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Towards a new settlement in Australian teacher education:  
A review of shifting sensibilities  
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Introduction
This essay reviews and provides a critical introduction to the papers found within these Refereed Proceedings of the Australian Teacher Education Association (ATEA) Conference held in Yeppoon, Queensland, 5-8 July, 1997. It argues that within Australia, and to a lesser extent the Asia Pacific region, there is evidence of a new settlement in teacher education, the parameters and particulars of which are characterised by significant changes in its political economy, social and knowledge bases. Throughout, our understanding of this settlement is of 'a dynamic historical process in which the balance of forces can be seen to change over time as new alliances are formed' (Grace, 1987, p. 195). Further, we understand these forces to be continually at work on two interrelated levels, to establish broad frameworks and to negotiate the specifics within and around which differences are temporarily settled. In this sense, teacher education policy:

... can be seen as a series of crises and settlements. The crises occur when the power and interests of dominant groups are challenged or threatened by the strategies of subordinate groups. [Teacher] Educational settlements refer to those situations where crisis has been temporarily resolved through an acceptable compromise or balance of forces. (Grace, 1987, p. 195)

While it is evident that particular features of previous settlements in Australian teacher education remain, in recent times many of these features have acquired different emphases and meanings; in part due to their conjoining with and (re)positioning amongst other elements previously illegitimated or ‘held at bay’. We argue below that this textual and discursive re-assessment is indicative of a distinctive shift in the sensibilities of teacher education. Each of the themes of change - to the political economy and the social and knowledge bases of teacher education - that record this resettling is examined in turn and, at relevant junctures, references are made to papers within the volume that provide further illustration and explanation.

The changing political economy of teacher education
In recent years there have been at least two significant changes in the political and economic life of the Australian state that have impacted on teacher education and teacher educators within Australia. At the macro level there has been a resurgence in a conservative or ‘restoration’ politics conjoined (uncomfortably, at times) with a neo-classical orientation to managing the Australian economy and its education industry; these are particular responses to the globalisation
of capital and the concomitant dilemmas for nation states generally. At the micro level these political and economic imperatives have achieved greater ‘reach’ into the lives of Australian teacher educators (amongst others) and the institutions in which they (once ‘collectively’) work(ed) - a managerial ‘achievement’ referred to elsewhere as ‘steering at a distance’ (Kickert, 1991; Marceau, 1993). Yet, it is not so much the presence of these discourses that represents change but the significant deepening of their influence and dominance, evident in a growing legitimacy and pervasiveness of ‘market’ ideology within Australian governments and their institutions.

The effect of these challenges to previously dominant discourses has been a resettling of the political economy of teacher education previously brokered during the recessionary late 1980s and early 1990s under the Hawke/Keating Federal Labor Governments. According to John Knight (1993, pp. 13-17), the underlying assumptions of this former ‘corporate managerialist’ settlement were:

- the centrality of education/training to microeconomic reform and industry restructuring,
- the fiscal limitations of governments and their education/training systems, hence the need for greater efficiencies, effectiveness and accountabilities of these systems,
- the centrality of teachers in meeting these ‘constraints’, hence the centrality of teacher educators in producing appropriately prepared teachers,
- the unification or compatibility of disparate education/training systems across Australia,
- the need for this to be directed by the Commonwealth, and
- the benefits of these imperatives for ‘the national interest’.

It is not our intention here to discuss changes to each of these assumptions as justification for our claims of teacher education’s more recent resettling. Indeed, from our perspective, the relevance of many of these economic codifications of Australian teacher education remains. Rather, as indicated above, we argue that the emphases given to these assumptions have changed, apart from and because of their conjoining with other assumptions; in particular, the ability of the market to satisfactorily address the current political and economic conditions of teacher education in Australia. Broadly, the shift has been from ‘managerial’ concerns - for institutions of teacher education to be ‘business-like’ in their operational controls - to the ‘commercial’ concerns of business - for teacher educators to compete in open and niche markets for consumers of their products and, ultimately, to establish and maintain non-government sources of funding through such avenues as user payments and tendering.

The paper by Kevin Harris, contained within this volume, discusses many of these issues in terms of the deprofessionalisation of teachers and the declining status of their work. Harris’ analysis of this new role for schooling and teachers is prefaced by an extensive and broad examination of the economic structure and production relations of the nation state; an exploration in which he concludes that market ideology:
... seeks and promotes ideological legitimation of the move from an inward self-caring welfare mode to an outward competitive mode by translating what were once spoken of as public or social goods into commodities allegedly best attended to in the economic arena of the local, national and even international market place. (Harris, this volume)

Such analysis also provides a prelude to other papers within this collection that similarly contemplate the effects of rapid structural change on teachers and their work (eg Mander) within broader imperatives for political and economic reform (Teasdale; Zipin), few more obvious than the impending ‘return’ in 1999 of Macau and its institutions of teacher education to mainland China (Lei).

In the shift from a welfare state to a ‘competitive’ state (Cerny, 1990), teacher educators have become more interested in what attracts potential students to courses of teacher education; interests that have inspired explorations into whether students’ motivations are predominantly extrinsic - informed by a demand for teachers’ labour - or whether altruistic and intrinsic discourses still have influence (Frahm et al.) in contexts dominated by the economic rationales and instrumental conceptions of education of the new right. But the competition for students is not just between courses of teacher education and pursuits in other areas. It is also amongst institutions of teacher education, prompting investigations into what attracts potential students to seek information about and enrol in teacher education courses offered by particular institutions (Booth et al.).

It is this neo-liberal market orientation which has encouraged institutions to develop a variety of ‘packages’ in order to better meet the demands of niche markets - demands constructed by producers as much as by consumers - and to reap the benefits they offer (early) monopolies. Some of these markets are still emerging or are relatively new to traditional understandings of Australian teacher education - illustrated by the more recent development (or co-option) of courses in areas such as vocational education and training (Frost) and early childhood education (Robert et al.) - while other markets are more established - such as those focused on postgraduate courses (Booth et al.) and courses for and in indigenous communities (Clark). Venturing into new markets also implies the potential for encountering new competitors, including recently accredited private providers (Lei; McGee), as well as more established organisations, such as schools and schooling systems - offering registration, accreditation and certification for teachers’ professional development (Williams et al.) - which ‘threaten’ the monopolies held by teacher educators in their traditional markets.

One could be forgiven for thinking that such markets have transformed Australian teacher education, and government institutions of education more generally, in ways that render almost unrecognisable their once liberal education ideals. Schools, for example, are no longer simply
concerned with schooling. Some have also become quasi-employment agencies for their students (Wagner et al.) as well as sites of education for their teachers; the one-stop-shop for producers and consumers of workplace training and placement. One might also speculate that the influence of teacher educators has been circumvented, or at least seriously challenged. In the past, teacher educators have tended to resist change, with some ‘success’, but there is evidence within this volume that acceptance of the operations of markets does not necessarily mean that teacher educators are also accepting of these markets’ ideological orientations. Zipin, for example, is at pains to demonstrate the oversimplisitic constructions of status within higher education which position teacher education as littl e more than training. Similarly, Robert et al. challenge early childhood educators to take control over how their area of expertise is to be conceived, despite the material and ideological difficulties in doing so.

But it is Teasdale who best demonstrates how teacher educators’ revolutionary agendas might be achieved. In discussing ways in which teacher educators in developing Pacific nations incorporate local knowledges into their courses, Teasdale argues for the co-option of popular discourses for one’s own purposes; in this case, the valuing of indigenous culture. What is demonstrated here is that particular discourses are not exclusively captive to particular ideologies. More broadly, then, the marketisation of teacher education - a major element in its re-settlement - need not sound the death knell for all that teacher educators hold ‘near and dear’. The way forward, however, is not via some return trip to a previous political economy of teacher education. Past settlements have progressively proven vulnerable to the ideological battering they have received from ‘the market’. What is required is for teacher educators to re-conceive of the market and, by extension, its influence on teacher education; a reconception which needs to include and draw on understandings of its changing social and knowledge bases.

The changing social base of teacher education
In a similar vein, Kalantzis, Cope, Noble and Poynting (1990) note that the negotiation of social, cultural and linguistic diversity has undergone dramatic change typical of the upheavals in Australian education over the last forty years. They identify three historical settlements. The first (1940s - 1960s) is assimilationalist with its tendencies of incorporation into and simultaneous mariginalisation of minority cultures vis-à-vis mainstream practices, its chauvinistic construction of what is deemed ‘valued knowledge’ and its fixed, centralised and uncontested curriculum. The second (1970s - 1980s) is based on notions of a progressive curriculum incorporating cultural pluralist versions of multiculturalism and cultural relativism, while the third (late 1980s - late 1990s), a post-progressive curriculum, is one based on particular notions of equity and social justice, where the curriculum is contestable and made problematic and where diversity and the sites of education give rise to the establishment of new critical and social epistemology in a decentred world.
While most teacher educators would readily locate themselves or their programs within the third of these settlements, the papers in this volume addressing the changing social base of teacher education provide some challenge to such positioning, drawing attention to evidence in relation to: the way in which teacher education is yet to adequately confronted issues arising out of the changing social base of students; what teacher educators are currently doing to address this issue; and how teacher education programs need to address concerns involving the homogenising, marginalising and legitimatising tendencies of dominant mainstream discourse practices in education. In short, many of these papers within this collection attempt to identify the nature of the changing and diverse social base of students in education in Australia today and to discuss the implications such diversity has for Australian teacher education.

This changing social base of students in institutions of teacher education, at one level, represents the ongoing effects of the globalising tendencies and the marketisation of teacher education, as discussed above. At another level, it highlights a social reality that Australia can no longer appeal to a homogenous student population typified by images of a white, middle class, anglo-celtic, English speaking male. Lankshear (1994, p. 5) asserts that ‘it is perilous [albeit] convenient to develop programs and approaches to teaching based on self-reproductive assumptions: that is assumptions which unquestioningly mirror and reproduce our own education’. One of the central concerns for teacher educators today, then, is to address those forces which legitimate certain practices to the detriment of the discursive practices of other marginalised groups within their courses.

In 1990, DEET identified in its policy document aimed at social justice within higher education, *A fair chance for all* (1990), six social groups which traditionally have been proportionally under-represented within institutions of higher education and which now form increasingly larger groupings in university student populations:

- people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds,
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders,
- women in certain discipline areas,
- people from non-English speaking backgrounds,
- people with disabilities, and
- people from rural and isolated areas.

Since the publication of this document, teacher education institutions, which are located within the Unified National System (UNS) of Australian universities, have been under increasing pressure to change and adapt to the needs of their student populations as represented by DEET’s six groupings. Here we argue that these needs may be addressed in at least two interrelated ways: first, and somewhat self-evidently, through acknowledgment by teacher educators that the socio-cultural nature of their student or client group has changed dramatically over the past
decade due in part to the changing political economy of education in Australia; and secondly, and most significantly, through teacher educators acknowledging that this ever-changing target group draws on and is informed by different and a diverse range of knowledges which are not necessarily congruent with existing and dominant discursive practices of education. In short, teacher education institutions need to reorientate their own practices if their new clients are to be accounted for and included into the processes of their education.

Unfortunately, several papers in this volume (see, among others: Erben & Wyer; Singh & Cowburn) illustrate how mainstream teacher education in Australia still produces Australian teachers who, for example, are largely ignorant of Asian societies; teachers who by-and-large have no cultural or intellectual orientation towards ‘others’ within their classrooms. From such observations these authors argue that the main issue confronting teacher educators is one involving questions about curriculum change, inclusion and critical pedagogies. It is important to realise that any institutional form of education, whether a school or university, legitimatises only certain views of the world or certain knowledges or certain social practices. Yet, this selective tradition about what counts as worthwhile knowledge is often romanticised, despite the fact that our student clientele has changed and increasingly incorporates people who derive from lower socio-economic, Aboriginal, rural and NESB backgrounds.

Other papers (such as Hawksworth & Hinton) suggest that it is the politics of economic rationalism that has created processes in which teacher educators have actually created contexts for change through niche market degrees; these degrees in turn attracting largely non-traditional student groups into their courses, particularly international students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The broader literature also draws attention to the speed with which teacher education institutions have had to undergo a process of adaptation to the increasing numbers of students from diverse backgrounds. Robertson (1990) draws attention to societies that are ‘increasingly internally exposed to problems of heterogeneity and diversity and, at the same time are experiencing both external and internal pressures to reconstruct their collective identities along pluralistic lines’. He continues that the individual is ‘increasingly subjected to competing ethnic, cultural and religious reference points’ (p. 57), much in the same way that the discursive practices of Australian teacher educators have been under pressure to change. While this notion of change and adaptability figures heavily in many papers within this volume (Archer; McGee; Townsend; Tatafu, Booth & Wilson), other issues - involving the actual learning environments of students, learning practices and the changing nature of the roles of teacher and student and how these impact on student populations in terms of access, participation, success and retention - draw heavily on notions of discontinuity and inclusive and flexible learning (see, among others: Gale & Wyer; Rowan & Bigum; Smith; Woodrow & Robert).
Ultimately, whether it is about curriculum change, delivery, structures, learning outcomes, lifelong learning or the philosophical bases upon which teacher education programs are built, the majority of papers in this volume, which specifically address the changing social orientations of students, seem to point to two interrelated problems: shifting the sensibilities of teacher educators toward a more critically informed understanding of the needs of culturally different and diverse people; and helping teacher educators to reconstruct their own discursive practices in the light of being required to interact in this changing sociocultural learning environment.

The changing knowledge base of teacher education

Implied, and at times explicit, in this attempt to resettle the understandings and practices of teacher educators is a shift in what now counts as worthwhile knowledge. Ten years ago, Lee Shulman (1987) proposed that the knowledge base of teachers could be categorised in six ways, as:

- content knowledge
- general pedagogical knowledge
- curriculum knowledge
- pedagogical content knowledge
- knowledge of educational contexts, and
- knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values.

Papers in this section of this volume have sought to (re)map the knowledge base of teacher education for the next ten years, and in the process to trace some of the shifting sensibilities in Australian teacher education. One possible starting point for this important enterprise is Shulman’s categories, which have been appropriated by several commentators (see, for example: Gay & Ryan, this volume; Marland, 1994; Taylor & McMeniman, 1996; Wyer, Danaher, Kindt & Moriarty, in press) and contested or placed within broader perspectives by others (such as Martinez, 1994 and Sackett, 1987). While Shulman’s categories provide a comprehensive framework for analysing what many teacher educators have found to be useful foci for organising the curriculum and pedagogy for teacher preparation and professional development courses, several teacher educators are unsure how effectively any such framework provides a reliable set of navigational aids in responding to a number of radical shifts in the epistemological bases of teacher education.

These shifts include, but are by no means restricted to:

- the fragmentation of knowledge and the influence of new technologies
- the rhetoric versus the realities of ‘flexible delivery of education’ (Garbutcheon Singh, Harreveeld & Hunt, 1997)
- the growing recognition of teacher participation in action research projects as contributing to knowledge construction in teacher education (Guy, 1997; Noffke, 1997)
- struggles over the control of teacher education, and hence over which knowledges are valued and which are elided (Kemmis, 1994)
• challenges to the legitimacy of knowledge produced within universities (Mules, 1994)
• ideological contestations of the meaning and relevance of literacy (Gale, 1996) and social justice (Gale & McNamee, 1996)
• increasing awareness of the importance of global and ecological perspectives in education generally (Lowe, 1997), and
• what is arguably the most fundamental intellectual challenge of contemporary times: the influence of the ‘posts’, including postcolonialism, postmodernism and poststructuralism.

The implications of this last point for the changing knowledge base of teacher education have been elaborated by Bhabha:

The wider significance of the postmodern condition lies in the awareness that the epistemological ‘limits’ of those ethnocentric ideas [of ‘postenlightenment rationalism’] are also the enunciative boundaries of a range of other dissonant, even dissident histories and voices – women, the colonized, minority groups, the bearers of policed sexualities. (1994, pp. 4-5)

Bhabha’s challenge to teacher educators is clear: any shifting knowledge base that seeks to engage with diversity, difference and discontinuity - which might appropriately be one of the goals of a new settlement in Australian teacher education - must identify, articulate with and integrate these and other manifestations of changes to our understandings of what education is ‘for’ and what teachers and students need to ‘know’. This challenge includes apparent ‘counter-narratives’ such as Watts’ argument (this volume) that prospective teachers’ decisions about notifying cases of suspected child abuse are influenced far less by their knowledge base than by their personal beliefs, past experiences and perceptions.

It is symptomatic of the enormity of this challenge facing teacher educators that contributions in this volume to the theme of teacher education’s shifting knowledge base far exceeded those to other themes, discussed above, of the changing political economy and the changing social base of teacher education. Perhaps this denotes a conviction that achieving greater understanding of the diversity, difference and discontinuity of the epistemological foundations of teacher education is a prerequisite to responding constructively and creatively to what some regard as more externalised political, economic and social shifts. In terms of teacher education’s resettlement, we could equally argue that the influence of these new parameters constrain, enable and require new negotiations with respect to the particulars of teacher education - what is taught and learnt and how.

At any rate, the contributors to the section on the changing knowledge base cover an impressive -almost bewildering - array of topics. Debates about teacher education knowledge are located in accounts of empirical sites and substantive issues that include action inquiry (Tripp),
collaborative case writing (Guy & Ryan), conceptualising ‘the child’ (Austin), creative writing (Danaher), educational technologies (Au; Rowan & Bigum), gender education (Rowan & Harris), language and/or literacy education (Erben & Bartlett; Harreveld & Garbutcheon Singh; Ikeda; Kho; Larking), middle schooling (Hardingham), notification of child abuse (Watts), peace education (Teasdale & Teasdale), professional development (Goodsir; Lope et al.; Perry & Ball), reflective teaching (Allen), special education (Watson & Pagliano), the teacher education practicum (Chan; Hansford & Brooker; Lang; Leggett & Harrison; McNally & Martin; Sinclair; Wilson), teaching competencies (Cornford; Jasman; Long & Vanzetti), thinking (McGill) and vocational education (O’Sullivan).

As well as (re)mapping in various ways the changing knowledge base of teacher education, the contributors to this section also exhibit some of their own shifting sensibilities about the new settlement in Australian teacher education. For example, Austin argues that adults and children have different stakes in conceptualising childhood in relation to education. Erben and Bartlett demonstrate that, by altering the kind of interactions between teachers and students, technologies such as audiographics have a considerable impact on the way that knowledge is constructed. Hardingham portrays the teachers’ knowledge base as a contested site in which university, school, government, professional and societal factors, among others, compete for influence. Jasman asserts the value of using a competency framework to explore and extend teacher educators’ professional knowledge base. And, at a time of great controversy about technologies in education, Rowan and Bigum apply actor-network theory to argue that educational innovations need to become stabilised without eroding the diversity of learning situations.

In 1993, Knight, McWilliam and Bartlett outlined key elements of what they called ‘an enabling teacher education policy for Australia in the twenty-first century’ (1993, p. 151) that still presents a challenge to Australian teacher educators today. Among those elements were the following:

The challenge is to resolve the dilemma of top–down versus bottom–up reform in a period of cultural diversity and social and economic turbulence. We have suggested forms of education which will enable the development of teachers as professionals, committed to the public good and the development of an informed citizenry for a democratic society. We have called for a teacher education policy which is more sensitive to context. In short, we have argued for a teacher education policy whose technology and goals are productive, not reproductive. (Knight, McWilliam & Bartlett, 1993, p. 151)

If the promise implicit in this account of ‘an enabling teacher education policy’ is to be realised in the next decade, the challenge involved in (re)mapping teacher education to take account of a
changing knowledge base - from frameworks such as those of Shulman (1987) to postmodernist analyses of the contemporary world - needs to be confronted. The papers in this volume pertaining to the shifting knowledge base of teacher education, in many and varied ways - some complementary, others contestatory, of one another - constitute one attempt at confronting this challenge. The most appropriate measure of their individual and collective success in undertaking this enterprise is likely to be their contributions - to borrow a graphic metaphor from Warry et al. (Warry, O’Brien, Knight & Swendson, 1996) - as directional tools as we seek to navigate the uncharted seas of teacher education in the next decade. As this essay has argued, tracing the shifting sensibilities in the new settlement in Australian teacher education is also likely to facilitate this outcome.

Conclusion
What can be said, then, of this collection of papers on Australian teacher education and on teacher education in the Asian-Pacific region more generally? Above we have argued that they point to the (ongoing) resettlement of the parameters and particulars of contemporary teacher education, although we have been careful to acknowledge that such resettling involves changes of emphases as much as it does the introduction of elements previously unacknowledged. Broadly, our account of this new settlement has emphasised the role of market imperatives in encouraging teacher educators to refashion their programs into products for niche markets, directed at enticing and retaining students in a context of reducing levels of financial assistance from governments and far more open competition amongst institutions of teacher education. Interestingly, it is this market orientation which has provided much of the impetus for refashioning teacher education in order to account for difference in the socio-cultural backgrounds of student-teachers, despite a strong and lengthy campaign for such change in these programs for more socially just reasons - although, care also needs to be exercised in recognising the co-option of market discourse for these other purposes.

We have also argued that the influence of these political, economic and social parameters on the negotiation of which knowledges are to receive recognition within teacher education has been considerable and, in some cases, has proven ‘unsettling’ for some teacher educators, not least because of an almost bewildering array of competing claims to legitimacy in a postmodern epistemological context. Of course, these knowledge claims not only reflect different ways of responding to the challenges facing teacher educators but they also reflect their authors' respective shifting sensibilities and positionings within the new settlement of Australian teacher education. That is, the market and its settling of teacher education, positions teacher educators and their students in new political, social and pedagogical relationships. From our perspective, and drawing on the evidence within this collection of papers, the challenge for teacher educators is to locate new positions of influence - for themselves and others - which attend to the marketisation of teacher education; locations which in our view - and clearly the view of several
authors within this volume - should not simply stand in opposition to the market but attempt co-opt it for the mutual benefit of those it affects rather than succumb to the market’s passion for competition and self-benefit. The resettling of Australian teacher education undoubtedly introduces limitations for teacher education but, like all settlements, it also creates opportunities to be grasped. Evidenced within this volume are possibilities for such negotiation.

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