

Learning to Teach in a New Era

The Australian teaching environment is one of high-stakes accountability and varied contexts, which also offers unparalleled chances to be creative, innovative and inspirational. *Learning to Teach in a New Era* prepares preservice teachers to embrace the opportunities and meet the challenges of teaching in the twenty-first century.

Closely aligned with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) and the Australian Curriculum, this book is an invaluable resource for early childhood, primary and secondary preservice teachers that can be carried through their entire degree and into the workplace.

The text is divided into three parts: professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement. Students will gain an understanding of the teaching profession and the policies and laws that govern it; develop practical skills in pedagogy, technology, curriculum, assessment and reporting, planning and classroom management and engagement; and learn vital skills in communication and ethical practice. Each chapter is supported by superior pedagogical features, including learning objectives, practical scenarios, teacher reflections, review questions, research topics and further readings.

Engaging and accessible, *Learning to Teach in a New Era* is a practical and comprehensive resource that equips preservice teachers with the foundational knowledge and skills to begin their education journey.

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Edited by Jeanne Allen , Simone White

Frontmatter

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Learning to Teach in a New Era

Jeanne Allen

Simone White



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Foreword

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 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.

Professor John Loughran
Sir John Monash Distinguished Professor
Executive Dean, Faculty of Education
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Foreword

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.

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 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.

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Contents

<i>Foreword by John Loughran</i>	<i>page v</i>
<i>Foreword by Clare Kosnik</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Authors</i>	<i>xvi</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xix</i>
<i>Using your VitalSource eBook</i>	<i>xxi</i>
 Introduction	 1
 Part I: Introduction	 7
 Chapter 1 Teaching in the twenty-first century	 9
<i>Jeanne Allen and Simone White</i>	
Learning objectives	9
Introduction	9
Key concepts of twenty-first-century teaching and learning	11
Teachers’ work in Australia	15
Teacher professional standards	20
Planning your professional learning trajectory	25
Summary	30
Review questions	31
Research topic	31
Further reading/resources	32
References	32
 Part II: Professional knowledge	 37
 Chapter 2 Understanding the education landscape: policy, practice and context	 39
<i>Simone White</i>	
Learning objectives	39
Introduction	39
Policy studies	41

What is the role of policy?	51
Policy in context	61
New policies for the twenty-first-century teacher	63
Summary	69
Review questions	70
Research topic	70
Further reading/resources	71
References	71

Chapter 3 Effective pedagogy for student learning 74

Anne Coffey

Learning objectives	74
Introduction	74
Knowing your students and how they learn	75
Pedagogy: the complex relationship between teaching and learning	78
Different pedagogical approaches	86
The pedagogy of effective teachers	101
Summary	105
Review questions	106
Research topic	106
Further reading	106
References	107

Chapter 4 Teaching with digital technologies 111

Amber McLeod, Kelly Carabott and Catherine Lang

Learning objectives	111
Introduction	111
Digital technologies and you	113
Digital technologies in schools	122
Using digital technologies in class	132
Sourcing appropriate digital technologies for your classes	140
What should I be teaching my students?	144
Summary	150
Review questions	151
Research topic	151
Further reading/resources	152
References	154

Part III: Professional practice 159

Chapter 5 Curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting 161

Madonna Stinson and Suzanne Henden

Learning objectives	161
Introduction	161

The message systems of education	163
Curriculum	167
Pedagogy	174
Assessment	177
Reporting	189
Summary	193
Review questions	194
Research topic	194
Further reading	194
References	194
Chapter 6 Planning for teaching	198
<i>Linley Cornish, Michelle Bannister-Tyrrell, Jennifer Charteris, Kathy Jenkins and Marguerite Jones</i>	
Learning objectives	198
Introduction	198
‘Big picture’ planning	200
Planning at classroom level	209
Sample lesson plans and units of work	217
Other planning considerations	231
Summary	236
Review questions	237
Research topic	237
Further reading	237
References	238
Chapter 7 Student diversity, education and social justice	243
<i>Leonie Rowan</i>	
Learning objectives	243
Introduction	243
Australia’s diverse student population	246
Teacher quality and teacher power	250
Knowledge and skills for working with diverse learners	252
Working to include, value and celebrate diverse learners	257
Summary	268
Review questions	269
Research topic	269
Further reading	270
References	270
Chapter 8 Understanding classroom management	275
<i>Jeanne Allen and Michelle Ronksley-Pavia</i>	
Learning objectives	275
Introduction	275

Classroom management: historically, socially and culturally contextualised	278
Theoretical approaches to classroom management	283
Managing the classroom for diverse learners	288
Classroom management frameworks and plans	296
Summary	302
Review questions	303
Research topic	304
Further reading/resources	304
References	304

Chapter 9 Creating engaging and motivating learning environments 309

Andrea Reupert and Stuart Woodcock

Learning objectives	309
Introduction	309
Positive teaching and learning environments	311
Engaging and motivating teaching practices	317
The student–teacher relationship	323
Responding to students’ off-task behaviour	325
Summary	329
Review questions	330
Research topic	330
Further reading	331
References	331

Part IV: Professional engagement 335

Chapter 10 Communication skills with students, staff and parents/caregivers 337

Wendy Goff

Learning objectives	337
Introduction	337
Theoretical underpinnings of education-based communication	339
Facilitators and barriers to education-based communication	343
Models of communication	344
A closer look at education-based communication	347
Strategies and skills for education-based communication	353
Professional reflection	361
Summary	363
Review questions	364
Research topic	365
Further reading/resources	365
References	365

Chapter 11 Becoming a teaching professional: ethical and legal issues	369
<i>Elaine Sharplin, Christine Howitt and Deborah Wake</i>	
Learning objectives	369
Introduction	369
Teaching as a profession	371
The ethics of the teaching profession	379
Legal requirements	388
Summary	402
Review questions	403
Research topic	403
Further reading	404
References	404
<i>Index</i>	414

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This icon is used throughout the textbook to indicate the presence of an interactive component in the eBook. A descriptor below indicates the type of content available.

Title	Page #
▼ Chapter 11 Becoming a Teaching Profess...	367
Learning objectives	367
Introduction	367
Teaching as a profession	369
The ethics of the teaching profession	377
Legal requirements	386
Summary	399
Review questions	399
Research topic	399
Further reading	402
References	402

Navigation and search

Move between pages and sections in multiple ways, including via the linked table of contents and the search tool.

skills that serve the interest of patients are reviewed. Interacting with professional colleagues is presented in the context of team communication and collaborative working relationships. Guidelines in communicating through written documents and legal practice must be effective at producing shared meaning between people. For this reason, the chapter begins with an overview of the process of interpersonal communication and what makes it effective. The emphasis is on the formation of professional relationships with patients and colleagues, as communication is the means by which relationships develop.

Highlight

Highlight text in your choice of colours with one click. Add notes to highlighted passages.

Teaching is recognised as a **profession** because it requires a highly organised occupation, providing important public services and overseen by statutory authorities. It requires a high degree of specialised knowledge, involving high levels of autonomous action and continuous updating of knowledge through career-long learning. (Solbre, 2013; Thomson, 2013), with overregulation at

Key terms

Hover over bold terms to display pop-up definitions of key concepts.

Multiple-choice questions

Open the multiple-choice questions pop-up box, select your choice of correct answers and click 'check answers' to assess your results. Note that this box can be moved about the page in order for you to read text while choosing your responses.

Multiple-choice questions

Q1: Complete the sentence. In most jurisdictions, beginning teachers need to demonstrate their growth from the Graduate to the 'Professional level of the Standards ...

- A - Within two years of commencing employment in the profession.
- B - Within six years of commencing employment in the profession.
- C - In a time frame negotiated with the school principal.
- D - None of the above.

Q2: Which of the following is incorrect?

- A - Most states require and monitor teachers to demonstrate their growth from the Graduate to the Professional level of the Standards and support the teaching profession.
- B - Australia does not monitor professional development for teachers registered out of field.
- C - ATTEL is the capital that provides education to teach, strong interpersonal and communication skills, and a willingness to learn.
- D - Demonstration of progression to highly Accomplished level is not required in any state after five years of teaching.

Check Answers

Short-answer questions

Read the question and type your answer in the box. Submit your answers to view the guided solutions and assess your results. Note that the solution pop-ups can be moved about the page.

Short-answer questions

Q1: In what ways are the frameworks described by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) and the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics (n.d.) similar? In what ways are they different?

Shapiro and Stefkovich and the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics both

The Shapiro and Stefkovich framework is different to the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics in that it is geared more towards the teaching profession and places students at the centre of all ethical decision making. The four competing ethical positions that Shapiro and Stefkovich identify as influencing teachers' decision making are similar in many respects to those from the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics. Justice or fairness are evident in both frameworks, where decisions are made on fairness. This overlaps with the ethic of critique, in that the concepts of power and privilege are emphasised as challenging the status quo or the way things are.

Submit

Critical thinking questions

Q1: What do you think it means to be a professional teacher? What are the knowledges, behaviours and beliefs that you think underpin professionalism for teachers?

Being a professional teacher means being committed to the educational development of children and adolescents. It requires extensive knowledge of the pedagogy, discipline content, school systems and legislative frameworks that teachers operate within. It also requires skills for decision making in complex contexts, and interpersonal and self-management skills. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers have been developed to describe what it means to be a teaching professional. As well, codes of conduct developed by the states and territories are intended to provide guidelines about what constitutes appropriate behaviour or fitness to practise for teaching professionals. Teachers need to be aware of the codes of conduct that are relevant to them.

Submit

Critical thinking questions

Throughout and at the end of chapters, respond to the critical thinking questions and use the guided solutions to assess your responses. Note that the solution pop-ups can be moved about the page.

Videos

View relevant video content to extend your knowledge on the topics presented in the book. Click the icon, which links to the video.

Teachers, schools and our education system

In this edition of Q&A (Monday, 23 July 2012; 59:31 minutes), a panel consisting of the Vice Chancellor of Sydney University, Michael Spence; then Attorney-General Nicola Roxon; National Director of GetUp! Simon Sheikh; author of *What makes a good school*, Isaac Caro; and then Shadow Education Minister Christopher Pyne, address questions around teacher quality.

After watching this video, do you think we could improve the quality of new graduates by:

1. having a higher grade to attain entry into teacher education programs, and
2. conducting rigorous interviews before graduates are offered a place, to ensure they are suitable entrants to the profession?

Review questions

Q1: In what ways is teaching characterised as a professional occupation?

Teaching can be characterised as a professional occupation because the teachers have distinct skill sets, such as understanding how students learn and managing supportive and safe learning environments. Teachers are constantly faced with ethical decisions, and placed in positions of great responsibility in their classrooms and in the work they undertake on a daily basis. Furthermore, teachers have a set of professional standards to live up to, which are used to guide every aspect of their work. To maintain reputation in this profession, it is a requirement for teachers to update their professional knowledge through professional learning.

Q2: How is the development of teaching standards related to the public and political agenda of improving the quality of teaching and the quality of education in Australia?

The development of teaching standards relates to the public and political agenda of improving the quality of teaching and the quality of education in Australia. There is often news in the media about how the quality of teaching needs to be improved. The APSIT were developed to address community concerns by ensuring that all teachers have high levels of knowledge and skills in professional knowledge, practice and engagement.

Review questions

Respond to the review questions at the end of each chapter and use the guided solutions to assess your responses. Note that the solution pop-ups can be moved about the page.