experience, reflection, collaboration, successes and challenges. And through this long process *Learning to Teach in a New Era* can be a touchstone referred to over and over again. It can be used before, during and after the teacher education program. Rather than floundering, feeling dispirited or cherry-picking activities from a variety of sources, beginning teachers can refer back to this core text. The concepts and strategies will be appreciated differently at various points of a teacher's development.

As a foundational text in a teacher education program *Learning to Teach in a New Era* brings coherence and some sense of how preservice teachers need to develop. It inspires the reader to think deeply but is not prescriptive. It does not advocate one right way to teach but encourages preservice teachers to reflect on specific topics and guides their thinking. It does not tell them what to think but

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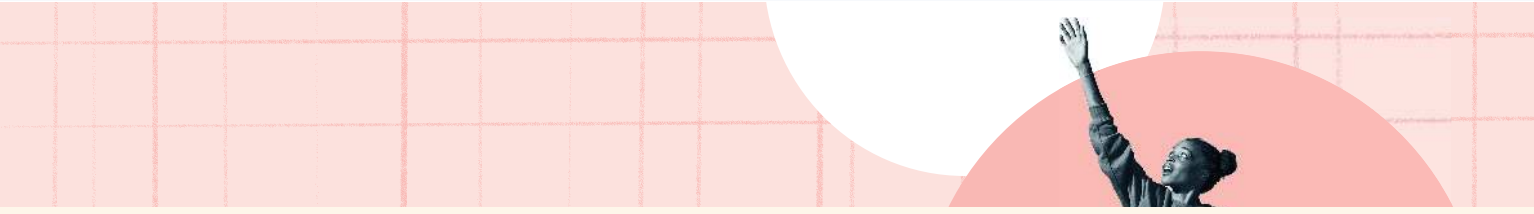

will help them develop an approach to teaching that is dynamic, inclusive and focused on children and will allow them to develop an identity as a professional. This is quite an accomplishment. I suspect this text, although written for the Australian context, will be used by an international audience.

Professor Clare Kosnik
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FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION 2

There is much talk about what it means to be a teacher – and yet understanding what it means to learn about how to teach does not attract nearly enough attention. This book offers a real opportunity to address that imbalance.

As the chapters individually and collectively make very clear, this book draws attention to the need for a major shift in understanding teaching as a profession. As a professional, a teacher must not only move beyond simplistic views of telling as teaching and listening as learning, but also be able to articulate the knowledge, skills and abilities at the heart of so doing. Added to that is the need to recognise and respond to the key concepts of teaching and learning in the modern era; an era that is information-rich but perhaps, increasingly, pedagogically isolated.

For those responsible for the learning of the next generation, developing a vision for professional learning and growth is crucial. Standards, planning a professional learning trajectory and knowing what it means to understand teaching and learning in sophisticated ways matter. That means that making sense of the educational landscape is more important than ever. For beginning teachers, the educational landscape is constantly changing, and that creates challenges for learning about teaching because policy and practice do not always complement one another; in some cases they unavoidably collide.

Paying attention to learning is an important focus for teachers. In so doing, the dynamic relationship between learning and teaching is able to be unpacked and reconsidered in order to ensure that practice is genuinely responsive to learning – in that way, learning can shape and direct what should be at the crux of teaching. Knowing how students learn and placing them at the centre of the pedagogical enterprise demands a great deal of teachers, but doing so also offers the possibility of students being invited into learning experiences rather than being viewed as passive recipients of information. In the digital world, that invitation exists in many ways; and in classrooms, the ability to create such possibilities is central to pedagogical expertise – something a beginning teacher needs to purposefully develop over time.

Curriculum and assessment can too easily dominate schooling practices and so it is important that the focus on learning drives not only the nature of the curriculum but also the manner in which that curriculum is assessed. Assessment should reflect the teaching that has been developed and employed to enhance student learning. Sadly, it is often the most superficial outcomes that are measured most and, through measurement, the value of learning can too easily be overlooked, or even lost. It is important that assessment reports on learning in meaningful ways and captures the essence of student growth and the development of understanding; cognition is not the only aspect of learning. Learning involves the heart as well as the head, and the values underpinning choices, decision making and acting are crucial to shaping an informed and thoughtful citizenry, and have a major influence in defining how we learn to act, and react, in social settings.

As these ideas begin to make clear, becoming a teacher is no simple task. Accepting the responsibility that goes with the need to care for, and develop, the whole student requires a great deal of knowledge to be used in ways that will positively inform practice. The professional knowledge of teaching is not always recognised in ways that are clear, helpful and applicable in the many diverse and varied contexts in which teachers work. However, in this book, the editors and authors have

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worked hard to place teacher learning at the heart of pursuing quality in student learning. As this text makes clear, although there are myriad things to know, be able to do and learn to professionally develop, teaching is a complex business that requires much more than training and the development of a routine or script. Expertise resides in the quality of the observations, data, evidence, decision making and practices that inform not only what to do, but how and why they are done as a professional teacher.

This book offers an invitation to engage with learning about teaching in ways that are designed to question and challenge the educational status quo. It encapsulates the personal challenges associated with what it means to learn to teach in a new era.

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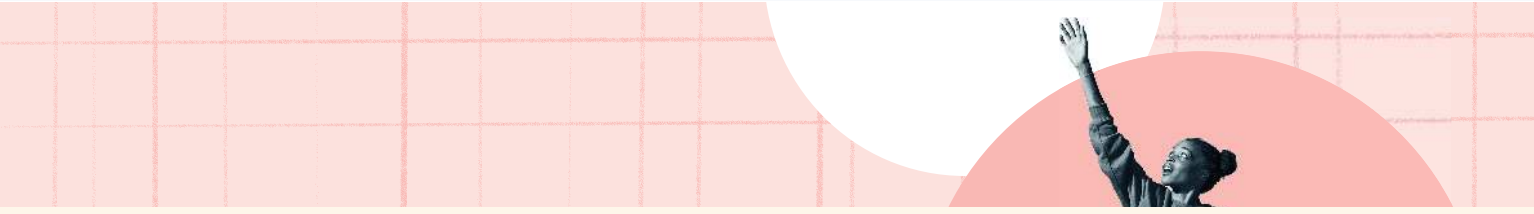

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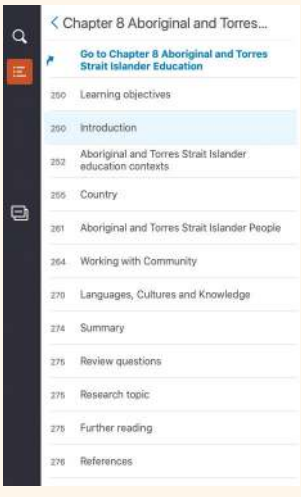

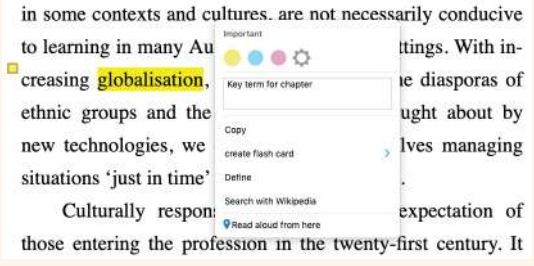

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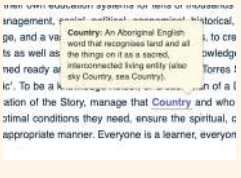

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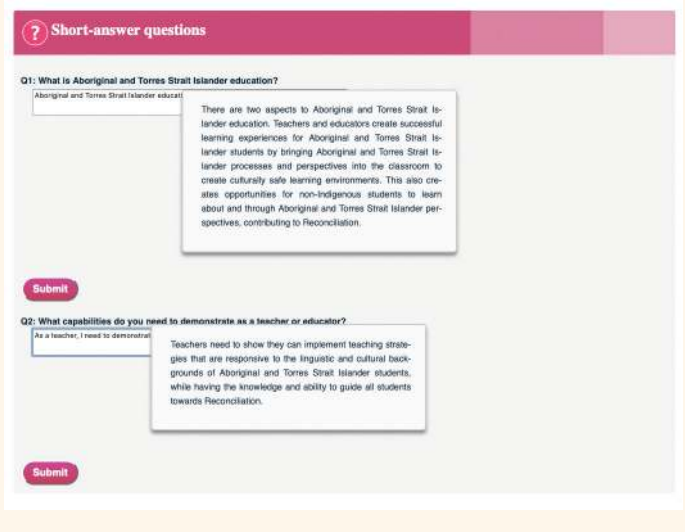

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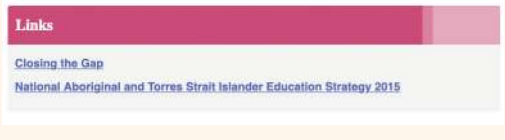

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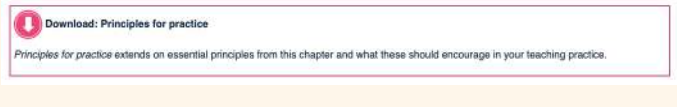

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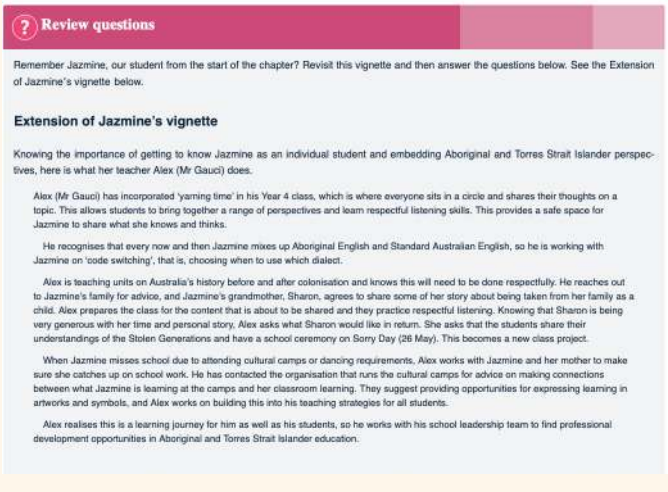

Review questions

Remember Jazmine, our student from the start of the chapter? Revisit this vignette and then answer the questions below. See the Extension of Jazmine's vignette below.

Extension of Jazmine's vignette

Knowing the importance of getting to know Jazmine as an individual student and embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, here is what her teacher Alex (Mr Gauci) does.

Alex (Mr Gauci) has incorporated 'yarning time' in his Year 4 class, which is where everyone sits in a circle and shares their thoughts on a topic. This allows students to bring together a range of perspectives and learn respectful listening skills. This provides a safe space for Jazmine to share what she knows and thinks.

He recognises that every now and then Jazmine mixes up Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English, so he is working with Jazmine on 'code switching', that is, choosing when to use which dialect.

Alex is teaching units on Australia's history before and after colonisation and knows this will need to be done respectfully. He reaches out to Jazmine's family for advice, and Jazmine's grandmother, Sharon, agrees to share some of her story about being taken from her family as a child. Alex prepares the class for the content that is about to be shared and they practice respectful listening. Knowing that Sharon is being very generous with her time and personal story, Alex asks what Sharon would like in return. She asks that the students share their understandings of the Stolen Generations and have a school ceremony on Sorry Day (26 May). This becomes a new class project.

When Jazmine misses school due to attending cultural camps or dancing requirements, Alex works with Jazmine and her mother to make sure she catches up on school work. He has contacted the organisation that runs the cultural camps for advice on making connections between what Jazmine is learning at the camps and her classroom learning. They suggest providing opportunities for expressing learning in artworks and symbols, and Alex works on building this into his teaching strategies for all students.

Alex realises this is a learning journey for him as well as his students, so he works with his school leadership team to find professional development opportunities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

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