Positioning Teachers: Unravelling The Teacher Effectiveness Agenda

By

Andrew Skourdoumbis

Submitted in fulfilment for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Deakin University
September, 2012
I am the author of the thesis entitled

Positioning Teachers: Unravelling The Teacher Effectiveness Agenda.

submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

This thesis may be made available for consultation, loan and limited copying in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968.

'I certify that I am the student named below and that the information provided in the form is correct'

Full Name: Andrew Skourdoumbis

Signed: Signature Redacted by Library

Date: 21/10/2015
I certify that the thesis entitled (10 word maximum)

Positioning Teachers: Unravelling The Teacher Effectiveness Agenda

submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

I also certify that any material in the thesis which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by any university or institution is identified in the text.

'I certify that I am the student named below and that the information provided in the form is correct'

Full Name. ANDREW SKOUROPOULOS

(Please Print)

Signed. ......................................................

Signature Redacted by Library

Date. 05/10/2012
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of a thesis of this kind can only occur if people have the necessary support and guidance required. I would like to thank my mother and brother for providing that support. I would like to thank Claudia Cepin for her painstaking efforts in preparing the thesis for submission. I would also like to thank the following colleagues from RMIT University for their continued encouragement and collegiality: Associate Professor Geo Shacklock, Dr. Michael Crowhurst, Dr. Judith Ocean, Dr. Barbara Chancellor, Dr. Rachel Patrick and Associate Professor Regina Wagner. A special thanks to Associate Professor Geo Shacklock for his insightful comments and suggestions regarding Chapter six of the thesis. I am very grateful to Dr. Stephen Parker for reading particular chapters of the thesis and for the subsequent feedback provided. Finally, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to Professor Trevor Gale, my supervisor. His wise counsel, astute instruction and insightful assistance throughout my PhD candidature have not only been appreciated but represent a debt that can never be re-paid.

As necessary as the support, guidance and encouragement I have received along the way, this journey would not have begun without a major purpose. I am grateful to all of the students that I taught throughout my time as a public secondary school teacher for providing me with the essential inspiration and resolve required to complete this thesis.
This thesis emanates from an interest in contemporary public education policy that specifically centres on classroom teacher effectiveness and its claimed connection to enhancing the achievement and learning outcomes of disadvantaged secondary school students in the Australian state of Victoria. A hermeneutical exploration of teacher effectiveness is undertaken by focusing on research accounts of effective teaching practice that suggest direct causal correlations between student achievement and classroom instruction. A distinguishing feature of these positivist research accounts is their highly complicated and complex metricated depictions of teaching practice. Their core aim is a mathematical derivation and evaluation of teacher effectiveness and performance with a view to describe and report on the practical efficiencies—success and accomplishment—of the individual classroom teacher in terms of improvements to student learning and achievement.

The conceptual structure for the thesis is developed from the theoretical frameworks of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. An important and vital aspect in the interpretive consideration of reified and positivist accounts of teaching practice and student achievement is a critical reflection on the field of classroom teacher effectiveness research. Foucault’s theoretical framework highlights existing techniques and expression(s) of power by exclusive systems of authority. Bourdieu exposes the limits and inadequacies of positivist inquiries into practice that often overlook and ignore system imposed constraints. Foucault and Bourdieu offer and make available to the researcher a critical examination that reveals taken-for-granted assumptions of positivist research and procedures of government for the evaluation and control of teaching and learning.

A precise and detailed critical articulation and analysis of positivist classroom teacher effectiveness research is a fundamental aim of this thesis. To this extent, the thesis sought to investigate and examine the parameters that define and validate classroom teacher effectiveness research for the development of public education policy. Furthermore, in the exploration of this matter, the thesis also attempts to reveal dominant economic, social and political influences that frame the classroom teacher effectiveness agenda in the contemporary educational context. Of particular interest is the depth to which positivist depictions of classroom teaching practice and student achievement respect and think about or include broader and contingent influences on teaching and learning and the outcomes of schooling.

To analyse and examine the problem of student under achievement is to acknowledge and understand that system assessments of teaching and learning depend on constructed evaluations of practice. An approximated description of what is the case eventuates. An alternative critical dialectics of teacher effectiveness that vocalizes not only the broader possibilities of influence on student achievement but underscores and brings to light the questionable nature and character of technique(s) of enquiry displays fully the multifaceted and complex practice of teaching and learning in a post-Fordist society and economy. This particular aspect represents an important and vital finding of this thesis.
Conference publications and journal articles derived from the thesis

- Chapter two presented at the Second International Asian Conference on Education in Osaka, Japan in December 2010 and published in the conference proceedings under the title: The Political And Economic Arguments In Contemporary Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Research And Inquiry.


- Chapter six presented as A Critical Case Study Of Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Research at the European Conference on Education Research (2011) at the Freie University, Berlin, Germany and at The British Education Research Conference (2011) at the University of London, UK.


# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One – Interrogating Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Research 1  
1. Introduction 1  
1.1 A Personal/Professional Outline 1  
1.2 Theoretical Outlines: The Problem of Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Research (TER). 2  
1.3 The Political and Economic Context: The Neo-liberal Ascendancy 6  
1.4 An Empirical/Methodological Outline: Data Generation (Policy-Makers and Teachers) 8  
1.5 Limitations 11  
1.6 2. Structure of the Thesis 11

Chapter Two – The Political and Economic Argument 15  
2.1 Introduction 15  
2.1.1 Commencing Arguments 16  
2.2 Organised to Dis-Organised Capital: The Contemporary Milieux 17  
2.3 Commitments Withdrawn: Performance and Persistent Evaluation 18  
2.4 Transgurations – The New Economy 22  
2.5 Globalization 24  
2.6 Conclusion 27

Chapter Three – Teacher Effectiveness Research: Hegemonic Characterisations 29  
3.1 Introduction 29  
3.1.1 An Overview 29  
3.2 Controlling Characterisations – Discursive ‘Disciplinary’ Control 33  
3.2.1 Symbolic Order(s) of Control – a Logic of Practice 34  
3.2.2 Models of Instruction 35  
3.3 Recent Developments in Teacher Effectiveness Research 37  
3.3.1 Value-added Research 42  
3.4 Disrupting Mechanisms of Control 46  
3.4.1 Conclusion 49
| Chapter Four – Foucault: A Critical Framework | 50 |
| Introduction | 50 |
| 1. A Theory of Critique | 52 |
| 2. Governmentality | 58 |
| 3. Notions of Surveillance: The Gaze | 60 |
| Conclusion | 64 |

| Chapter Five – Bourdieu: Reproduction and a Logic of Practice | 67 |
| Introduction | 67 |
| 1. Social Reproduction | 68 |
| 2. The Science of Practice | 73 |
| Conclusion | 80 |

| Chapter Six – A Critical Case Study of Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Research | 82 |
| Introduction | 82 |
| 1. A Critical and Qualitative Methodology | 83 |
| 2. Case Study as Method | 86 |
| 3. Techniques | 89 |
| Data Generation: | 89 |
| (a) Interviews-Participants | 89 |
| (b) Documents | 92 |
| (c) Data Analysis (Critical Discourse Analysis) | 92 |
| 4. Ethical Considerations | 95 |
| (a) Informed Consent | 95 |
| (b) Confidentiality | 95 |
| (c) Protection from Harm | 96 |
| Conclusion | 96 |

| Chapter Seven – Believing in ‘What Works’ | 97 |
| Introduction | 97 |
| 1. Legitimated Practices | 98 |
| 2. Naming the Focus: Teacher Performance and Student Learning | 101 |
Chapter One – Interrogating Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Research

Introduction

This thesis is a dialectical interrogation and exploration of classroom teacher effectiveness research (hereafter referred to as TER). The central argument of the thesis is that complex positivist mathematical derivations of classroom instruction and pedagogical action cannot adequately capture and report on all aspects of teaching practice. Chapter one provides an introduction to this inquiry. It covers two broad areas. The first is a personal, theoretical, and empirical outline of the research. Secondly, the Chapter provides a descriptive representation of the thesis and a summary of the major arguments of each Chapter.

1. A Personal/Professional Outline

I come to the problem of classroom TER having worked as a public secondary school teacher for two decades and with considerable personal experience of the many systemic policy changes enacted by Australian governments (State and Federal). During this time (1989-2008), I also served on public education committees in the Australian state of Victoria that worked on aspects of teacher education, teacher development and teacher performance including school system curriculum and assessment issues. I served on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), and the Ministerial Advisory Committee for the establishment of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (MACVIT). My commitment to public education and to the students who attend public schools, has consistently centred on working towards the improvement of student academic achievement and student learning outcomes. Notwithstanding this, I also had significant professional interest in the industrial issues that affect the work and role of public school teachers. I served on the Australian Education Union (AEU-Victorian Branch) secondary sector council and state executive for a number of years during my career in public school teaching.

A specific interest of mine has been to examine aspects of classroom TER for the development of education policy. At the very heart of my interest is a concern with theoretical and ideological conceptualisations of pedagogical practice claiming knowledge of teaching and learning through empiricist abstractions and constructions of teaching. I am also interested in the political and economic considerations posed by the problem of classroom TER including contemporary technicist representations of teaching practice. My interest is to critically interrogate positivist classroom TER research for the purposes of establishing ‘what counts’, why and for whom, in mapping and thus documenting ‘effective’ classroom teaching practice. The theoretical and empirical outlines that follow reflect these purposes.
Theoretical Outlines: The Problem of Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Research (TER).

The focus of this thesis is on classroom TER, and whether a theoretical basis can be established for what may constitute effective teaching. Inquiries into the problem of classroom TER by educational researchers have tended to rely almost exclusively on positivist forms of research emphasizing a methodological approach that is overwhelmingly constituted by complex quantification and mathematical procedures. Invariably, research inquiries of this kind limit or restrict studies of classroom teacher effectiveness to particular variables; for example, curriculum and classroom environment variables or cognitive outcomes (see for example Hill, Holmes-Smith & Rowe, 1993; Rowe, 2003). This aspect of TER, which emphasizes the linear and discrete notion of research inquiry in its isolation of ‘variables’ in classroom teaching practice that are thought to contribute to the learning process, cannot, as Barrow (1984) has noted, deal with the complex nature and process of learning:

There are a number of factors that stand in the way of success in such research. Some of them are merely contingent matters such as the practical difficulty of observing large enough truly random samples, of ensuring that participants in the research do not behave uncharacteristically because of the research, and of effectively controlling some of the variables. Those sorts of problems are acknowledged by researchers, although the implications for the value of their work are not so often acknowledged. Then there are constraints that are unavoidable in the world as we know it: for example, a student or a teacher in any field study or experiment will have his particular personality and all that that entails. We cannot nullify its effects. Thirdly, there are logical constraints such as the impossibility of actually observing cause and effect. (p. 77)

Moreover, the majority of classroom TER studies emphasize in one form or another the general statement ‘other things being equal’ or ‘when adjustments or corrections are made for’ (see Rowe, 2003; Ballou, Sanders & Wright, 2004; Pianta & Hamre, 2009). However, Barrow (1984) observes that “in the classroom other things are never equal” (p. 77) and they never could be. For Barrow, the inherent difficulty and problem with any study involving the examination of effective teaching practice is the conceptual complexity involved in clearly articulating and defining the question under examination and then implementing an adequate research design that accounts for the “thousands of variables that actually are in play in a classroom setting” (1984, p. 77).

Informed by this critique, this thesis aims to critically study the problem of classroom TER. It seeks a critical examination of the positivist/objectivist idea and conception of effective teaching practice that bases much of the purely positivist teacher effectiveness researcher’s claims about effective teaching practice and student learning outcomes upon standardised tests. The basic argument of the thesis is that purely positivist methods of research do not and cannot, despite recent
claims to the contrary (see Pianta & Hamre, 2009), adequately and completely capture all teaching and learning interactions. Indeed, in posing the problem of classroom TER as a distinctive topic and subject of thought for educational research and inquiry, the importance and attention devoted to the capture and measurement of classroom instructional performance for the identification of effective teaching practice can be made. This is of significant educational relevance, particularly if one considers the contemporary political and economic contextual justifications for establishing effective teaching practice that enhances the learning outcomes of public secondary school students (see Victorian Government Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Blueprint for Government Schools; 2003, 2008). A unique and essential aspect of determining effective teaching practice in order to improve learning outcomes for individual students is a research focus that involves complex methodological procedures of inquiry and investigation predominantly centred on statistical measurement. This represents an obvious reference point for critical examination and scrutiny.

Consequently, the major research question that this thesis seeks to answer is: What counts as valid and worthwhile classroom TER for the development of public education policy? In the exploration of this question, the thesis also attempts to answer related questions that include: a) What dominant economic, social and political influences frame the classroom teacher effectiveness agenda in the contemporary educational context? b) To what extent does researcher bias influence contemporary classroom TER? and c) To what extent has an account been given in TER of context, of schools or otherwise?

Justification of classroom TER as a problem for examination and analysis rests on the contemporary prominence given to it as a core and indispensable feature of teaching and learning. The specific details of this prominence are quite complex and involved, but generally centre upon the following three aspects.

First is the importance attached to the learning outcomes of students and student academic achievement. This aspect has added significance in contemporary times, whereby a specific concern with the academic achievement and learning outcomes of public secondary school students, and especially those deemed to be ‘underperforming’ in literacy and numeracy is under constant scrutiny and evaluation and has been for some time (see Rowe, 2003). The reasons for this are many and varied, and include the historical, political and economic. Generally, the relevance and importance of the individual classroom teacher practitioner in ‘making a difference’ to individual student learning and student academic achievement is acknowledged (Gamoran, Marks & Newmann, 1996; Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000; Correnti, Miller & Rowan, 2002). Yet, a quite vocal and distinct educational debate, one that positions the individual public secondary school teacher as the major differentiating variable and factor in academic achievement and individual student learning is emerging:
Placing validated, standardized observational assessment of teachers’ classroom instruction and interactions more squarely in the realm of large-scale education science (e.g., value-added studies, studies of policy and accountability frameworks, and national survey-like studies such as the Early Childhood Longitudinal Program or the National Assessment of Educational Progress) and in protocols evaluating the impacts of teacher education could have tremendous downstream consequences in terms of traction on questions that vex the field. (Pianta & Hamre, 2009, p. 109)

This distinctive and well-articulated debate, an example of which is highlighted above, tends to emphasize the decisive and crucial impact on student learning and academic achievement of individual classroom teaching practice, and it diminishes the relevance and impact of student attitudes to schooling, behaviours and experiences of schooling and obvious family background characteristics. This represents a marked departure from studies such as those by Coleman (1966) and Jencks (1967), whose research illustrated the importance of family background and related ‘social factors’ in the consideration of schooling and student learning outcomes. Subsequent and recent studies such as that by Rothman and McMillan (2003), Teese and Polesel (2003) and Mills and Gale (2010) appear to support this work by earlier researchers, (eg: Coleman, Jencks) noting in particular, the “persistent link between socio-economic status and school achievement” (Rothman & McMillan, 2003, p. 35). Despite this research, classroom TER focuses attention on individual classroom teaching practice and the ‘efforts’ of the individual public secondary school classroom teacher practitioner rather than specifically scrutinizing to any great and significant extent contextual influences that may impact upon academic achievement and individual student learning.

Second, in the analysis and examination of the problem of classroom TER and its particular relevance in ‘raising’ academic achievement and student learning outcomes, is the issue of intelligibility. The significance of this issue centres on the methodological principles of positivist research specific to the problem of classroom TER. Its importance and relevance points towards an imposed “economism” (Foucault, 2003, p. 13) of, in the first instance, methodological practice, often characterised by intractable and difficult ‘techniques’ of inquiry utilising mathematical formats of description followed by a seemingly universalist and hence indisputable acceptance beyond doubt of research outcomes. This particular feature of intelligibility is made more significant by Government and education policy-maker subscription and consecration with obvious accountability implications for the teaching workforce. The acclaimed and alleged academic superiority of objective and positivist classroom TER in possessing the ability to harden and so make obvious the distinction between ‘effective’ classroom teaching practice and ‘ordinary’, typical or underperforming teaching practice, is a form of system control. Positivist depictions of classroom teaching practice point to a series of “dominating frameworks” (Said, 1978, p. 40) which generally contain and represent practice in an objectified form, seemingly free and unimpeded by external influences and/or constraints. This “proper study” (Said, 1978, p. 45) of individual classroom teaching practice concerned
with a “science of the concrete” (Levi-Strauss, 1967, p. 16), is a powerful and articulate infusion of the positivist ‘scientific process’ into the classroom. It is the positivist classroom teacher effectiveness researcher through supplantation and more generally, characterisations and animations of classroom teaching practice considered ‘effective’ in enhancing and raising individual student learning outcomes and academic achievement, that aims to articulate and convey what is achievable. This correction, usually textual, of “raw reality” (Said, 1978, p. 67), schematizes the classroom thus changing it into an objectivated region and territory. This leaves the individual teacher isolated and rootless and the object of observation and contest.

The third detail of prominence involves the relevance and importance of education, first to a nation’s general sense of economic and social well-being, and secondly, to the economic and social well-being of individuals. The decimation of many established industries and modes of employment experienced by and in communities has led to an uncertain employment outlook in a post-Fordist world (Lash & Urry, 1987; Harvey, 1990; Ball, 2006). The current and contemporary economic order still based upon capital production and accumulation, but now accompanied by the application of stricter and more aggressively rational modes of economic theory, implies a paramount concern for economic efficiency and effectiveness. The broader argument that is involved in the matter of education and its relevance and importance to economic and social well-being lies in the skill-base and thus productive capacity of an individual (see Pusey, 1991; Thurow, 1996; Lingard, 2000). For example, the current Australian government workforce development strategy states:

Australia requires a highly skilled population to maintain and improve our economic position in the face of increasing global competition, and to have the skills to adapt to the introduction of new technology and rapid change. International and Australian research indicates that to lift productivity we need a deeper level of skills than currently exists in the Australian labour market to lift productivity. We need a workforce in which more people have skills, but also multiple and higher level skills and qualifications. Deepening skills across all occupations is crucial to achieving long-term productivity growth. It also reflects the recent trend for jobs to become more complex and the consequent increased demand for higher level skills. This trend is projected to continue regardless of whether we experience strong or weak economic growth in the future. (Australian Workforce Futures. A National Workforce Development Strategy, 2010, pp. 1-2)

It is a strategy totally committed to the productive capacity of individuals for the continued sustenance and support of economic growth.

The formation then of a critical inquiry into the problem of classroom TER is composed of:

1. a concern centred on the link, often expressed ‘causally’ and in a linear and ‘discrete’ fashion using highly complex and contestable metricated
systems of evaluation between individual classroom teaching practice, student learning and academic achievement;

2. the sanctified and, in most instances, intrinsically complex and unintelligible methodology and process of positivist classroom TER that discursively records and documents incarnations of ‘effective’ classroom teaching practice for improved and enhanced learning outcomes and academic achievement by individual students and,

3. consideration of contextual influences, largely political and economic expressed by an adherence to neo-liberal and neo-conservative modes of thought and operation that encroach and infringe upon the internal space– classroom– of the individual teacher practitioner.

Points 1 and 2 above indicate the contestable nature of TER. Point 3 underscores the relevance of context, an understated facet of most TER. In this thesis, particular attention will be given to the third aspect, contextual influences. It forms a pivotal component in understanding educational practice and individual classroom teaching in a rapidly and increasingly changing post-Fordist world. Consequently, in order to gather a preliminary understanding of its importance to this study, I foreground its theoretical relevance by mentioning important considerations that are pertinent to the problem of classroom TER.

The Political and Economic Context: The Neo-liberal Ascendancy

A significant component of this thesis considers the development of education policy within a contemporary political and economic context. Inevitably, political and economic considerations tend to dominate the direction of education. Harman (1974) for example argues that political factors influence education policy as a consequence of government control. Notwithstanding the rise of ‘market thinking’ in education accompanied by a view of schools as “annexes of industry and commerce” (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998, p. 11) reflects an intensification of economic matters and their application to schools and education. The rise of neo-classic and neo-liberal forms of economic theory and practice during the 1980’s and 1990’s in Australia heralded a greater sense of political and corporate involvement in educational matters, particularly in terms of the development and implementation of public education policy. The political and economic context for this move was the “globalisation of the economy within a post-Keynesian framework” (Lingard, 2000, p. 29) reflected through the “dominance of market liberal ideology which witnessed a restructured managerialist, competitive performative state apparatus, along with the ministerialisation of policy production” (Lingard, 2000, p. 29). There are two significant aspects to this move. The first and most significant aspect that also acts as the centrepiece of this shift was the “economic significance of education in producing the types of workers required in a globalised post-Fordist economy” (Lingard, 2000, p. 27). The second aspect involves a concern with “outputs and outcomes” (Lingard, 2000, p. 30) as opposed to inputs thus “emphasizing efficiency and effectiveness” (Lingard, 2000, p. 30).
The contemporary political project firmly centred on neo-classical and neo-liberal forms of government is well documented by Peters (2002). Many of its features include: the extension of economic rationality as a basis for the political; a revival of the rational, self-interested, utility-maximizing subject of classical economics; the release of the techniques and rationality of business, including the commercial and the private into the established public services and operations of the state. Neo-liberalism, encompassing neo-liberal political, economic and management theory, has steadily influenced public education policy, particularly centred on an economic reform-oriented state polity. A new employment or work culture based upon innovation and heightened productivity reflects the notion of competitive advantage. The post-Fordist worker operating in an interconnected global economy, must be work ready, highly motivated, highly skilled, capable and committed with an understanding of the quick responses needed in a modern economy. Gale and Densmore (2003) capture the rethinking and reworking this implies for education, with particular reference to the schooling system and the economy. Its specific characteristics include: stimulating competition among schools to break the public school ‘monopoly’, evoking notions of ‘choice’, which implies that problems of academic achievement can be solved by establishing competition for students, and increasing parental choice over what and where children learn. The underlying drivers of this change are government strategies aimed at reforming schools. The reform agenda uses “discourse informed by business and market ideologies” the characteristics of which incorporate a “customer-oriented ethos” with decisions based largely upon efficiency, cost-effectiveness and a “competitive edge or advantage” (Gale & Densmore, 2003, p. 23). Public education policy develops an economic perspective, and schools and teachers develop the characteristics of an education market including enhanced and more intense performance measures and outcomes.

Neo-liberalism has also heralded the arrival of “new managerialism” (Newman & Clarke, 1994, p. 15) in public schooling systems. A significant feature of its input into the schooling system rests on the implementation of organisational change. Conforming to the ways and methods of an “enterprise culture” (Peters, 2005, p. 123) is representative of new managerialism and promotes what Peters (2005) refers to as a “new prudentialism in education” (p. 123) that addresses the “entrepreneurial self” (p. 123). In its broadest sense it “represents a shift away from a rights-based welfare model of the citizen to a citizen-consumer model (based on the rejuvenation of homo economicus), where individuals calculate the risks and invest in themselves at critical points in the life cycle” (Peters, 2005, p. 123). The dominant neo-liberal and neo-conservative political and economic order expressed in particular through a strong belief in a return to ‘educational standards’ and a common culture has, at its very centre, an overarching ideological commitment that matches educational objectives with the aims and goals of economic and social welfare imperatives. It has popularised the ‘virtues’ of the free-market, espoused the benefits of competitive structures, particularly in schools and school systems, diminished government responsibility in the area of social needs and has, over time, gradually lowered “people’s expectations for economic security” (Marshall, 2000, p. 230). Olssen (1996) perhaps puts it best when he states that neo-liberalism:
has come to represent a positive conception of the state’s role in creating the appropriate market by providing the conditions, laws and institutions necessary for its operation. In classical liberalism, the individual is characterized as having an autonomous human nature and can practice freedom. In neo-liberalism the state seeks to create an individual who is an enterprising and competitive entrepreneur. (p. 340)

Moreover, the neo-liberal order has ushered in “new forms of vigilance, surveillance, performance appraisal and of forms of control generally” (Olssen, 1996, p. 340). In short, it represents a ‘rightist’ shift in thinking. Chapter two expands on many of these aspects about the neo-liberal ascendancy and the influence of market thinking in education.

An Empirical/Methodological Outline: Data Generation (Policy-Makers and Teachers)

Research involves two important features. First, it focuses on what is worth knowing. Second, it converges on establishing how something can be known. The research process is composed of several characteristics that outline its framework. Crotty (1998) suggests that the research process includes:

- **Methods**: the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis.
- **Methodology**: the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes.
- **Theoretical perspective**: the philosophical stance forming the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria.
- **Epistemology**: the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology. (p. 3)

The aim in research is to develop understanding.

Informed by this account, initial planning for the interpretive analysis and critical examination of classroom TER for this thesis, centred on an exploration of the conceptualisation of classroom teacher effectiveness by key ‘actors’ or ‘agents’ in the field of education, namely education policy-makers (category one) and public secondary school teachers (category two). The intention, in the initial stages of the investigation, was to consider the problem of classroom TER and its conceptualisation from the perspective of these two key categories. Chapter six, the Methodology Chapter, outlines the processes for identifying education policy-makers. Here, I deal with category two, public secondary school teachers, and provide an explanation of their non-participation in the research investigation.
In the initial research design, teachers were to be chosen based upon (i) employment in the public school system and (ii) having been a teacher of final year students in the area of Literacy/Humanities (eg: English, Literature, Philosophy, etc.) or Numeracy/Science/Mathematics (eg: Chemistry, Maths, etc). They were also to be chosen from among those with at least five years teaching experience, to encompass the level of experience necessary in order to fully engage with the research themes raised during the interview process. Only public schools in metropolitan Melbourne were selected given restrictions on the researcher’s opportunity to access such data. In addition, the research was limited to the Australian state of Victoria. The Victorian Government’s Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Blueprint for Government Schools (2003, 2008), outlines the specific policy direction for education in the state of Victoria. It is of significance because it sketches out and constructs arguments for enhancing student achievement on the basis of TER. Public schools and final year public school teachers were the designated target group for two reasons.

1. A great deal of the classroom teacher effectiveness literature in terms of collected data is at the elementary school level or early secondary school level. There is a significant absence of available collated data in terms of classroom teacher effectiveness and so called high stakes testing at the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) level.

2. The majority of Australian students are educated in public schools and recent educational debates have targeted literacy/numeracy levels of students in government schools linking literacy/numeracy outcomes in terms of individual student achievement and individual classroom teacher effectiveness.

The invitation to teacher participants was approached by letter to the school Principal explaining the research and seeking the involvement of the school and interested teachers in the research. In particular, the letter outlined the research and sought the involvement of teachers who were prepared to:

1. Complete a classroom teacher effectiveness questionnaire which listed the characteristics of effective teaching according to selected classroom teacher effectiveness literature.

2. Be observed during the delivery of two lessons.

3. Be interviewed at the end of the second lesson regarding aspects of the classroom teacher effectiveness questionnaire and the level to which the characteristics of effective teaching may have been met.

4. Be interviewed on aspects of their results obtained in high stakes testing at the final year level.
Each interview was to occur after observation of the first lesson or in conjunction with the interview at the end of the second classroom observation. The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) divides schools into regions. There are four regions in Melbourne. Schools are further categorised according to ‘Like School Group’. This represents a government designated category for a school based upon a student’s family occupation (sfo). Schools with a high number of socio-economically ‘disadvantaged’ students have a different sfo to those schools with a high number of socio-economically ‘advantaged’ students. The intention was to identify two schools from each region; one with a high number of socio-economically disadvantaged students and one with a high-number of socio-economically advantaged students. This process identified eight schools; four from each particular sfo category. Two teachers were then to be selected from each school.

In following through with this plan, time constraints became an issue. Arranging suitable times to meet with teachers and to observe those teachers actually teaching students in classrooms proved very problematic and it was decided to limit the letters of invitation to two DEECD regions. The Western and Eastern regions of metropolitan Melbourne were chosen, three schools in particular. I followed up letters of invitation with telephone calls to the selected schools. One of the schools from the Western region of Melbourne declined to participate. The principal of this school mentioned the letter and my research at a staff meeting but teachers did not express enough interest in the research. Only one of the chosen schools in the Western region initially offered to participate. The principal of a large inner Western metropolitan co-educational secondary college contacted me by telephone and then follow-up email and gave me the names of two teachers who had shown some interest in participating in my research. The chosen classroom teachers had the following backgrounds; a literacy (English) and numeracy/science (Chemistry) teacher of final year students. Arranging a time to meet was very problematic. A number of telephone calls were made to the interested teachers and email messages sent. There were no forthcoming responses. Direct contact was also made with chosen schools in the Eastern region via follow up telephone calls to principals. None of the schools chosen from the Eastern region showed interest in participating in the research. A decision was made after consultation with my University supervisor to proceed with my research based upon interviews with chosen policy participants. This led to the non-participation of any classroom teacher practitioners in my research. Hence, only policy-participant (category one) responses are considered for data analysis in Chapters seven and eight of the thesis.

Limitations

This study is small-scale, interview-based and involves the critical analysis and interpretation of particular forms of classroom TER for the development of public education policy. It did not set out or aim to evaluate and assess teacher performance, although it did seek an alternative analytical and critical approach to the problem of classroom TER and how it is conceptualised and used to inform public education policy.
Inevitably, there are limitations with any research methodology. This study uses qualitative research that is discursive in character, informed by a theoretical perspective based on critical theory, specifically as mounted by the Frankfurt School (see Crotty, 1998). There are no observations of classroom teacher practitioners and the study does not use surveys or make extensive statistical inspections of collated data on teacher performance. The study does not use an algorithmic computational calculus. To this extent, the thesis is markedly different from the majority of TER.

2. Structure of the Thesis

The argument of this thesis begins in Chapter two. The ascendant neo-liberal political and economic order is identified as having a dominant hold over Australian schooling. Chapter two delves into the systemic program of change that defines and characterises contemporary public education policy-making interests and concerns. It begins by highlighting the shift towards a free-market agenda in Australian schooling. This represents the contemporary and powerful dynamic in public education. The economy largely delineated by post-Fordist representations and configurations of production is operationalised and made viable through transfigured conversions of accumulation and productive capacity. The performative place and role of classroom teachers and schools has a unique and important distinctive functional elicitation in this new world. Teaching practice and pedagogical action are isolated for scrutiny and evaluation. All of these matters are part of a larger process of globalised change. A key feature of this change is the altered nature of forms of governance that operate under a globalised world order. Hence, Chapter two considers the issue of globalisation and its relevance to the problem of classroom teacher effectiveness. This part of the Chapter highlights the activist and intrusive nature of post-Fordist forms of governance and control as a lead into the Chapter that follows.

Critical examination of classroom TER begins in Chapter three. There are two specific aims of the Chapter. First is the categorisation of TER using the theoretical frameworks of Foucault and Bourdieu. The relevance of these theorists to this study is twofold. The Foucauldian analysis highlights the manifestation of power exerted and acting on the classroom teacher by surveillance systems of evaluative authority. The Bourdieuan component of the analysis exposes inadequacies and limitations in the positivist research method for the evaluation of teaching practice. The second aim of the Chapter highlights the scientific conceptualisation of TER in terms of the inception of ‘scientific models’ of classroom instructional practice. The Chapter begins by providing an overview of the field of TER as a field of interest in the broader field of education. The chapter then considers the controlling characteristics of TER expressed through models of classroom instruction, before examining the contemporary relevance of a specific form of TER, value-added research.

Chapter four defends the application of a Foucauldian theoretical framework to the problem under consideration. The application of Foucault’s theory of critique problematizes the purely
positivist/objectivist conception and manifestation of classroom TER. Foucault’s critical method with its capacity to challenge and problematize accepted ‘doctrine’ masquerading as ‘truth’ focuses attention on established and dominant political and governmental practices that impinge upon the classroom teacher practitioner. It also does the same to commanding and powerful modes of research that often imply and allegedly demonstrate epistemological dominance through silent manipulations of context, a key feature of the empiricist tradition in education research. In other words, Foucault’s theory of critique can help one trace and map existent and dominant power relations that are exerted upon the classroom teacher practitioner. Foucault’s idea of governmentality traces the impact of ‘economy’ or regularized systematization upon political practice illustrating that the art of government emphasizes a specific form of rationality that is centred on the regulatory control of populations. The critical theoretical framework of Foucault, encompassing his notions of governmentality, surveillance and ‘regimes of truth’ is of particular relevance to a critical examination of TER as it illustrates how contemporary neo-liberal and neo-conservative political practice through an adherence to enhanced levels of performance and accountability, documents and objects student learning, student achievement and classroom teaching practice. These specific and central features of governmentality apply to educational practice.

In Chapter five, a fundamental facet of significance to the thesis is raised. This is the examination and consideration of practice(s) of technological observation. The Chapter, in broad outline, considers Bourdieu’s notions of reproduction and the logic and science of practice. The positivist research method manifestly draws upon its own particular set of established processes and beliefs that quite often impose limits or controls on the actual object of inquiry. The “epistemological privilege of the observer” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 14) that the positivist classroom teacher effectiveness researcher enjoys is based upon the inherent and scholarly distance set between themselves as observer and those under observation. Definitions of classroom teaching practice once enunciated, are designed to reside beyond countervailing arguments that may act to decipher complex and detailed aspects of teaching practice and educational action that, in the first instance, cannot be easily identified. Hence, Chapter five seeks to focus the critical analysis and examination of classroom teacher effectiveness towards and onto the specific functional techniques of positivist research method. The subsequent measurement and evaluation of classroom instruction that is based on these techniques is then exposed for contestation and dispute. This represents an important and core feature of the thesis as it is the reproductive mechanisms inherent in educational practice and the contemporary work of schooling that are also exposed.

In Chapter six I discuss and outline the methodology that underpins the theoretical orientation of my thesis. The Chapter also provides an account of the techniques used to analyse and examine the data generated by the interviews of policy participants. In this chapter I make the case for a critical interpretive examination and analysis of classroom TER as a bounded case for study.
I start by canvassing epistemological considerations and argue that the thesis adopts a critical constructionist theory of knowledge as its theoretical framework. I then move to a discussion of the specific technique used to generate data for the thesis before considering details of the data analysis process. It is in this section of Chapter six that I describe the utilisation of critical discourse analysis as the major technique used for the process of data analysis in the thesis.

Chapter seven attempts to answer the major research question of the thesis ‘What counts as valid and worthwhile classroom teacher effectiveness research for the development of public education policy?’ I explore policy participant belief and acceptance of a particular kind of evidence-based education research for the development of public education policy. To this extent, the Chapter grapples with major public education policy determinations of ‘what works’ in terms of student achievement for the period 2003-2010 in the Australian state of Victoria. The Chapter begins with a discussion of education research as a field of practice, and illustrates the influence that TER has for the development of public education policy with respect to student achievement. Further, I consider the themes that define and characterise the importance and role of positivist classroom TER as a legitimised form of inquiry for the development of public education policy. The legitimisation afforded to TER is bounded by the specific focus on teacher performance and student learning outcomes.

Chapter eight analyses and examines policy participant belief in individual classroom teacher practitioners ‘making the difference’ to student learning and academic achievement. The specific role and instructional performance of the individual classroom teacher in ‘making the difference’ is exposed as the defining thematic feature. As part of this discussion, I identify three unique yet interrelated versions of the ‘making the difference’ theme. First I discuss and consider the teacher and then elaborate on the theme of school context and its specific role for the enhancement of individual student learning outcomes. These form the first two versions. I then consider a third take on ‘making the difference’ which suggests that neither schools nor individual teachers make a significant difference in terms of enhancing student achievement.

Chapter nine concludes the thesis. The main argument of the thesis is summarised by stating the significance of the research. The Chapter takes a broad view of the research and names the contribution of the thesis as a whole to the field of classroom TER. It addresses the research questions of the thesis in two ways by signifying two delineating facets for the effective critique of TER. First, it canvasses the specific details of what actually counts as valid and worthwhile TER thus dealing with the notion of validity. Second, the chapter identifies and subsequently names the absent component(s) of positivist TER specifically, aspects of social justice.

In the Chapter that follows this introduction, Chapter two, I begin the critical interrogation of classroom TER by first and foremost focusing on significant and defining aspects of political and economic formations. It is important to recognise and understand that the contemporary policy-making relevance of effective teaching practice, notwithstanding its administrative and
bureaucratic dominance as an instrument of measurement, has a contextual basis. The home primarily of what in short is a technocratic response to shifts in political, economic and social change which are also historically situated, resides in forms of governance. The particular and discrete governmental foundations of control that is itself a necessary if not vital aim of contemporary governance, are on display through trans-generative processes active in the main, within the post-Fordist economy, and a new approach to production.
Chapter Two – The Political and Economic Argument

Introduction

In this Chapter I outline the specific political and economic parameters that influence contemporary public education in Australia and most other OECD nations. The Chapter anchors the debate about classroom teaching practice and classroom TER within these parameters. In doing this, it implies that the concern and focus on classroom TER by policy-makers is not solely an education issue. It also has a political and economic dimension in that education can also be viewed as an instrument of economic policy. That is, education does not simply respond to the political and economic—it is also involved in doing the work of the economic and political. Political and economic considerations invariably force governments to act, thus exerting influence over educational matters including classroom teaching practice. To this extent, public education policy-making must grapple with prevailing political and economic considerations in so far as they involve, require and desire an educational response.

There are four parts that comprise this Chapter. Part one canvasses the main contextual arguments involved in clearly identifying the political and economic forces that guide and control public education. This affects the work of schooling including classroom teaching practice. The major argument raised in part one of this Chapter is the ‘modern’ prioritisation given to change and disorder. In quite specific terms, this part of the Chapter provides the economic argument that is the vital and important feature that propels change and transformation in terms that affects public education.

The implicit facilitation of large-scale economic change occurs via the political process. The second part of Chapter two considers the major political imperative that has defined significant economic transformation and change in recent times. This imperative is described for the purposes of this study as the movement towards State sanctioned dislocation and removal involving withdrawal from economic provisions and commitments that once drew upon State-based involvement. The contemporary and prevailing economic and political State sanctioned design and plan of action recommends and provides for market driven approaches including enhanced economic competition. The performative component of classroom teaching practice and its subsequent evaluation for systemic compliance is symptomatic of this contemporary mode of existence.

The third part of the Chapter discusses the core aspects of post-Fordist productive capacity in terms of preparation and ‘job-readiness’. The new post-Fordist work order privileges demonstrative and performative capacity. To this extent, it is a skills-based new world, and education and training hold a distinctive and pre-eminent position. Classroom teaching practice is crucial for it directly links to individual student skill development.
Finally part four of the Chapter completes the argument by locating the apparent constant of change and dislocation within the reference point of globalization. The major point emphasized here relates to control brought about by economic and political change. If one accepts the political and economic conditions portrayed at the start of this Chapter that have resulted in significant change and capital disorganization, the control and management or, in other words, governance of public education, is paramount. In the current context, it is not surprising that education policy-making explicitly targets and emphasizes classroom TER and the evaluation of individual classroom teaching.

1. Commencing Arguments

The capitalist or bourgeois manifestation of society is centred on “intense change” (Lash & Urry, 1987, p. 1). Everything becomes unstable and remains in impermanent modes or states of regular and patterned adjustment. Indeed, according to Marx and Engels (1930), the revolutionary mechanism in productive capacity that over time has brought about significant changes to the expropriation and valorization of labour, transforms relationships. An essential and primary feature of the intense change that clarifies and illustrates developments in ‘modernity’, is the bourgeois ascendancy in forms of life and existence. Indeed, the bourgeois driven mode of progress is defined, if one takes the Marxian interpretation of social development, as radical and revolutionary propulsion of change never before experienced by humanity.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without incessantly revolutionising the instruments of production; and, consequently, the relations of production; and, therefore, the totality of social relations. Conversely, for all earlier industrial classes, the preservation of the old methods of production was the first condition of existence. That which characterises the bourgeois epoch in contradistinction to all others is a continuous transformation of production, a perpetual disturbance of social conditions, everlasting insecurity and movement. All stable and stereotyped relations, with their attendant train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, and the newly formed becomes obsolete before it can petrify. All that has been regarded as solid, crumbles into fragments; all that was looked upon as holy, is profaned; at long last, people are compelled to gaze open-eyed at their position in life and their social relations. (Marx & Engels, 1930, p. 29)

In recent times, more sophisticated and complex forces and capacities of production eventuate as a result. Unique to this aspect of social development is altered arrangements of forms of control and management.

People’s lives are thus controlled by a revolutionary bourgeois class-by a class with vested interest in change, crisis and chaos. The citizen in this modern era must learn not to long nostalgically for the xed, fast-frozen relationships of the real or
fantasized past, but to delight in mobility, to thrive on renewal, to look forward to future developments in their conditions of life. As a world of change, it is a world which swings wildly out of control, menacing and destructive. The bourgeoisie thus moves within a profoundly tragic orbit. It has unleashed tremendous powers, but these powers are destructive as well as constructive, producing as well as resolving conflicts. Within this uncontrollable maelstrom the temporal and spatial structuring of people’s lives are continuously transformed. (Lash & Urry, 1987, p. 2)

The contemporary new world, characterised by ceaseless change with the individual the centre and apex of renewal is all-encompassing. Transformation is crucial for it is linked to survival and economic prosperity. The decisive paradigmatic shift from organised to disorganised capital acts as the guiding pre-eminent principle of productive existence (Lyotard, 1979; OECD, 1989; Lingard, 2000). Schools, including the work and role of teachers, are also affected by the constant of change, but we need to delve deeper into its particular framework and constitution before considering it specifically in terms of TER.

Organised to Dis-Organised Capital: The Contemporary Milieux

The basis of organised capital production, the long established mode of productive exchange incorporates inter-related features (see Lash & Urry, 1987). These features are characterised and suggestive of clear and structured relations of capital that now no longer dominate. Indeed, the post-Fordist shift in productive exchange is based on disorganised modes of productive capacities that include non-uniform multi-dimensional individual abilities and talents for productive interaction and application.

Subsequently, the representative capitalist derivation of disorganisation has a conceptual but also tangible and real basis. Its affirmation in particular and individual western countries is somewhat different; nevertheless, prominent factors adhere to similar features and aspects (see Lash & Urry, 1987). Some of these include:

1. The growth of a world market combined with the increasing scale of industrial, banking and commercial enterprises ... From the point of view of national markets there has been an effective de-concentration of capital.

2. The continued expansion of the number of white-collar workers and particularly of a distinctive service class (of managers, professionals, educators, scientists, etc.), which is an effect of organized capitalism, becomes an increasingly significant element which then disorganizes modern capitalism. This results from the development of an educationally based stratification system which fosters individual achievement and mobility and the growth of new ‘social movements’ (students’, antinuclear, ecological and women’s movements, etc.) which increasingly draw energy and personnel away from class politics.
3. Decline in the absolute and relative size of the core working class, that is, of manual workers in the manufacturing industry, as economies are de-industrialized. (Lash & Urry, 1987, pp. 5-7)

Disordered forms of capitalism signify economically disaggregated conversion. Cultural and sociological features sustain and propel it forward. But its overall and foundational standpoint is built upon the productive capacities and features of capitalism without which it cannot eventuate. Education is drawn into and cannot escape this maelstrom. On the contrary, education is not only a key part of this new world; it is one of the major facilitators of its existence and sustenance. Education through an articulated conscripted attachment to a provisionally enacted form of practical interaction produces desired outcomes deemed necessary and vital to the new world configuration. To comprehensively sense and grasp the relevance of education in this trans-guration requires the elaborate discursive outline of the pervasive political and economic influence that has dominated modern contemporary times. It is also to specifically focus on schools and their particular relevance and importance to the argument within this study.

2. Commitments Withdrawn: Performance and Persistent Evaluation

The “advanced” (Rose, 1996, p. 40) or neo-liberal political program is the major change in the “ideological environment of Australian schools” (Connell, 2002, p. 323). Its specific focus is cast in terms of corrective intervention and redirection with a capacity to do something about a “practicable object” (O’Malley, 1996, p. 193), for example, re-formulation of schooling practice away from the “limitations of the classical welfare state” (Connell, 2002, p. 323). This new conceptualisation, incorporating technologies of measurement and surveillance “of which the Panopticon and insurance are examples” (O’Malley, 1996, p. 192), reflects programs of reform that have shifted key and core “coordination functions of nation-societies away from states and bureaucracies to economies and markets” (Pusey, 1991, p. 3). The “trend line of change and rationalisation” (Pusey, 1991, p. 3) is reconceptualised into a political program and process of strategic control that is justified in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

A core feature of this new shift and formulation of schooling practice within Australia is the political and economic response to a sense of crisis. Its manifestation expressed in terms of “ungovernable democracies and of overloaded states” (Pusey, 1991, p. 3) is preceded by core negative descriptions of developed economies, the emphasis of which is centred on conditions of “directionless consensus and pluralistic stagnation” (Pusey, 1991, p. 17). A dominant free market orientation imbibed by the dynamics of reforming economic rationalisations and “systems of logic” (Pusey, 1991, p. 11) provides a framework and base upon which public education policy determinations are made and enacted. The economic focus of this new market orientation advocated on grounds that exclusively presumes “system integration in which the burden of co-ordination is passed from the inferior medium of co-ordination of state bureaucracy to the supposedly better one of the economy” (Pusey, 1991, p. 18) in iterates public education policy development and enactment. In Australia it has resulted in, as Connell (2002) states:
the prioritization of ‘training’ over education, the partial privatization of universities, the increased subsidizing of private schools as a half-step towards vouchers, the continuing attempts to turn public schools into enterprises and principals into entrepreneurs, the invasion of public education by corporate advertising, the corporatization and fragmentation of Technical and Further Education (TAFE), the shift of research funding towards marketable products and processes, the adoption of business management practices in public education, and the ‘outsourcing’ of educational research and development. (p. 323)

This sought after rise of a free and unfettered market agenda as a “contemporary technique of rule” (O’Malley, 1996, p. 194) which “reinstates the morally-responsible individual” (O’Malley, 1996, p. 194) also re-asserts individual initiative and risk-taking. It has re-cast pedagogic action and the work of schooling that for classroom teachers re-ects a personal performative and individual representation of jurisdictional administration and management.

Fundamental to the current reform of public education is a system of self-management articulated in terms of a “new culture of schooling” (Ball, 1994, p. 65), one that prioritizes “commodification and output indicators” (Ball, 1994, p. 65). Local school management allegedly free of the burdens of systemic constraint, are encouraged and empowered pursuing enterprising and innovative agendas for change. An indispensable and representative development of self-management based on the “illusion of autonomy and flexibility” (Ball, 1994, p. 66) and facilitated by an adherence to free market principles of administration, results in what is termed “steering at a distance” (Ball, 1994, p. 66). As a disciplinary practice, it removes and re-locates authorial power away from those with an immediate and actual stake in education: classroom teachers, students and parents. Yet, paradoxically, it has resulted in the heightened and acute centralisation and convergence of authorial scrutiny onto those most exposed to its unequal excesses: classroom teachers and public school students.

The managerial conduit through which one can then map the “preferred teacher” (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998, p. 107) is a disciplinary process of exchange through forms of control that steers pedagogical action towards market imperatives and exemplars. Important characteristics include approaches that emphasize variety and responsiveness to market demands. The standardisation and normalisation of teacher’s work and classroom practice becomes a function of curriculum, the market and management approaches. The stratification experienced by the classroom teacher practitioner across these domains has invariably resulted in their objectified and commodified formation. The teacher becomes a deliverer, tester, technician, commodity-producer, performer, entrepreneur that is a resource and a cost and remains accountable (see Ball, 1994).

Indeed, the process of reform in public education has elevated management of pedagogic practice and the work of schooling so that it becomes a necessary function of exchange. Management becomes “an end in itself” (Ball, 1994, p. 71). The reformulation of public education so that it conforms to a free-market ideological outlook provides a mechanism through which delivery of key and dominant
system outcomes can be attained. It “ties classroom practice, student performance, teacher appraisal, school recruitment and resource allocation into a single tight bundle of planning and surveillance” (Ball, 1994, p. 71). Classroom teaching practice is re-made and a good teacher/bad teacher dichotomy prevails. Significant differences in interest between those that manage and those that are managed are unavoidable, notwithstanding policy document statements to the contrary:

We will engage the workforce in professional learning as part of an overall approach to service improvement. Leadership will be a major focus, as we know it is a major driver of improved performance. People must be developed and supported from the moment they choose careers in learning and development. (Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Blueprint for Government Schools, 2008, p. 33)

This social re-adjustment for those involved in the work of schooling defines the reform process. “Self-management is the panopticon of modern educational organization” (Ball, 1994, p. 72) and power exerted through subtle means is control at a distance despite sentiments of engagement and professional collegiality.

The idealization and trumpeting of “new freedoms and possibilities of devolution and school-based management” (Ball, 1994, p. 72) overlays distance and downplays control and steering. It occurs within a systemic nexus between “flexibility and constraint, autonomy and response” (Ball, 1994, p. 72). A devolved educational environment incorporating technologies of policy legitimization and regulation centralize the performativity of teacher pedagogic action. The “ideological co-optation of the moral and ethical consciousness” (Smyth, J., Dow, A., Hattam, R., Reid, A. & Shacklock, G., 2000, p. 86) of teachers where they are re-skilled and re-instructed to meet the demands of education consumers in a free market re-focus classroom teaching practice. Market responsiveness as a guiding principle behind the performative classroom teacher practitioner signifies school based self-management.

Furthermore, the advanced neo-liberal “need for enhanced accountability” (Smyth, 2006, p. 302) has occurred against a background of what Smyth (2006) terms “enduring myths” (p. 302), namely:

1. That we have a crisis in schools, attributable to schools, teachers, and teacher education.

2. That the way of fixing these alleged problems is by cutting schools and higher education institutions loose from a public education system and allowing them to be disciplined by ‘market forces’.

3. Furthermore, that the way of improving ‘quality’ in education is by requiring close adherence to arbitrarily determined standards and targets, and ensuring compliance through forms of prescribed accountability.
4. That the language, rhetoric, models and modes of thought of the business sector are preferable and more appropriate to anything that can be developed by schools, students, teachers or teacher educators.

5. That the role of parents is that of judicious consumers exercising ‘choice’ of school that provides the best deal for them and their children, rather than active citizens interested in a system of education that is in the interests of everyone’s children, not just those most adept at working the system. (Smyth, 2006, pp. 302-303)

Similarly, Gale (2006) advances four core and essential neo-liberal arguments as markers of a distinctive “politics of schooling” (p. 99) and accountability discourse within Australia. They are:

1. The curriculum has passed its use by-date.

2. Our students just don’t measure up.

3. Schools are wasting opportunities.

4. It’s the teachers who are to blame. (Gale, 2006, pp. 3-5)

Systemic conformity and methods of compliance bracketed and cushioned by accountability that is itself indicative of “a new industry, bureaucracy and language” (De Lissovoy & McLaren, 2003, p. 131) propels action. It “demands certain action be performed, while forcefully foreclosing on others” (Smyth, 2006, p. 304). The dilemmas that approaches of this kind provide are exacting and demanding. They marginalise and subordinate “educational and social justice values” (Ball, 2006, p. 92). Narrow and pragmatically restrained market focused actions predominate. Subsequently, suppression of any values laden debates and approaches is preferred thus elevating a “lexicon of expediency, pragmatics and financial necessity” (Ball, 2006, p. 92). Consequently, new kinds of teacher professionalism proceed and are advanced. Their specific localized frameworks intertwine career identification with school-based success and/or failure. They also incorporate key features of economic characterisations largely of a prudentialist and enterprising kind, the new and trans- gured post-Fordist expressions of educational engagement.

Indeed, the steady movement towards post-Fordist reconstructions of accumulation and production involve a re-intensification, or perhaps more specifically, reinvestment in processes of valorisation. The implicit and key ingredient, incorporating a re-constituted attachment to a competitive skills base embedded within all sectors of the post-Fordist workforce is crucial. A vital aspect of a multi-skilled and highly flexible and productively adaptable post-Fordist worker cohort sustains the new economic trans- guration. In the maintenance of its generation is located an individual attachment to continuous pathways of education and training. The aim here反映sthe transient and impermanent nature of post-Fordist productive capacity and accumulation.

Classroom teaching practice and the outcomes of education have added significance in a new work order in which heightened levels of performative capacity dominate. The specific and
measured evaluation of TER can be used to configure and determine effective pedagogy that meets the needs of a post-Fordist economy. This can be achieved at the system level leading to the identification of schools in terms of their academic performance relative to a system-sanctioned standard norm and/or indicator. Schools that the education system deems ‘under-performing’ are specifically targeted and the specific evaluation of teaching practice becomes the subject of action. An important aim is the transformation of teaching practice through a concerted process of re-skilling. The major focus becomes actionable conduct performed and enacted on the classroom teacher in order to assist development of strategies of teaching practice that have been found to work in terms of enhancing individual student achievement.

3. Trans formations – The New Economy

The transformation of the old economy toward the new is characterised by a distinctive shift in Fordist production. The neo-liberal “expansion and metamorphosis of capitalism” (Bayart, 2007, p. 3) supercedes less functional modes of labour. The “replacement of Fordist types of work organization by less hierarchical modes of business management which emphasizes exibility and the arrangement of production units in horizontal networks” (Bayart, 2007, p. 3) typifies the new shift. The old work order typical of Fordist styles of labour and production, including inescapable levels of “rigidity” (Harvey, 1990, p. 142), have declined. The new economy seeks to overcome Fordist rigidities. “Flexible accumulation” (Harvey, 1990, p. 147) best describes the present transformation in capital production:

It rests on exibility with respect to labour processes, labour markets, products, and patterns of consumption. It is characterized by the emergence of entirely new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets, and, above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological, and organizational innovation. It has entrained rapid shifts in the patterning of uneven development, both between sectors and between geographical regions, giving rise, for example, to a vast surge in so-called ‘service sector’ employment as well as to entirely new industrial ensembles in hitherto underdeveloped regions. (Harvey, 1990, p. 147)

Operating in this post-Fordist world requires a new set of capacities and skills. Indeed, the competitive sustainability and competitive advantage of firms will rest on an employee’s training and ability to engage with the new economic and work order. Smaller work units will prevail incorporating a rationalisation and intensification of skill levels. Transferability of skill application embodied by functional utility is an aspect synonymous with the post-Fordist worker.

In order to achieve a seamless transition and transferability of skill levels, a change in knowledge is necessary. At its very core, a post-Fordist neo-liberal hyper-economy utilises goods, services and knowledge. Economic activity is increasingly defined by a shift from “manufacturing and production of physical goods to information handling, knowledge accumulation, and production of knowledge goods” (Burton-Jones, 1999, p. 12). The commodification of knowledge
and its utilitarian and economic value redefines capital production. The valorisation of individual productivity and efficiency rests on a capacity to integrate knowledge as an indispensable factor and ingredient of production. Computerisation incorporating information technology in all of its varied manifestations is central to this aspect of economic and industrial reform.

An important and key factor in this shift of production is education and the vital role of schools. New relationships between education and the economy in a changing society predominate and schools matter, including the type of pedagogical practice in which they engage. A significant part of these new relationships is embodied in a rationalisation of knowledge, particularly for the post-compulsory school curriculum with now an emphasis on key and specific outcomes of knowledge. The movement towards a core curriculum for all students reflecting the “high and rising minimum threshold of knowledge and competence that is demanded by modern economies” (OECD, 1989, p. 29) is important. It reflects post-Fordist shifts towards automation including the importance attached to knowledge generation as a crucial part of economic growth. There is clearly a human capital element to this aspect, one that is a post-Fordist model of economic production. It responds to the rise of information technology as the new “basic” (OECD, 1989, p. 32) in the school curriculum, notwithstanding the emphasis on making school education “more relevant to real-world labour market needs” (OECD, 1989, p. 31).

The educational response to the alleged needs of a new economy and “new work order” (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998, p. 78) characterised as the “new vocationalism” (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998, p. 78) highlights political and economic imperatives as major influences on education in contemporary times. Indeed, the regulatory needs of “fast capitalism” (Shacklock, 1998, p. 78), including the influence of an enterprise culture as “the new educational organiser” (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998, p. 80), reconceives individual productive capacity including the work of public school teachers. Moreover, the neo-liberal political and ideological regime of advanced production whose significance features prominently in re-constructed entrepreneurial productive engagement takes place within the “installation of neo-liberal forms of governance” (Davies & Bansel, 2007, p. 248), symptomatic of large scale global change.

Indeed, the advanced “neo-liberal theory of progress” (King & Kendall, 2004, p. 143) has as an over-riding strategic locus, an economic characterisation that renders the State as less important than the ‘market’. Post-Fordist considerations of production that include heightened and elevated espousals of economic competitiveness, dominate. There is nothing inherently surprising in this development. A capitalist process of production must seek to re-create itself through innovation and creative endeavour (see Schumpeter, 1942; Marx, 1990). A process of economic globalization facilitates this mode of productive exchange. “Globalization intensifies competition which, in turn, stimulates innovation” (King & Kendall, 2004, p. 144). This represents the post-Fordist connection between competitive intensifications, expressed through global exchanges and transactions of ‘fast capital’ and the urgent need for a renewed educational sentiment and settlement.
The economic and political configuration that the new educational settlement adopts also incorporates non-State based forms of governance. The new economic and political order that increasingly utilizes non-governmental means of representation, acts to control and contain. It is an order and form of governance that at its core has four distinctive characteristics and features. The first is an undoubted acceptance and reliance upon rationalist knowledge. The second is an emphasis on capitalist modes of production that in turn is dependent upon post-Fordist automated technology. Lastly, this means of production is largely managed through bureaucratic forms of governance (see King & Kendall, 2004).

Implicit in the contemporary post-Fordist structure of governance is transition.

Globalisation foregrounds education in specific ways that attempt to harness education systems to the rapid and competitive growth and transmission of technologies and knowledge linked to the national competitiveness of nations within the global economy. (Ozga & Lingard, 2007, p. 70)

Governance becomes a question of transition, the emphasis of which is situated in methods of preparation for post-Fordist mechanisms of production. Indeed, the transformative structure of global capital including the necessary facilitation of one mode of production (Fordist) to another (post-Fordist), becomes the “object of transformation” (Balibar, 2009, p. 307), and thus the accepted norm. Schools and classroom teachers form a tangible conduit and reference point for economically enacted change. Their exposure to transformative economic processes limits their functions towards the competitive needs of economic exchange. Under these conditions, teaching practice warrants particular attention for it is teachers and their specific classroom contributions that have added significance. The unique form of post-Fordist governance that globalisation can provide legitimizes active external regulatory interference steering education and what may constitute effective teaching practice in specific economic and vocational directions.

4. Globalization

The individualization of pedagogical practice and action and thus the constructed and problematised account of effective teaching, is a planned scheme. Its derivation, if one accepts the formation of social inequality and exclusion through political and economic domination, is not necessarily located in relations of exploitation. Put simply, its contrived conceptualisation as a mechanised prospectus of surveillance and control is situated in post-Fordist and neo-liberal modes of corporate managerial existence as a form of governance. This in itself could be read as a form of exploitation, but is better cast generally in terms of “certain social arrangements” (Lea, 2009, p. 2) representative of the corporation now spread into all modes of employment, thus reflecting the pervasive “modern corporate structure” (Lea, 2009, p. 2).

Indeed, it is this very notion of pervasiveness and immersion in a corporate dynamic of control and efficacy, generally symptomatic of unfettered and unrestrained modernity–globalization–
that constitutes comparative and evaluative systems of performance and appraisal. This is not to suggest that globalization and all that this term entails reflects in itself a system, but it is to acknowledge that “we have been faced with a change of scale” (Bayart, 2007, p. 6), one that is manifestly scientific (technological) and entwined within the economic and political.

Many factors have created a sense of the world’s unity both in people’s minds and as an objective configuration. Among these factors are new technologies, the development of the mass media and transport, the extension of the market economy as a legitimate problematic (if not as a way of producing effective solutions), various ecological catastrophes, especially Chernobyl, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the unprecedented fragility of the American territorial sanctuary. (Bayart, 2007, p. 7)

Yet, to isolate and bestow singular causal factors upon such a transformative and episodic period of human history is to trivialise the event. Nevertheless, one can seek to map and outline its defining features. Marginson (1999), for example, considers the six aspects of globalization to be bounded by:

- Finance and trade;
- Communications and information technologies;
- International movements of peoples;
- The formation of global societies;
- Linguistic, cultural and ideological convergence; and
- World systems of signs and images. (p. 21)

Each of these inter-related aspects as world systems “have a life of their own” (Marginson, 1999, p. 20), and can and usually do “affect every part of the world, including educational institutions and programmes, and the subjectivities formed in education” (Marginson, 1999, p. 20).

A primary consideration then in a new world of changing circumstances is the functionary capacity of a state in terms of its authority and control–governance. The political project of globalisation becomes a question of method. The problematics of systemic control in order to establish a form of governing authority without government stems from and is linked to an expressed managerial function of rule. The genesis of comparative systems of evaluation is the result for public school teachers.

This is to be expected. The central and core mechanism of compliance that is established as an individual commitment to intensified modes of productive capacity requires devotion. It also needs and surreptitiously requests heightened expressions of individual motivation. This particular aspect may be viewed by some as new and hard-fought for expressions of rights and freedoms, previously restricted within workplaces and especially in most schools. Indeed, neo-liberal
interpretations of the new order are generally cast in terms of the removal and excision of bounded work-place regularities dismissive of employee input. An important example includes employee input into major decision-making at the level of the rm or school. Nevertheless, the post-Fordist work order implies and engenders control through the expected and functional capacities enacted by an adherence to system sanctioned norms and imperatives.

In addition, in rejecting totally positivist and ideologically empiricist conceptions of classroom TER, the very structure of narrow and technicist evaluations of teacher performance are also rejected. Indeed, by introducing statistically organised schematisations of teacher evaluation, based in the main upon the learning outcomes of public school students, major and particular regions of the educational ‘space’–curriculum, context (school, classroom, peer effects, and so on) are not adequately considered. This type of epistemological reduction rather than producing vivid and accurate accounts of correlations between effective teaching practice and student learning, elevates absence and omission as part of the research and process of inquiry.

Indeed, the educational process in post-Fordist times becomes an activity whose major aim is the production of “use-values” (Althusser, 2009, p. 188). The particular appropriation, generally in the form of a core and common set of curriculum options, tied to systemic assessment requirements, is therefore a vital component of pedagogic work. Pedagogical practice and the work of schooling are then the source of a nation’s economic prosperity by virtue of the preparation needed in skilling ‘on-demand’ sources of labour. School-based vocational education and training (VET) and recent proposed changes (eg. The Bradley Review, 2008) to the higher education sector in Australia are a case in point.

A theoretical conception of classroom TER defined by the administrative constraints imposed by neo-liberal forms of governance warrants a total exploration of the experimental method favoured by its introduction. Globalization, one of whose characterizations is an intensified attachment to altered pathways of economic exchange, confronts political control. Consequently, and perhaps not surprisingly, the political and administrative (bureaucratic) control through a distinctive and easy application of performative evaluation is chosen. The “absolute immanence” (Althusser, 2009, p. 145) that specific positivist forms of scientism and classroom TER that prevails, releases a conceptualised view of the classroom that is ideological in character. The “Absolute Knowledge” (Althusser, 2009, p. 146) that specific superstructural scientific approaches of effective teaching practice that dominate, as a consequence of forms of governance enacted within globalised forces of economic exchange, is then an obvious manifestation of power and subjectivity.

Subsequently, the performative quality of public school teachers becomes a focus for “widespread policy debate” (Connell, 2009, p. 213). A vital aspect of the debate is the steady policy articulation of what constitutes good and effective teaching. Indeed, as Connell (2009) puts it “What is meant by a ‘good teacher’ has thus become a significant practical question” (p. 214). This in itself poses problems. The object of knowledge, which in this case is an empiricist
determination and articulation of good teaching practice, through highly metricated systems of evaluation based on scientometric models of ‘effective teaching practice’ and pedagogical action, develops as a real phenomenon autonomous of contextual modalities. Representative of this “collapse into empiricist ideology” (Althusser, 2009, p. 148), is the steady intrusion of a “politico-economic praxis” (Althusser, 2009, p. 149) unmoved by any mediated sense of historical existence and attachment to an organic lived experience of the social. The reduction and subsequent identification through, at its most extreme, the negation of difference, fulfills and mirrors the neo-liberal agenda of change.

A positivist science of classroom teacher effectiveness concerned with and sure of the “obviousness of facts” (Althusser, 2009, p. 175) revokes the very objectivity it claims to espouse. A science whose primary goal is certain knowledge of effective teaching practice including determination of specific pedagogical laws that constitute that practice, incorporates the empiricist–positivist neo-liberal public education policy-making agenda. The aim is the evaluation of TER and performance. This in itself is theoretically based on a post-Fordist conception of productive capacity. It depends on a naïve characterisation of pedagogical practice that is essentially skills driven.

Conclusion

This Chapter discussed the significant and defining aspects of change that characterize modern capitalist societies and economies. These aspects reside predominantly in political and economic configurations centred specifically on the management of productive capacity for the control and maintenance of modern economies. Education, including schools and classroom teachers become important components in forcing the necessary economic adjustments required to maintain competitive advantage. Classroom teaching practice must be measured and constantly monitored so that it responds to and improves the skill level and academic achievement of individual students.

The hegemonic contours of neo-liberal political rationality emerge as the dominant organizing system of governmentality. Public education, pedagogic action and the work of schooling exists within this system. It is a system that, as Brown (2003) postulates, re-casts human action:

… not only is the human being configured exhaustively as homo oeconomicus, all dimensions of human life are cast in terms of market rationality. While this entails submitting every action and policy to considerations of profitability, equally important is the production of all human and institutional action as rational entrepreneurial action, conducted according to a calculus of utility, benefit, or satisfaction against a micro-economic grid of scarcity, supply and demand, and moral value-neutrality. Neo-liberalism does not simply assume that all aspects of social, cultural and political life can be reduced to such a calculus, rather it develops institutional practices and rewards for enacting this vision. That is, through discourse and policy promulgating its criteria, neo-liberalism produces rational
actors and imposes market rationale for decision-making in all spheres. Importantly then, neo-liberalism involves a normative rather than ontological claim about the pervasiveness of economic rationality and advocates the institution building, policies, and discourse development appropriate to such a claim. (pp. 3-4)

The public secondary school teacher is entangled within this neo-liberal systemic governmentality. The governance of schools and classroom teachers is symptomatic of broader globalization implications that include the wilful and intractable influence of a corporate dynamic. The reified and metricated evaluations of classroom instruction devoid of context should be expected because the common and dominant form of authority and control is in short a question of method and thus governance. Consequently, in order to locate and understand the problem of classroom TER and scrutinize it using a critical dialectics, we must first consider the issue of governmentality in terms of the practice of teaching. For this reason, in the following Chapters I begin the critical examination of classroom TER by first focusing on its categorisation. The theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu and Foucault are used to do this.
Chapter Three – Teacher Effectiveness Research: Hegemonic Characterisations

Introduction

This Chapter uses aspects of the theoretical writings of Foucault and Bourdieu to critically reflect on the field of teacher effectiveness research (TER) in order to categorise it. The relevance of Foucault and Bourdieu separately and together emerges as the Chapter traverses the specific “techniques of accountability, measurement and management” (Marshall, 2000, p. 230) that is representative of the dominant economic and political power bloc that increasingly influences educational matters. Indeed, the Foucault – Bourdieu theoretical panorama offers the critical theorist a form of pragmatism that allows for and considers “modernist elements of the present” (Lingard, Hayes, Mills & Christie, 2003, p. 13).

The Chapter is comprised of four distinctive parts. It begins by considering an overview of TER as a field of interest within the broader field of education. The predominant belief systems of positivist TER are canvassed. This signals the exercise and relevance of power and control as a decisive and important feature in TER that holds as its major principle, a cause and effect hypothesis for the determination of student achievement through classroom pedagogy. The second part of the Chapter considers the specific controlling characterisations unique to the field of TER. Discursive ‘disciplinary’ aspects of control are mentioned that feature and indicate (i) symbolic order(s) of control defined by a ‘scientific’ logic of practice and (ii) models of pedagogy as the constructed constituents that inform TER. Both of these aspects are the controlling characterisations of TER. The third section examines recent developments in the field of TER. It considers specific models of teacher effectiveness, and in this regard, scrutinizes value-added TER in some depth. The final part of the Chapter considers how to disrupt dominant and narrow mechanisms of control, identifiable and specialized features of positivist TER.

1. An Overview

Teacher effectiveness as a field of education research involves identifying the behaviours and/or actions of classroom teacher practitioners that are thought to causally contribute to student academic achievement. Belief in the contribution(s) of science and scientometric forms of inquiry to the art of teaching (see Gage, 1972) is central. Research and what this term implies is crucial in understanding how conceptions of teacher effectiveness studies seek definitive causal relationships between learning and teaching. Definite explanations of events between variables is a specific aim:

Research is defined as scientific activity aimed at increasing our power to understand, predict, and control events of a given kind. All three of these goals involve relationships between variables. We understand an event by relating it logically to others. We predict an event by relating it empirically to antecedents in time. We control an event by manipulating the independent variables to which it is functionally related. Hence, research must seek out the relationships – logical, temporal, and functional – between variables. (Gage, 1972, p. 16)
Teaching, on the other hand may be “defined as events, such as teacher behaviour, intended to affect the learning of a student” (Gage, 1972, p. 16). Teaching is bound up in a particular behaviour or action that is interpersonal in nature, but “may be frozen in the form of a book or a film, or a set of programmed instructional materials” (Gage, 1972, p. 16). In canvassing these particular definitions, research on teaching and thus research on teacher effects become variables in a scientific “game” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66) of inquiry.

In seeking truthful accounts of teacher practice and student achievement, positivist processes of inquiry into teaching and learning omit any question or query over the relationship between “power, truth and the subject” (Foucault, 1997, p. 47). A precise and simple description of effective teaching practice culminating in isolated singularities about teacher performance, classroom pedagogy and student achievement, becomes the incontestable research focus. This forms the basis of what the positivist teacher effectiveness researcher strives to answer and document. Acknowledging that learners can do particular things during their time spent in formal schooling is now not enough. The educational and productive emphasis of schooling has shifted towards what students have achieved. But this direct and straightforward configuration of teaching and learning diminishes and conceals relationships of power that exist in systems of schooling and within broader political and economic structures. Indeed, the positivist teacher effectiveness researcher reconstitutes the relation of student achievement and teacher practice in two ways. First, the dilution and removal of mediated contingencies of action upon teaching and learning reinforce positivist belief systems of research already defined by certain actions and processes. This denies the possibility of other possible methods of inquiry. Secondly, the relation of student achievement and teacher practice becomes a question of output. This raises the stakes and implicates the individual classroom teacher into systemic processes of accountability in which their practice can be mapped and targeted.

The contemporary education system replete with its particular mechanisms and regimes of accountability, generally expressed as a set of education system policy-objectives and teacher personnel performance statements, obliges governments to provide an educational service. The Panoptic process of procedural surveillance that forms of classroom TER offers is characterised by the “function of supervision” (Foucault, 2008, p. 67). A constant evaluation of schooling and teaching practice is the result. This also includes an attention to arbitrarily contrived numerical comparisons of school performance – (standards) within and across geographic regions or zones and across a State. Indeed, it is “understandable that parents, policy-makers and educators want to know about how schools are functioning” (Reckase, 2004, p. 117) as governments expend significant resources on them. But, as Reckase (2004) also points out, “determining the amount of change in students’ skills and knowledge is not easy” (p. 117) and furthermore, the desire to use “relatively simple models to represent and report the results” (p. 117) is a distortion of reality. Providing then a critique of classroom teacher effectiveness universals using Foucauldian and Bourdieuan theoretical frameworks stems from scepticism of forms of methodological Puritanism. The art of positivist classroom TER is none other than a particular way of analysing the
problem of classroom teacher instruction, and extending the inquiry to the relationship between forms of teaching practice (specifi cally pedagogy) and student learning/academic achievement. Models of teaching practice do not take account of the possibility of self-limitation and “mistaken” (Foucault, 2008, pp. 16-17) notions or ideas of truth with respect to the problem of classroom teaching practice. The site of veridiction, taken as the school classroom but expressed through a well-structured and planned “natural mechanism” (Foucault, 2008, p. 32) of positivist classroom TER constitutes a “standard of truth” (Foucault, 2008, p. 32) which enables discernment, thus leading to and producing generalisations about teaching practices. This enables one to “falsify and verify” (Foucault, 2008, p. 32) particular forms of teaching practice based upon expectations of what is seen to offer the best approach for enhancing the learning outcomes of students. Classroom TER as it is applied to teaching practice means that to be a ‘good’, ‘competent’ or ‘effective’ teacher, one has to teach or give instruction to students based on or according to a pre-determined and tested/modelled ‘truth’. Its role is one of veridiction as it provides the basis upon which it can “command, dictate and prescribe” (Foucault, 2008, p. 32) pedagogic mechanisms of teaching and learning on which education policy is articulated.

The attachment to a type of “na ve naturalism” (Foucault, 2008, p. 120) expressed by the mathematical and scientifi c account of positivist classroom TER and constructed ‘models’ of inquiry, define the market of educational exchange between teacher and student by “thinking of it as a sort of given of nature” (Foucault, 2008, p. 120). But, as those engaged in classroom teaching practice –classroom teacher practitioners – can attest, teaching and learning is defi nitely not a ‘given’ and is not easily documented, verifi ed or explained. Indeed, the formulaic and mathematical translation of what may constitute effective classroom teaching practice is problematic and diff icult to achieve.

Despite this, the methodological world of the positivist teacher effectiveness researcher speaks of the practical world of the classroom teacher through a mechanical logic of thought and discourse. It is a view that as Bourdieu reminds us is conceptualized somewhat differently from that of the individual engaged in the social world of practice (see Bourdieu, 1990). The positivist teacher effectiveness researcher through a scientifi c logic of practice (see Bourdieu, 1990) conceives of the classroom teacher as a subject of study that has the capacity for guidance. This appeal to mechanistic and dirigistic thought about the classroom is the defi ning characteristic of TER depicted by models of classroom instruction. Moreover, the admissible incorporation of variables other than those that directly refer to behaviours and/or characteristics of teachers, whilst desirable in research on teaching, are separated when dealing specifi cally with the influences on student academic achievement. Specifi c pedagogical attributes are sought constituted from within an effective teacher characterisation that appears to hinge on several key questions. These include: What are the traits and characteristics of effective teachers? What must an effective teacher carry to the classroom in terms of requisite skills and knowledge, background and experience? What do effective teachers do in the classroom? How would one know an effective teacher? (Imig & Imig, 2006, p. 5). Consequently, and for this reason, the setting up of a “model that has to be constructed
to give an account of practice as the principle of practice” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 81) is a distinctive feature of the classroom teacher effectiveness researcher. Bourdieu (1990) reminds us that a theoretical schema that seeks to model the practical scheme “reconstructed by the analyst, lets slip everything that makes the temporal reality of practice in process” (p. 81) a possibility. In addition, Bourdieu (1990) suggests that there is “no chance of giving a scientific account of practice – and in particular of the properties it derives from the fact that it unfolds in time – unless one is aware of the effects that scientific practice produces by mere totalisation” (p. 82). Nevertheless, scientific accounts of teaching practice and classroom pedagogy and what represents effective teaching dominate contemporary thoughts on the work of schooling and pedagogical action. Their problematization though is often understated. Indeed, problematical aspects of contemporary schooling practice including the “centrality of the teacher” (Larsen, 2010, p. 208), their classroom pedagogy and their effect intended or otherwise on student learning outcomes, can be articulated by first focusing on why and how these particular features of the work of schooling dominate current education policy-making. Central to the argument is the extent to which TER acts as a Foucauldian regime of truth, equipped with its own particular discourse and mode(s) of operation. A vital and important characteristic remains the veridical expose of the subjugated classroom teacher. Furthermore and no less important is the operational effect of symbolic representations of power legitimated through not only models of social action but dominant modes and expressions of technicist science. Indeed, positivist TER reflects a symbolic theory of practice that as a result of its narrow and functional evaluative praxis is representative of normative conceptions of practical reason (see Bourdieu, 1998).

To this extent then, a Foucauldian and Bourdieuan categorical account of TER must contend with one overriding feature: the exercise and control of power. Research about teaching practice and student achievement is about the adoption of techniques of disciplinary control. Indeed, models of classroom pedagogy based on objectified and positivist accounts of effective teaching practice rely on a “technology of the self”, actualized and acted out, on and then through the body of the classroom teacher. The implicit tendency in all models of classroom pedagogy is to focus teaching practice upon its performative or functional processes. In other words, its intent in an actionable form is to focus the class, gain control, get student interest, maintain student engagement, and constantly re-assert authority. Consequently, positivist TER seeks the control and guided manipulation of classroom teaching as a desired outcome. Models of effective teaching practice and classroom pedagogy based on a science of teaching are characterised by a “specific art of government” (Gore, 1993, p. 55). The deliberate and intentional manipulation and exercise of power as Foucault (1982) maintains “consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome” (p. 789). Classroom TER in its attempt to manage and rule on teaching practice implies a form of governing control. Thought about in this way, TER denotes a form of governance, which “is to structure the possible field of action of others” (Foucault, 1982, p. 790). In doing so, TER acts as a controlling power over teaching practice.
2. Controlling Characterisations – Discursive ‘Disciplinary’ Control

The technical systematization of teaching and learning through classroom TER represents the “normalization of behaviour designed to harness the productive and reproductive capacities of the body” (Cronin, 1996, p. 58). The classroom teacher and student achievement form the primary locus for examination and control. TER is an expressive form of power with the capacity to affect. The reactive affects of classroom TER induces formalizations of teaching and learning practices constituted in surveillance mechanisms of control. The subjugated classroom teacher is the affected focal point. The facilitated comparison and evaluation of classroom pedagogy and student achievement made possible through research on teacher effects incorporates particular conceptions of teaching and learning. Invariably, judgements of effectiveness are measured against defined and system generated criteria. The promise of establishing definitive and causal connections between individual classroom teacher performance and student achievement has produced a series of research syntheses that reportedly outline effective teaching strategies (Evertson, 1982; Good & Brophy, 1986; Mortimore, Sammons, Lewis & Ecob, 1988). A generalised conception of effective teaching across both primary and secondary schools rests on specific classroom practices that include but are not necessarily limited to: the existence of structured classroom sessions, the provision of intellectually challenging teaching, a work-centred environment, a limited focus within sessions, and the possibility of maximum communication between teachers and pupils (see Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis & Ecob, 1988; Hattie, 2003, 2009).

The above notwithstanding, Robinson (2004) proposes five performance related factors that are indicative of effective teacher practice. These are (a) meticulous planning and preparation based on strong subject knowledge, (b) an understanding of the different modes of interaction between teachers and taught, (c) the logical and systematic construction of a single lesson, (d) core teaching skills such as questioning, exposition, narration and illustration, and, (e) the personal power and presence of the teacher. These factors tend to mirror earlier TER done by Brophy and Good (1986) that found effective teachers were those that maximised teaching time and focused on the curriculum. They also allowed for efficient learning to occur by covering the curriculum quickly but always seeking to match student capacities with subject content knowledge. Brophy and Good found that effective teachers were those that actively encouraged their students to achieve mastery levels in new content areas and problem-solving was encouraged. They also took an active and direct role within the classroom rather than allowing students to work independently without much supervision. Another element of the Brophy and Good (1986) study on effective teaching found that highly structured lessons with frequent questioning was important for efficient learning as was a teacher’s response to student answers and questions. The Victorian Government’s Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Blueprint for Government Schools (2003, 2008) -the subject of analysis later in this thesis (see Chapters 7-8)- also articulates what constitutes good or effective classroom teaching. It continues in a similar fashion to that outlined above. Six key principles define how and what it should resemble. These are
listed as: 1) the learning environment is supportive and productive; 2) the learning environment promotes independence, inter-dependence and self-motivation; 3) student’s needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected; 4) students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application; 5) assessment practices are an integral part of teaching and learning and 6) learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom (DEECD, 2009, p. 1).

The “norms” (Foucault, 2011, p. 150) or ‘factors’ such as those outlined above of effective teaching practice established by TER are characterised and constituted by a discursive framework of postulates. The “formulae of knowledge” (Foucault, 2011, p. 247) described by them form a “eld of procedures of government” (Foucault, 2011, p. 4) that rules over teaching practice. Indeed, their generation and institutionalisation has a dual focus. One involves prescription and description of content, the other involves process. Both encapsulate a teacher effectiveness “mathesis” (Foucault, 2011, p. 247) of effective teaching practice. They act as symbolic markers and signposts of control that contain their own unique logic and reason.

(i) Symbolic Order(s) of Control – a Logic of Practice

Teacher effectiveness studies are generally based on the process-product model of research (see Seidel & Shavelson, 2007). Research and studies of this kind involve measurement of student academic outcomes in conjunction with some form of classroom observation or questionnaire that reports on teacher factors such as classroom behaviours or pedagogical content knowledge and how those factors may affect outcomes attained (see Muijs, 2006). Research on teacher effects tends to focus on student achievement and does not report on student self-esteem, pro-social behaviour or moral values. In basic terms, process-product TER aims to:

de ne relationships between what teachers do in the classroom (the processes of teaching) and what happens to their students (the products of learning). One product that has received much attention is achievement in the basic skills … Research in this tradition assumes that greater knowledge of such relationships will lead to improved instruction: once effective instruction is described, then supposedly programs can be designed to promote those effective practices. (Anderson, Evertson & Brophy, 1979, p. 193)

Typically, process-product teacher effectiveness studies comprise four key constructs. These are teacher effectiveness, classroom instruction, active teaching, time-on-task (see Shulman, 1986). The operationalization of effectiveness in process-product studies of teaching according to Shavelson, Webb and Burstein (1989) exhibits the following properties:

Effectiveness assumes commonality of curriculum goals, objectives, and content coverage across classrooms because one standardized achievement test is used to judge the effectiveness in all classrooms.
Effectiveness is strictly summative in its measurement of subject matter knowledge. It is not what students know or don’t know that matters, but the accumulated quantity of their knowledge in comparison with students in other classrooms.

Performance on the effectiveness measure is equated with knowledge or skill in subject matter. There is no notion of “less than best effort”, guessing, partial knowledge, or test-taking skill.

Effectiveness is strictly aggregative across students within a classroom. Operationally, regardless of how student performance is distributed within the classroom, the class average is chosen to represent class performance. (p. 52)

Traditionally, the promotion and implementation of process-product studies of teacher effectiveness tend to rest on ve key strengths (see Shulman, 1986). The rst indicates that teachers do make a difference to student learning. Teacher behaviour, particularly teacher expectations relates to variations in student achievement. Secondly, the in uence of behaviouristic psychology within education research is well founded. If teaching is a skill or is comprised of a set of skills then these can be learnt. Thirdly, process-product teacher effectiveness research can be carried out in classrooms. This gives the research a sense of the natural unlike the laboratory tradition for the study of learning. Fourthly, the implications for policy and practice are seen as straightforward. Implementation of prescribed teaching and learning processes for successful student achievement is deemed easy and smooth. Standardized achievement tests become the indicators that parents and policy-makers take seriously. Finally, the approach adopted works. The programmatic direction of teaching and learning based upon particular teacher behaviours consistently gives results that indicate effective teachers as those that have higher achievement gains.

Bourdieu (1990) contends that the “objectivist viewpoint inclines one to ignore the fact that scienti c construction cannot grasp the principles of practical logic without forcibly changing their nature” (p. 90). Constructed models of teacher effectiveness as approximations to truthful accounts of effective teaching practice rely upon a practical logic that displaces the act of teaching and learning. The process-product model of teacher effectiveness is a constructed model generated through and by an internal logic that corresponds to its own scheme. A “whole technology of representation” (Foucault, 1977, p. 104) constructed on a premise of what constitutes effectiveness, is only made possible by mathematical reference points of judgement regarding chosen and speci c outcomes of teaching and learning. This is achieved by focusing speci cally on models of pedagogy.

(ii) Models of Pedagogy

There are generally four models of pedagogy upon which studies of teacher effectiveness are based. These include direct instruction, interactive teaching, collaborative small-group work and constructivist teaching (Muijs & Reynolds, 2005). Models of instruction form a core construct for the evaluation of teaching and learning and hence warrant brief description here.
The model of direct or whole class pedagogy signifies a teaching method of pedagogy in which the classroom teacher practitioner directs or teaches to the whole class at once. Direct pedagogy methods of teaching are thought to enhance the learning outcomes of students because they invariably restrict lessons to a single area of work. They do this through the use of structured sessions and through frequent questioning with questions and statements usually of a higher order (see Muijs & Reynolds, 2005). Whole or direct class pedagogy allows for an increased sense of teacher-to-student interaction in that the teacher is actively engaging with the whole group of students rather than focusing expressly upon an individual student. Whole class or direct pedagogy assists in classroom management as pupils are thought to be more likely to be on task if constantly under the direction of the classroom teacher, and if there is a single active focal point for the lesson. The main elements of direct pedagogy involve clear and structured lessons, clear and structured presentations, lesson pacing, skill or procedural modelling, utilisation of concept mapping and interactive questioning (see Muijs & Reynolds, 2005). A major component of the main elements listed is the active participation of students and, for direct pedagogy to be effective, students need to be seated with their attention given expressly to the teacher. Direct pedagogy involves significant teacher input and is considered to enhance the learning outcomes of students through specific teacher centred actions and/or pedagogic behaviours.

Interactive teaching is generally considered to focus on the use of questioning of students by the classroom teacher but can also refer to whole group or class discussion. The effective classroom teacher is able to enhance student learning outcomes through effective questioning techniques. Key issues to consider in terms of effective teaching practice and effective questioning includes pupil response, the cognitive level of questions asked, the nature of questions asked (open or closed), and the use of process and product questions (see Muijs & Reynolds, 2005). The effective and interactive teacher makes use of prompts and is also aware of appropriate wait-time. Generally speaking, interactive teaching is most effective when specific questions are asked at the beginning of each lesson usually focussing on the previous lesson’s material, the emphasis and purpose of which is review of knowledge learnt and understood.

Collaborative small group work is thought to engender and develop collaborative skills and social skills. It is considered an important method for the scaffolding (see Muijs & Reynolds, 2005) of pupil understanding and is a powerful method in developing problem-solving capacities of students as they will tend to learn from each other. Effective small group work revolves around pupil co-operation and requires the clear articulation of the activity or task undertaken. Effective teachers of small group work usually give pupils defined roles and usually base assessment of the activity or task on the whole group presentation with perhaps some emphasis on individual contribution(s).

Constructivist teaching processes encourage pupils to construct meaning based upon specific learning activities that concentrate on essential and key ideas. Positioning the learner in an active and inquiry based situation that makes use of their curiosity through exploration is a key aim. Constructivist teaching suggests that the learner successively builds and constructs their knowledge by actively engaging in particular learning activities. Effective constructivist teachers assist
the learner by providing the necessary means of developing student knowledge through modelling in which the teacher actually shows how to do something; scaffolding, which involves significant teacher support at the beginning of the learning process, coaching, articulation, reflection, collaboration, exploration and problem-solving (seeMuijs & Reynolds, 2005). Rather than maintaining a fixed lesson plan, an effective constructivist teacher has the ability to be flexible and adaptable towards lessons by often giving pupils choice with respect to learning activities.

The defining aspects of each model outlined are contingent upon specific signifiers. TER relies upon a “correct use of the model” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 104) which by implication presumes a severance and partition of interference. In other words, teaching and learning is subsumed by the forcible limitations and strictures of a ‘model’ devoid of a “lived and enacted” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 104) sense of experience and practice. Indeed, models of instruction consign teaching and learning to a “state of pure appearance” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 104) that in effect, favours and segregates “practice as seen from outside” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 104) to a condition and status that is enduring and unchanging – in a word, timeless. The result is a misconstrued and false illustration of teaching and learning. The ensuing misinterpretation of experience and practice that is based on a predetermined and pre-constructed ‘model of experience’ only fulfills an obligatory “predictability and calculability of the acts it prescribes” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 105). The thesis returns to the aspect of time in Chapter nine.

In view of this, models of pedagogy as signs and indicators of teaching and learning convert into “mechanisms of power” (Foucault, 2011, p. 2) constituted and framed by a “particular type of environment” that in turn produces “habitus” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 72). Furthermore, through a rule-governed “methodological objectivism” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 72) models of classroom pedagogy operate as “mechanisms of surveillance and correction” (Foucault, 2011, p. 5) that “hypostasizes” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 72) assessments and evaluations of teaching practice. A manufactured systematisation of classroom performance created by an “imperative discourse” (Foucault, 2011, p. 3) of teacher effectiveness and second, “statistical regularity or algebraic structure” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 72) totalizes classroom teaching removing it from the interplay and exchange of “individual history and group history” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 72). Encapsulated within the false predication of “mechanism and rationalism” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 72) is a symbolic positioning of classroom teachers as transformative sources of change. A teacher’s instructional performance and their contribution to a school are targets for evaluation and both figure prominently in recent developments in TER.

3. Recent Developments in Teacher Effectiveness Research

Seidel and Shavelson (2007) suggest that there have been two major developments in teacher effectiveness studies in recent times. The rst involves broadening the scope of what is included in studies of teacher effectiveness. Seidel and Shavelson (2007) refer to the incorporation of global aspects of teaching that analyses teaching patterns or regimes instead of traditional single acts
of teaching. The second involves a focus on processes of learning in specific learning domains and so is a process of inquiry that examines the effect of specific instructional practices on learning.

There are two “distinct approaches” (Seidel & Shavelson, 2007, p. 462) that are used to measure teacher effects on individual student learning. The first is a purely statistical mechanism that relies on the estimation of effects in large-scale surveys of student achievement. The second is a “quasi-experimental intervention” (Seidel & Shavelson, 2007, p. 463) design technique that measures student achievement after a period of teacher or classroom instructional intervention. This second approach is an investigation of student knowledge and its subsequent facilitation by structured teaching. In other words, this development represents the value-added component, a feature that is discussed in detail in part three of this Chapter.

The derivation of teacher effectiveness models stems from an educational effectiveness research base that has almost exclusively relied upon studies of student outcomes from within a narrow curriculum subject range, generally language or mathematics (see Creemers & Kyriakides, 2006). The new goal(s) of education incorporating the full range of the school curriculum including the development of meta-cognitive skills has historically not been used to study teacher effectiveness. Recent TER (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2006) seeks to encapsulate the diverse nature of a teacher’s role within a school. It aims to broaden the emphasis of TER which has stayed within narrow and conventional boundaries of school learning. Furthermore, the expanded and multi-faceted nature of teacher work in contemporary schooling makes it virtually impossible to implement and use simple methods of inquiry in order to describe, evaluate and assess teacher effectiveness. In light of this, Cheng and Tsui (1999) have proposed seven models upon which investigation and inquiry into teacher effectiveness should be based. The proposed models include: goals and tasks, resource utilization, working process, school constituencies satisfaction, accountability, absence of problems, and continuous learning (p. 142). Each model comprises two key components generally emphasizing “certain factors” (Cheng & Tsui, 1999, p.142) that define and encompass a teacher’s performance and contribution to and within a school.

Foucault shows how the “formation of forms of knowledge (savoirs)” evolve into “matrices of possible bodies of knowledge” (Foucault, 2011, p. 4). TER models of classroom pedagogy represent and comprise discursive matrices of knowledge that can be studied as “regulated forms of veridiction” (Foucault, 2011, p. 4). Indeed, as “forms of subjectivation” (Foucault, 2011, p. 5), models of classroom instruction are the techniques and technologies that regulate teacher practice through a “pragmatics of self” (Foucault, 2011, p. 5) consisting of specific “rules of veridiction” and “norms of behaviour” (Foucault, 2011, p. 4). Each of these models of TER proposed by Cheng and Tsui are considered and briefly outlined below, first in terms of their specific detail and second on the particular Foucauldian connotations of their significance and importance.

The goal-and-task model of TER is perhaps the one most often used within the school context. It is based on a belief in the first instance that teachers have developed their own goals and have
been assigned related tasks, and that they work towards completing these to the best of their ability. It has a behavioural and performative focus defined by a self-directed formation of particular intentions and purposes. The sign of an effective teacher is one that has successfully completed the planned goals and assigned tasks within designated school aims and goals. The model comprises three core features. First, goals and tasks assigned to teachers must be clear and specific, secondly, the outcome(s) of task performance must be easily observed and objectively assessed and thirdly, criteria or standards of teacher effectiveness must be stated clearly and readily available (see Cheng & Tsui, 1999). The clear advantage of this model is that it can be readily used by school administrators to evaluate a teacher’s performance and/or contribution to the educational outcomes of the school. The disadvantage of a model such as this is that any judgement or measurement of a teacher’s performance must be made in terms of the resources available to the school and to the teacher. Thus, it is somewhat dependent upon school contingent factors other than those that the teacher may be solely responsible for and may affect the performance attained if tasks assigned are demanding and broad.

The resource-utilisation model of TER seeks to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of a teacher based upon available resources and support provided from within a school. Under this model, an effective teacher is one that can carry out assigned tasks if they are deemed to have maximized the use of allocated resources to accomplish their work and called upon needed support to trump difficulties encountered. The model assumes an effective teacher operates within a school environment that recognizes the need to share resources and supplies in order to accomplish tasks. It also calls upon the teacher to consider assistance from sources external to the school in order to meet stated objectives (see Cheng & Tsui, 1999).

The working-process model reflects the teacher’s role and place within an education and school system. It acknowledges that the teacher is a part of the school system and that educational outcomes are attained through the work that a teacher does as part of the teaching and working processes that form the school and education system. It assumes that an effective teacher is one that ensures the quality of their work through quality teaching. The model works if a clear relationship exists between a teacher’s working process – teaching – and educational outcomes. Several factors may be used to monitor the effectiveness of a teacher under this model. These include teaching style, teachers’ job attitudes, teacher behaviours, teacher relationships with students and colleagues, classroom management, contributions to decision making and school planning. The major limitation of this model is in the difficulty associated with the monitoring that needs to be conducted. The model may be considered primarily concerned with the ‘ongoing’ nature of a teacher’s work and role and as such focuses on means rather than ends (see Cheng & Tsui, 1999).

Under the school-constituencies model, teachers are considered effective if they are able to meet the expectations and needs of the school constituency. The model assumes that the expectations and needs of school constituencies determine the nature of tasks and goals that form the work and role of the teacher on a daily basis within a school. This model of teacher effectiveness is attractive to
policy-makers and researchers in that it emphasizes “educational quality” (Cheng & Tsui, 1999, p. 143), considered an important component for school constituency satisfaction. It also offers a less technically onerous and complicated method of teacher effectiveness examination compared with other methods that rely on the measurement of task achievement, job performance and/or working processes. School constituencies may include students, parents, other teachers, the principal, school council, and state and/or federal education authorities. Typically, school-constituency satisfaction models must incorporate listed expectations and/or requirements of teachers. It is suggested that high and diverse expectations and requirements of teachers leads to low school constituency satisfaction as teachers have difficulty meeting stated objectives. Conversely, low expectations and/or requirements generally lead to a high school-constituency satisfaction rating as teachers can more easily meet stated objectives (see Cheng & Tsui, 1999).

The accountability model of teacher effectiveness has arisen largely as a result of government expenditure in the area of public schooling. A ‘value for money’ argument is perhaps a defining characteristic for this form of TER. It is concerned with the demonstration of teacher competence and responsibility in terms associated with the adequate and professional discharging of teaching duties including classroom pedagogy and other school related activities that often require professional judgement and decision-making. This is an information model that portrays teachers as active collectors of information about their work progress, decision-making, standards and consequences of performance (see Cheng & Tsui, 1999). The factors considered important in assessing teacher effectiveness for this model include “competence, reputation and other aspects of accountability” (Cheng & Tsui, 1999, p. 144).

The absence-of-problems model of teacher effectiveness identifies the weaknesses, problems and defects of particular teachers rather than seek to identify criteria or markers of effectiveness. An effective teacher is one that carries out the expected and minimum requirements of their work without any obvious or apparent problems and/or performance difficulties (see Cheng & Tsui, 1999). This particular model may be of relevance for teachers in the early stages of their careers. In general terms, it is often difficult to assess beginning teachers using teacher effectiveness criteria developed for more accomplished and experienced teachers. Rather than look for excellence in performance in inexperienced teachers, the application of an absence-of-problems model may identify and detect problems as a means for further professional development and performance improvement.

The continuous-learning model has been adapted to take account of the changing nature of educational and school contexts. It suggests that teachers are effective if they are able to meet the demands and challenges offered by diverse and changing educational contexts. An emphasis on learning in order to enhance teacher capacity is a part of this model as is a commitment to individual and personal improvement and development. There is some overlap between this model of teacher effectiveness and the working-process model, although the continuous-learning model appears to focus on personal and professional development through mastery of behavioural characteristics or factors that are considered exemplars of effective teacher practice.
Each of the listed models of teacher effectiveness comprises distinct features of control. The first centres on the teacher as an individual, but not just any individual, an individual that must “develop, work on, improve” (Foucault, 2011, p. 269) themselves. The second feature involves a performativity component. The individual teacher must have completed, resolved, outlined, developed, fulfilled, transacted, accomplished, met, established and so on, particular tasks and functions. All of the listed models with the exception of the absence-of-problems model have the teacher as individual self manager and organizer. The performativity component makes the individual teacher responsible for transacting achievement in terms of tasks and functions performed. As such, models of classroom TER represent a school-system form of evaluation. The scrutiny and debate about student learning and progress to a broader evaluation of individual teacher and school performance is a particular aim. It is expressed as a question of “veridictional practice” (Foucault, 2008, p. 34). The focus becomes the individual, not necessarily in Foucauldian ‘penal’ terms such as “Who are you?” but along the lines of, “What have you achieved?” or, “What can you do?” When this subtle, or some may argue, overt shift addressed to the classroom teacher practitioner in terms of “What can you do?” happens, in a sense it alters the “jurisdictional function” (Foucault, 2008, p. 35) of the education system. A transformation occurs by virtue of veridiction and the individual teacher is held to account for student learning.

Veridiction, specifically the determination of the conditions and effects of the veridical exercise, is constituted by “particular rules of veridiction and falsification” (Foucault, 2008, p. 36). A technology of classroom TER, the basis of which is established and maintained through an application of particular rules and models of pedagogy, elicits conditions that must be satisfied for a discourse on effective teaching practice to be held. What becomes important is a determination of the “regime of veridiction” (Foucault, 2008, p. 36) that enables the teacher effectiveness researcher or the education policy-maker to say and assert a “number of things as truths” (Foucault, 2008, p. 36) about teaching practice and the learning outcomes of school students. In order to do this, classroom teacher effectiveness discourse on classroom performance and student learning incorporates three distinctive functions or features. The first manifests itself through verification or veridiction where the performance of the classroom teacher practitioner is contestable and in question. Secondly, key components of action include limitations placed on teaching practice and student learning exhibited and expressed through and by calculation. Thirdly, the subjugated positioning of the classroom teacher within the field of education elevates the education researcher and policy-maker as consecrated and sanctified doxic (see Bourdieu, 1990) ‘truth-teller’ ignoring the qualitative input of individual teachers regarding student achievement. The Chapter returns to this particular point in part four.

The utilization of high stakes testing used to measure the performance of individual teachers and schools making them accountable for student achievement, highlights a special case of teacher effectiveness research. Indeed, the “substantial interest in recent years in the performance and accountability of teachers and schools” (Rubin, Stuart & Zanutto, 2004, p. 103) that holds
“educators accountable for student outcomes” (McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, Louis, & Hamilton, 2004, p. 67) has a political component. In Australia it has not resulted in a system of sanctions and rewards as yet, unlike the United States, but it has seen the development of a more pervasive form of accountability and evaluation. The estimation of teacher and school effects through statistical models of value-added TER represents a movement towards the combination of test-score information into a single measure usually of teacher efficacy and performance. This represents the so-called value-added component.

Value-added Research

The value-added model of TER aims to make a difference to student learning and achievement by re-instituting and re-harnessing the process-product research design rationale. In acutely focusing attention on classroom instruction and student achievement as a single measure of educational quality and effectiveness, the value-added model reclaims the positivist belief system in cause and effect processes of teaching and learning. Making a difference to student achievement is made possible through a precise study of teacher action and how particular pedagogical practices are reected in achievement.

Value-added research makes the case for the evaluation of an effective teacher by “offering a quantifiable methodology” (Imig & Imig, 2006, p. 10), the statistical and theoretical basis of which resides in utilizing the test performance history of individual pupils and measuring expected gain scores over a defined period of time. The term value-added refers to the direct contributions made by the teacher to the learning outcomes of students. Hill (1995) outlines three value-add measures:

The first is what might be called “Unpredicted Achievement”, defined as level of attainment of students adjusted for family background characteristics such as socioeconomic status and non-English speaking background, and for student ability, using a general ability measure such as a measure of verbal reasoning. The second is what might be described as “Learning Gain”, defined as the level of attainment of students adjusted for their prior levels of attainment. The third is “Net Progress”, namely level of attainment adjusted for family background, ability and initial level of attainment. (p. 3)

Value-added TER claims to reveal the “detrimental impact of poor teachers on pupil performance” (Imig & Imig, 2006, p. 10). The plotted test scores of pupils exposed to several consecutive years of ineffective teachers shift downwards whereas the plotted test scores of pupils exposed to effective teachers shift upwards (Imig & Imig, 2006, p. 10). Generally speaking, interpretations of the term value-added vary, and depend upon the purpose specified and the research models used. In terms of its use, value-added research may assist schools to focus on areas of improvement with specific reference to the professional development needs of teachers. Value-added research may assist in the evaluation and effectiveness of education policy initiatives thereby highlighting best-practice in terms of teacher and school practice.
Value-added models of teacher effectiveness usually characterise teacher effects as “random variables that contribute to test scores” (McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, Louis & Hamilton, 2004, p. 72). Longitudinal value-added models of teacher effectiveness consider two measures of teacher effects. The first measure is an estimate of individual teacher effects and the second measure is an estimate of overall contributions of teachers to variability in student outcomes (see McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, Louis & Hamilton, 2004). Alternative value-added models of teacher effectiveness include covariate adjustment models, models for gain scores and cross-classified models (see McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, Louis & Hamilton, 2004). All value-added models of teacher effectiveness assume that teacher effects “persist undampened into the future” (McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, Louis & Hamilton, 2004, p. 88).

Notwithstanding the possible uses of value-added research, identifying what value-added research is actually estimating and purporting to show remains problematic. The underlying assumption of any value-added research is that school and teacher effects on the learning outcomes of students are and remain causal effects. According to Raudenbush (2004) there are two types of effects on student learning that might be estimated using value-added models of teacher effectiveness. The first may be of interest to parents and is reflective of their child’s potential outcome in a particular school compared with the outcome(s) their child may attain if they were in another school. The second effect is perhaps of more interest to policy-makers and school system administrators. It measures or estimates the difference in potential outcome(s) of a student within a particular school when school practice P is in operation as compared to the potential outcome(s) of the same student within a particular school when school practice P* is in operation. This type of value-added TER holds school personnel to account as it specifically focuses on practice rather than variables that school personnel have no control over, such as school contextual factors including socio-economic variables. The problematical issue here is that school and/or teacher practice is often difficult to define and observe (see Raudenbush, 2004).

The value-added theoretical framework with claims of “mixed-method methodology” (Ballou, Sanders & Wright, 2004, p. 5) expressed by mathematical vector models of fixed and random effects seeks the identification of a distinctive relationship between the practices of a particular classroom teacher practitioner and student learning. Causal inferences and effects remain difficult to measure. Rubin, Stuart and Zanutto (2004) in a review of value-added classroom teacher effectiveness models of assessment claim that “there is a focus on the estimation techniques rather than the definition of the estimand, i.e., the target of estimation” (p. 104). Indeed, implicit in the identification of causal and inferential teacher effects is the difficulty in defining fundamental influences on student learning and achievement. The application of difficult to define influences, for example, the school, the teacher, the classroom, implies making assumptions about student learning and the causes of potential outcomes that necessitates derivation of particular and discrete explanations and interpretations. Advocates of the value-added method of teacher effectiveness make the claim that it “measures gain from a student’s own starting point” and thus it “implicitly
controls for socio-economic status and other background factors to the extent that their influence on the post-test is already reflected in the pre-test score” (Ballou, Sanders & Wright, 2004, p. 38). This appears to be an assumption without much validity as it causally correlates learning gain or learning deficit from one test score in one year to one test score in the following year. Consequently, any inferences made in terms of score achieved proceeds on the basis of estimation and assumption of unobserved influences.

Advocates of value-added models of teacher effectiveness acknowledge the potential damage that may be inflicted upon the standards movement in education if classroom teacher practitioners “are being held accountable for student achievement without due regard for factors beyond their control” (Ballou, Sanders & Wright, 2004, p. 37). Indeed, the work of value-added teacher effectiveness researchers often refers to assumptions, predictions and estimations made, particularly in terms of teacher effects. It is also the case that models of TER often denote a numerical value of zero to co-variances. This aspect of value-added models of teacher effectiveness is very problematic as it dismisses all variables other than teacher practice. Value-added teacher effectiveness researchers seek the formulation of rules that take what is taken to be observed regularity and, as such, confer numerical and indeed an “anthropological description on the theoretical model constructed in order to account for practices” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 29). Furthermore, value-added models of classroom TER merely represent through the “execution of the model (in the twofold sense of norm and scientific construct)” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 29) an “imaginary anthropology which objectivism engenders when, with the aid of words” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 29) or, in the case of value-added TER, words and mathematical equations, “obscure the distinction between the things of logic and the logic of things” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 30). It thus presents the “objective meaning of practices or works as the subjective purpose of the action of the producers of those practices of works” (Bourdieu, 1977 p. 30). In other words, value-added TER deactivated the “action of time” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 107) making “continuity out of discontinuity” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 107). Value-added TER neutralizes the practice of teaching and learning a result of which is the universalization and officialization of experience. Facets of teaching practice—planning, timing, delivery of instruction, observation, movement around the classroom, questioning technique(s) utilized and so on—become distinguishable and measurable features comprised of their own unique set of configured and reasoned indicators. Notwithstanding this, the technical and practical exercise of evaluating teaching practice incorporates a pre-coded and pre-ordained ordered logic encompassing an established and arranged set of markers and guides including the use of statistics, surveys, questionnaires, observations, tests and so on. To illustrate, take for example, the following from a mixed-model method of value added research where models seeking to evaluate teacher effectiveness are applied of the form

$$y = Xb + Zu + e,$$  \hspace{1cm} (1)

where \(b\) is a vector of fixed effects, \(u\) is a vector of random (teacher) effects, \(X\) and \(Z\) are incidence matrices (indicating students assigned to particular teachers, subjects and years), and \(e\) is
a vector of random error terms (see Ballou, Sanders, & Wright, 2004). Description of teacher effects and random student components occurs through an elaborately organised series of mathematical computations or matrices. The description of teacher effects and random student components is written as:

$$\text{var (u)} = D, \text{var (e)} = R, \text{Var (Zu+e)} = V = ZDZ^T + R.$$  \hspace{1cm} (2)

$D$ is assumed to be diagonal. Co-variances are zero, even within-teacher co-variances across years and subjects. $R$ is block-diagonal, with unrestricted within-student covariance and zeros in the off-diagonal blocks. Estimates of $b$ and $u$ are obtained as solutions to the mathematical system configured below:

$$\begin{bmatrix} X'R^{-1}X & X'R^{-1}Z \\ Z'R^{-1}X & X'R^{-1}Z + D^{-1} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} b \\ u \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} X'R^{-1}y \\ Z'R^{-1}y \end{bmatrix}$$

The solution for the teacher effects on individual student learning is thus given by:

$$U^* = DZ'^{-1}(y-Xb^*) = E(u/y).$$  \hspace{1cm} (3)

$U^*$ is known as a shrinkage estimator. An elaborate explanation of $U$ and other components of equation (3) follow (see Ballou, Sanders & Wright, 2004). One is presented with a series of unintelligible and contestable claims about the teacher effects “formula” (Ballou, Sanders & Wright, 2004, p. 42). Indeed, the “of cialization strategy” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 109) applied, involving the application of mathematical constructs and variables to experience transforms the practice of teaching and learning into codi ed quantities and sections. The strategic aim of the positivist teacher effectiveness researcher is the production of a set of practices that accord to and t a system of performative rules such as those expressed above.

An implicit and understated belief system for positivist TER, such as that above, is its unwavering need to reduce observable classroom phenomena to that of a “single problem” (Kant, 2001, p. 39). Indeed, the positivist quest for certain knowledge about teaching and learning elicits descriptions of observable experience devoid of its own particular and idiosyncratic limitations. The underlying idealist logic manifested through adherence to specific and prescribed systems of positivist science and/or mathematics, generates a unique set of knowledge descriptors about teaching practice and student learning. Narrowly confined boundaries constitute their inception and constitution. Consequently, a positivist belief system in cause and effect principles of teaching and learning emanates and “rests upon de nitions, axioms, and demonstrations” (Kant, 2001, p. 477). Value-added forms of TER in adopting rei ed mathematical depictions of teaching and learning are themselves incomplete and only approximate to systematised “constructions of concepts” (Kant, 2001, p. 479). An orthodoxy of dominant and positivist processes of TER aspires to ground discourse about teaching and learning within a naturalized and established order. Predictive and sustained expositions and de nitions about classroom instruction and student
achievement are produced through symbolic “systems of classification” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164). This arises through adherence to what may be considered a self-evident belief in definitions about teaching and learning that are themselves taken as givens. In essentialist terms, this represents an axiomatic adoption and belief in unmediated grounds of certainty that pass as “collective publicly avowable, legitimate interests” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 109).

The discursive practice(s) of classroom TER brings forth “systems of power relations” (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 65) resembling a scientific and mathematical set-up of normalized processes of inquiry. Knowledgeability of teaching practice and student achievement is commissioned through a constituted and objective set-up of mathematical laws and regulations as if they themselves speak the truth about teaching and learning. A methodology of positivist knowledge about effective teaching practice is a “justification for power” (Veyne, 2010, p. 32) and so represents a crucial component of the scientific “order of things” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 131). In universal conceptions and depictions of classroom teacher effectiveness, everything is singular, for there is a “commitment to the presuppositions-doxa-of the game” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66). Furthermore, commitment is expressed by an unconditional belief in what is on offer within the field of TER, and belief is “an inherent part of belonging to a field” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 67). Consequently, positivist classroom TER results in an “exercise of power” (Foucault, 1982, p. 788), expressed by “discursive practices, presuppositions, episteme and set-ups” (Veyne, 2010, p. 13). This is in turn representative of a “way in which certain actions modify others” (Foucault, 1982, p. 788).

4. Disrupting Mechanisms of Control

Re-conceptualising the problem of classroom TER in Bourdieuan and Foucauldian terms signifies and connotes a responsive alternative. The complex search for universal rules of classroom teaching practice requires intricate explanation. Positivist TER has limitations as it refers to a narrow and confined region of inquiry, as a result overlooking important educational considerations. Student achievement is one aspect of teaching and learning, but what may constitute the achievement and educational outcomes of students is composed of a variety of influences. Influences can include the type and style of teaching, priorities, testing, parental involvement, funding, class sizes and so on.

The problematic and complicated dynamics and statics of classroom teaching practice necessitates extensive and detailed inspection that speaks to dominant positivist elicitations of knowledge. To achieve this, the focused and deliberate objectification of teaching practice must be considered and conceived as a problem of truth not only about the narrow and restrictive actions and procedures of science and scientific models, but of the discursive practices that come to define teaching practice. The experience of classroom teaching needs to be understood as a specific phenomenon with its own unique set of possible and complex relations. Grenfell (2007) explains that for Bourdieu, viewing and seeing “phenomena relationally … is to see them as understandable in terms of social spaces, positions and relationships. Science itself must be regarded in these terms”
Likewise for Foucault, “any piece of knowledge functions as knowledge only to the extent that it is enforced by the controlling practices of power” (Jardine, 2005, p. 46) which are illustrative of the series of relations that govern conduct.

Disrupting deceptive overgeneralisations depicting truths of classroom teaching practice and student achievement implies removing constraints of knowledge. Indeed, the specific and precise disruptive intent of a Bourdieuian and Foucauldian approach to the analysis of classroom TER is to dislodge system imposed constrictive and manufactured representations of what is deemed effective teaching practice. An alternative line of inquiry represents movement towards acknowledging discontinuities. There is recognition that a “single element of knowledge is unknowable” (Jardine, 2005, p. 98). In the attempt to classify, embodied representations and constructions of practice often distort and mislead. Bourdieu (1984) states:

Those who suppose they are producing a materialist theory of knowledge when they make knowledge a passive recording and abandon the ‘active aspect’ of knowledge to idealism … forget that all knowledge, and in particular all knowledge of the social world, is an act of construction implementing schemes of thought and expression, and that between conditions of existence and practices or representations there intervenes the structuring activity of the agents, who, far from reacting mechanically to mechanical stimulations, respond to the invitations or threats of a world whose meaning they have helped to produce. (p. 467)

The implication is that simple reflections of correspondence between observed and measured practice as objective truth is awkward and problematic. Similarly for Foucault (1970), resemblance as representation “carries with it a certain number of consequences” (p. 30). The resultant outcome is one of insubstantiality and dilution, a paucity of undefined and unexplained occurrences, the outcome of which is thinned out and condensed knowledge. Epistemological configurations of representation and resemblance that in appearance are full and rich, plethoric by way of designation, exude an “absolutely poverty-stricken character” (Foucault, 1970, p. 30). The imprecise nature of resemblance:

...never remains stable within itself; it can be fixed only if it refers back to another similitude, which then, in turn, refers to others; each resemblance, therefore, has value only from the accumulation of all the others, and the whole world must be explored if even the slightest of analogies is to be justified and finally take on the appearance of certainty. It is therefore a knowledge that can, and must, proceed by the infinite accumulation of confirmations all dependent on one another. And for this reason, from its very foundations, this knowledge will be a thing of sand. (Foucault, 1970, p. 30)

The imperative for a critical dialectics of TER is to re-constitute and return:

...into the real world that one is endeavouring to know, a knowledge of the real world that contributes to its reality (and also to the force it exerts). It means conferring on this knowledge a genuinely constitutive power, the very power it is denied when, in
the name of an objectivist conception of objectivity, one makes common knowledge or theoretical knowledge a mere reflection of the real world. (Foucault, 1970, p. 467)

Prescribed and strict, or in other words, system of social interpretations and representations of effective teaching practice are the showpieces of positivist TER. A “universal science of order” (Foucault, 1970, p. 246) for classroom teaching and for how it is to be mapped and examined formulates “on the basis of mathematics” (Foucault, 1970, p. 246), a classificatory sphere of knowledge. Once established and instituted, linear and discrete analyses of teaching practice including and involving classroom pedagogy, unfold. The positivist “mathesis as the science of calculable order” (Foucault, 1970, p. 73) overlooks and controls – governs – established inquiry into classroom teacher effectiveness and is instituted as the formal analytical genesis of a right to speak about it. What is more, the deference that a heightened sense of formalization bestows on mathematicization elevates positivist TER as a contemporary scientific project of importance and significance for public education policy. The “illusion of the absence of limits” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 484) despite the limitations and restrictions that positivist classroom TER exudes and displays, disconnects and separates the “possibility of synthesis from the space of representations” (Foucault, 1970, p. 246). It is this particular occurrence, that is, the separation of what is the case from what is represented as the case, that, as Foucault (1970) states “explains why all hasty mathematicization or naive formalization of the empirical seems like ‘pre-critical’ dogmatism and a return to the platitudes of Ideology” (p. 246). The confident and rm assuredness that specified and particular procedural configurations grant and confer upon the outcomes and principles derived from TER result from the processes enacted to study it.

Each fact, object, concept, statement, relationship, theory, technique, procedure, and each person authorized to speak knowledgeably or to take knowledgeable action or execute a certain practice, is understandable as knowledge only from its place and status in the rule-governed, interconnected network of knowledge-from the problematization in the grid of intelligibility of its discursive/knowledge formation. Because of this, it is not possible to know a single, isolated fact of knowledge. (Jardine, 2005, p. 98)

If the fastened and affixed controls, reminiscent of instrumental attachments of order that positivist TER requires, are removed or withdrawn, an inclusive and broad account of classroom teaching practice becomes possible.

Indeed, what is desirable is a broad account of teaching practice, one freed from research accounts depicting student achievement based on testing. In doing this, the focus shifts towards specific features of school education that TER often ignores and neglects. Specific examples include the curriculum, facilities and materials, teacher recruitment and teacher preparation. Furthermore, broader accounts of teaching practice could also consider the individual child/student in terms of their cognitive, social and emotional development. In short, the likelihood of new and additional information and knowledge is put down for consideration.
Conclusion

This Chapter has used aspects of the theoretical frameworks of Foucault and Bourdieu to categorise and critique TER. The Chapter has sought to illustrate that there is a major and significant awkwardness and inextricability linked to the application of science for the evaluation of teaching practice and student learning. Moreover, the teacher effectiveness researcher’s ‘tools of inquiry’, an epistemological collection and ensemble of scientific modelling is a form of ‘justificatory discourse serving to justify science or a particular position in the scientific field’ (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 6). TER espousing on the one hand a neutral or unbiased form of epistemological inquiry, is in effect a methodological representation and reproduction of the “dominant discourse of science about itself” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 6) and much of what it claims about effective teaching practice as an assessable and objectifiable form of practice is a scholastic summary of the ‘scientific’ investigation as an action and method of inquiry.

Dominant scientific processes as legitimated forms of inquiry for the evaluation of teacher performance and student achievement reveal an exercise of power that manifests in education system mechanisms of surveillance and control. Moreover, standardised outcomes of schooling, particularly those centred on specific literacy and numeracy levels of achievement are emphasized. Teacher behaviours and/or actions become crucial identifiers of effective classroom instructional practice as a result and a heightened shift in emphasis that raises the ‘stakes’ towards the end result of schooling is now the preferred education system position. Value-added TER is representative of this shift.

The Foucauldian and Bourdieuan categorisation of TER in that case serves a purpose. In short, it organizes and arranges – sorts out – the discursive composition and practical logic of the TER format and design. A distinctive separation and categorical classification is an outcome and product of this purpose. The problem of TER is then displayed in its entirety, composed of its two essential elements. First, it is displayed as a controlling discourse and ‘tekhn of logos’ (Foucault, 2011, p. 335). Second, is its exhibition as a practical logic based on a corresponding “objective systematicity of practice” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 92) that subjectivizes.

What now remains is to expand upon the break down and separation of the dialectical critique of TER. Chapter four begins this expansive discussion by considering the Foucauldian ‘parrhesiastic enunciation’ (Foucault, 2011, p. 64) of TER as a system of power.
Chapter Four – Foucault: A Critical Framework

Introduction

This Chapter argues for the application of a Foucauldian theoretical framework to the problem of classroom TER. Foucault’s studies of discipline, bio-politics and government consider the role of repression through forms of control and power. His studies suggest that social institutions (prisons, schools, factories and so on) establish their own particular forms of power generally by way of a normative law immanent to the institutionalised population and “constituted in the practices and knowledges of the human sciences” (Bastalich, 2001, p. 47). This Chapter explicitly charts Foucault’s theoretical notion of critique and in so doing, draws on his work in an attempt to identify the key features that characterize classroom TER discourse and debate within a neo-liberal economic and political social context. Indeed, a key difference between this chapter and the chapter that precedes it is that it focuses on a special administrative role for TER within education.

The practice of teaching operates within an economic and political context that shapes and/or subjectifies. Foucault’s idea of governmentality illustrates that the art of government emphasizes a specific form of rationality that is centred on the regulatory control of populations. Governmentality operates through a tacit yet conditioned and routinized process of social exchange and interaction. The “creation of new orders of knowledge, new objects of intervention, new forms of subjectivity” (Curtis, 2002, p. 2) characterizes a “science of government” (Peters, 2007, p. 166) that is concerned with the analysis of population and wealth for the purposes of governing. The critical theoretical framework of Foucault encompassing his notions of governmentality, surveillance and “regimes of truth” (Foucault, 2008, p. 19) is of particular relevance to a critical examination of TER as it illustrates how contemporary neo-liberal and neo-conservative political practice, through an adherence to enhanced levels of performance and accountability, documents and objectifies student learning, student achievement and classroom teaching practice. Moreover, the emphasis on teacher performance in terms of classroom pedagogy and individual student achievement fails to notice and so misses the sum total of teaching and learning. In other words, only a partial rather than complete version and depiction of teaching practice and student achievement is given. In his description of governmentality, Foucault is concerned with the tendency to ‘rationalise’ aspects of political affairs, including the function of a State. His idea of governmentality specifically focuses upon aspects of political economy and apparatuses of either governmental or individual security that seek to regulate behaviour and, more broadly, define actions. In terms of TER, Foucault’s idea of governmentality may be used to highlight issues of public trust in the teaching profession. Sachs (2003), for example, points to the close scrutiny of teachers at both the public and private level, and she also highlights the often made claim that supposed poor standards in student academic achievement are linked directly to poor teaching and inferior educational standards. She moves on to say that the:
...development and implementation of standards and regimes in the UK, the US and elsewhere can be seen in this light. Governments want control over a compliant teaching profession and see that standards regimes provide the regulatory framework to achieve this end. (p. 6)

Moreover, she makes the connection between an increase in calls for standards and control with enhanced regulation and system enforcement of sanctions. These specific and central features of governmentality apply to educational practice.

Informed by these understandings from Foucault’s work, there are three major parts that form the Chapter. The first discusses his theory of critique and considers the critical tradition of inquiry. In doing so, it is suggested that Foucauldian critical inquiry and analysis provides a basis for the epistemological inquiry of systems of control such as TER. The relevance here to TER is his serious treatment of truth and, in particular, in the study of relationships between power and the subject. This part of the Chapter highlights a significant and key feature of Foucauldian thought, the imposed “technologies of domination” (Peters, 2003, p. 209) through state fashioned systems of inquiry, through which Foucault shows how players are bounded and formed by the system(s) that govern them. It is a contention of this thesis that particular expressions of positivist classroom TER represent formalist systems of educational theory and practice considered normative and thus best suited for the evaluation and analysis of contemporary schooling systems including the pedagogical and instructional performance of classroom teachers. For this reason, a critical dialectics of TER embodies and exemplifies “parrhesia”, the “free-spokeness” (Foucault, 2011, p. 2) needed to ‘tell it like it is’. To do so entails re-focused TER towards its specific limitations, highlighting ‘missing components’ of the research process.

This leads into the second part of the Chapter, the Foucauldian notion of governmentality. Foucault’s idea of governmentality brings to light contemporary economic and political systems that impact on education and the classroom teacher practitioner. In broad terms, this section of the Chapter discusses the neo-liberal economic and political paradigm showing how contemporary economic and political considerations influence education as an object of thought for policy consideration. The discussion also acts as a reminder of the “present day reconstructions of the discourses of research” (Lincoln & Canella, 2004, p. 6), which now function as systems of “regulatory and disciplinary powers” (Lincoln & Canella, 2004, p. 7), with the ability and power to punish and discipline, the influence of which extends into the classroom and strategies and methods of teaching practice.

The third part of the Chapter is a discussion of Foucault’s notion of surveillance, and extends upon his idea of governmentality. In this account, the classroom teacher is constituted by an objectivist research methodology that traces improved student learning outcomes directly to the pedagogical and instructional practice of the classroom teacher. Moreover, the classroom teacher is bounded by an objectivist research method called upon by education policy-makers
for the purposes of establishing modes of classroom practice that enhance the learning outcomes of students. Foucault traces the bounded subjugation of individuals through system-oriented surveillance and exposes the relationships of power predominant within a network of possible relations between opposing forces. The problem of classroom TER, explored in this thesis, exists within a broader contemporary concern with learning outcomes and academic achievement of public school students and is thus part of a broader intensified call for accountability in education (see Cheng & Tsui, 1999; Rowe, 2003; Ayres, Sawyer & Dinham, 2004; Leigh & Ryan, 2008). The teacher then represents a case for study.

Foucault is concerned with the ‘technologies of positioning’, that is, the examination of ‘technologies’ that position an individual for observation and study. Foucault’s theoretical framework provides for the critical analysis and examination of current TER discourse and debate. Its importance lies in clearly showing how teachers are subjugated by research and policy-making. The application of Foucault’s ideas of regimes of truth, governmentality and surveillance, bounded in an over-arching sense by his theory of critique, highlights the contemporary position of a classroom teacher practitioner as a subjugated object of study as it exposes missing elements of positivist TER. Nevertheless, his work does not provide for an alternative research methodology that perhaps could best capture and describe the work and role of a classroom teacher practitioner. Hence, the Chapter concludes by briefly foregrounding the work of Pierre Bourdieu in order that a more detailed study of the theoretical and positivist framework of a logic of teaching practice can occur. This is taken up more fully in Chapter five.

1. A Theory of Critique

The fundamentals of Foucault’s theory of critique are situated in a form of questioning or inquiry that is ontological in its expression towards the foundation of a new method of critical thought. The theoretical framework of Foucault’s theory of critique stems from and is grounded within the Enlightenment’s “dare to know” (Foucault, 1997, p. 106) tradition of inquiry and, as such, is part of a critical tradition that poses questions such as: What is our actuality? What is the present field of possible experiences? (Foucault, 1997, p. 106). To this end, Foucault was concerned about relationships formed and existing between people in the everyday. A major aspect of his work concentrated on the ‘positioning’ of individuals thus focusing on the experiences of people as subjects. For Foucault, “the question of the relationships between power, truth and the subject” (Foucault, 1997, p. 47) forms a unique component of study in that it provides a foundation for inquiry into the nature of division as a legitimised action responsible for a historically emergent topological stratification. The stratification mentioned here encompasses not only the social, viewed and understood as or through an analysis of class, and all that the word class entails, but incorporates an attention to detail of virtually all levels and aspects of human interaction. The new “political anatomy” (Foucault, 1977, p. 138) consists in a “meticulous observation of detail, and at the same time a political awareness of these small things, for the control and use of men” (Foucault, 1997, p. 138). This “utilitarian rationalization of detail”
(Foucault, 1977, p. 139), emanating in response to particular needs, fashioned systems or a system of inquiry for purposes of accountability and political control. Foucauldian critical theory and analysis is a visible and primary channel or conduit for epistemological inquiry into systems of control and as such can act as the “eyes and the voice” (Deleuze, 1999, p. 43) of one that may think otherwise and not from an established and already pre-configured dominant ‘order’.

An important aspect of Foucault’s theory of critique is his serious treatment of truth in the study of relationships between power and the subject. A critical ontology for Foucault must be composed of not necessarily a body of knowledge as factual content that one can draw upon, but rather should be “conceived as an attitude, an ethos” (Foucault, 1997, p. 132) with the capability to bring about knowledge through an understanding and recognition of “limits that are imposed on us” (Foucault, 1997, p. 132). This represents a key feature of Foucauldian thought in that state-fashioned systems of inquiry bring with them their own procedures that often lead to particular results, which are considered valid and reliable and thus, for Foucault, are no more than “games of truth” (Peters, 2004, p. 50). Foucauldian critical theory is a rigorous analysis of the techniques or ‘regimes of truth’ used to establish certainty and, in this sense, Foucault is concerned with mechanisms that produce truths through constructed and dominant discourses. Invariably for Foucault, human beings are constituted as subjects through regimes of truth that objectify the self and are thus composed of modes of objectification incorporating modes of inquiry, often scientistic in method that divide and stratify human practices and actions. The basis to this form of objectification through dogmatic adherence to purely logical positivist science or “scienticity” (Lather, 2006, p. 783) is to bring about an order of things by way of an empirical scientifically-oriented orthodoxy resulting, it is expected, in an analysed version of events then portrayed as truth. This in many ways is the key and central feature of Foucault’s work, in that the operation of power within advanced post-Fordist Western economies has shifted. The shift has moved beyond a purely operative and singular sovereign form of power to one that is “more diffuse, anonymous, and immanent” (Bastalich, 2001, p. 51). The operation of power in contemporary times is for Foucault an operation that is connected to the “production, circulation and authorisation of truth” (Bastalich, 2001, p. 51).

The Foucauldian critical approach takes note of power relationships between participants and acknowledges that human beings as subjects are constantly moulded by “practices and techniques of subjectivation” (Simola, Heikkinen & Silvonen, 1998, p. 66). The historical basis to the subjectivation and objectivation of individuals for Foucault had its genesis in a broader theme, one that was concerned with aspects of governing. This “governmentalization” (Foucault, 1997, p. 28), a term used by Foucault to describe the emerging arts of governing, (for example, the art of pedagogy, the art of politics and so on), brought with it a form of authority. Governmentalization for Foucault subjugated the individual “in the reality of a social practice through mechanisms of power that adhere to a truth” (Foucault, 1997, p. 32). A significant part of Foucault’s work centred on forms of government, particularly aspects concerned with and developed through the arts of
governing. The critical theory approach adopted by Foucault (1997) is aligned with what he terms the “art of not being governed quite so much” (p. 29).

Foucault’s theoretical framework rei es archived knowledge, analysed and interpreted from a standpoint that traces its historical development. Foucault’s theory of critique considers the importance and relevance of the written word as text from within written statements and the effects these have had upon people. As statements can define the position of an individual, Foucault seeks to analyse the space(s) that written statements define or describe. Foucauldian critique is then a study of occupied space or position. In an exposition of Foucauldian critique, Deleuze (1999) states that three different realms of space are identified and encircle any statement (p. 6). The first Deleuze calls collateral space and has no local identity. Statements written or uttered from within collateral space “move from description to observation, calculation, institution and prescription, and use several systems or languages in the process” (Deleuze, 1999, p. 6). In this space, the statement exists and is expressed as a “primitive function, or as the first meaning of the term regularity” (Deleuze, 1999, p. 7). Correlative space is the second area and is a link between a statement and its subjects, objects and concepts. Using Deleuze’s (1999) examples, a “contract necessitates an underwriter, a poster implies a copywriter, a collection indicates the existence of a compiler” (p. 7). A statement occupying a correlative space derives a function. The third realm Deleuze calls complementary space, which represents non-discursive formations. Examples include, political events, educational practices and processes. Statements from within this area have an “institutional milieu” (Deleuze, 1999, p. 9) attached to them; for example, the position of a teacher in a school. The core of Foucault’s theory of critique in terms of statements is not necessarily the words, phrases or propositions uttered, rather, it is the “change in nature” (Deleuze, 1999, p. 17) of the subjects of the uttered or written proposition, word or phrase. This part of Foucault’s theory of critique seeks to expose and outline how objects of a proposition or statement “become dispersed throughout the opacity of language” (Deleuze, 1999, p. 17). Invariably they act as the means through which individuals can be controlled and managed. In terms of classroom TER, it centralizes the work and role of the teacher and classroom pedagogy. For instance, “value-added evidence demonstrates quite clearly that classrooms and teachers matter” (Pianta & Hamre, 2009, p. 109). Furthermore, “not only is a good part of the value of attending school conveyed at the level of classrooms, but teachers play a major role in determining the value of the classroom environment for student learning and development” (Pianta & Hamre, 2009, p. 110). The centrality of the classroom teacher and their classroom pedagogy is highlighted, pronounced and in full observable view within these particular statements.

The hybridized interplay between knowledge as truth and truth as knowledge is a re-current theme in Foucault’s theoretical framework of critique. Truth to Foucault can only ever show itself to knowledge through an entwined ‘problematised’ relationship. The two entities are connected as a sequence of “problematisations” (Deleuze, 1999, p. 54), whereby the visible and what is purportedly seen is not necessarily the representable picture of what may be the case.

There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses
of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. (Foucault, 1980, p. 93)

It is for this reason that Foucault has generated a critical framework that releases one from imposed interpretations. The importance and relevance of Foucault’s theory of critique is in its design. It is a design that has been developed as a method of analysis for the examination of knowledge, truth and power by way of “a pragmatically oriented, historical interpretation” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 120) of cultural and social practices. Foucault is “seeking to construct a mode of analysis of those cultural practices in our culture which have been instrumental in forming the modern individual as both object and subject” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 120). Furthermore, Foucault (1980) says that “we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function” (p. 93). The specific effects of power found through how individuals are judged and/or classified function as a consequence of ‘true discourses’. Power acts by the objectification of the individual or subject. It is upon actions that power exerts itself.

The exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome. (Foucault, 1982, p. 789)

The positivist classroom TER researcher or education policy-maker, does not possess power but has the means to influence the behaviours of classroom teacher practitioners particularly in terms of teaching practice. The bureaucratic and administrative subjugation of classroom teachers and teaching practice is achieved through education policy as a preferred method of control.

For example, the analysis of power in Foucauldian critique demonstrates Foucault’s belief in the uid nature of power relations. For Foucault, power as an entity is diffuse, always moving. Whilst on occasion power may be traced to and located from within a place of privilege, it may not necessarily remain static. “Power has no essence; it is simply operational” (1999, p. 24) to echo Deleuze. Its functionality is relational not only operating on those who are in a position to execute it (the dominant) but also relying on the dominated for the hold it has on them. Foucauldian critique, particularly in the analysis of disciplinary power and the study of the history of sexuality, illustrates the capacity of power to produce reality and so produce truth. Deferring to Deleuze (1999) again, power “produces truth before it ideologizes, abstracts or masks” (p. 25). At the very least, Foucauldian critique is interested in identifying and then destroying the “doctrines of development and progress” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 109). It is to the “play of wills” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 106) that Foucault gazes in order to evaluate and then examine how “both scientific objectivity and subjective intentions emerge together in a space set up not by individuals but by social practices” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 105). The claim of objectivity for Foucault “masks subjective motivations” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 105), which it must be said emerge through subsequent imposed interpretations of considered
universals, be it of behaviour, methodology or other forms of practice in any social or academic sphere. Teacher effectiveness research is framed by schematised universals. One example involves the value-added component of a teacher’s practice. If student prior achievement is held constant and prior student test results are assembled into a statistical model, student scores in a subsequent year assuming any gains made should be solely attributable to the teacher reflecting teacher effectiveness (see Haertel, Rothstein, Amrein-Beardsley & Darling-Hammond, 2011).

Foucault provides the requisite theoretical framework, primarily based on the application of a ‘critical lens’, for addressing the problem of classroom TER, by outlining a theory of critique, the focus of which may not only be an exploration of positivist TER discourse but a complete and thorough examination of contemporary education policy and direction. The application of Foucault’s ‘tools of analysis’, structured by his theory of critique, to contemporary secondary school education and, more specifically, to TER, occurs within a broader analysis of forms of knowledge and relations of power.

Central to a Foucauldian account of contemporary education are a range of ubiquitous and relatively mundane procedures and relays of power which manipulate space and time and produce and circulate knowledge, and in so doing regulate the contexts of individual and collective subjects, augment their capacities and channel their effects. They are aimed, in short, at rationalising the management of individuals, and, where they come to support, link up and coordinate with each other in more or less constant or uniform ways, as in educational institutions, they form what Foucault called blocks of capacity-communication-power. (Deakon, 2005, p. 74)

Moreover, the tripartite nature of Foucauldian analysis based on his archaeology of knowledge, the genealogical study of power and the ethical study of the self, suggests that TER must be addressed within a critical framework that acknowledges the influences of dominant power-knowledge relationships as they exist in secondary school education, and what effect this has on the self of the classroom teacher. Thus, Foucauldian analysis hinges on:

1. regime of truth: the identification of particular features of a regime or system, developed through the relationship between power/knowledge,

2. technologies of the self: constituted by “normative frameworks of behaviour for individuals” (Foucault, 2011, p. 3) that occur as a consequence of a regime of truth, and,

3. subjectivity: identifying how subjects are formed through relations of power.

These aspects of Foucauldian analysis provide for a research approach that can strongly articulate a critical examination of positivist TER that at a minimum, problematizes TER method and discourse/debate. It also contextualizes and problematizes classroom teaching practice.
A Foucauldian examination of classroom TER is then, an empirical procedure that describes the “vectors of power” (Mayo, 2000, p. 2) as they form subject(s) of education (classroom teachers). It is, in the first instance, an approach that can identify the source of power, which it is argued in this thesis, stems from forms of governance and control. There are two prominent aspects to consider. The first is the trust placed in a metricated and positivist research method charged with establishing the effectiveness of a classroom teacher’s pedagogical practice. There is an essential and necessary “degree of effectivity” (Althusser, 2009, p. 196) found within the actual method of research itself for it deals with the construction of an articulated conception of effective teaching practice. The second incorporates the broader and, perhaps more importantly, the influence of four distinct relations of power. Foucault has identified these as the economic, political, judicial and epistemological (see Deacon, 2005) and a critical examination of classroom TER must grapple with how relations of power operate in terms of the discourse of TER. In searching for a description of the vectors of power inherent in the discourse of positivist TER, Foucault’s method of examination helps to ask questions of the research method and technique of analysis. For example, rather than ask what makes for an effective classroom teacher or perhaps how does an effective classroom teacher behave, Foucault shifts the question towards what regime(s) of truth or power/knowledge permits such statements or questions to emerge and be legitimated as truth. Moreover, Foucauldian analysis and its application to the problem of TER, can assist to re-evaluate the positivist teacher effectiveness researcher’s own practices, thus perhaps changing their research approach. In other words, adopting Foucault’s theoretical approach may lead to the alteration of particular kinds of questions, thus acknowledging Foucault’s warnings about the constraints placed upon individuals and the “constrictions attended by subjectivity” (Mayo, 2000, p. 12).

Teacher effectiveness research, and the special importance attached to it through epistemological power, makes possible forms of control that operate not only at the classroom activity level but also at the school, and more broadly, school-system governance level.

Any system of education is a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledges and powers which they carry. (Foucault, 1984, p. 123)

The critical interrogation of classroom TER through the activation of key and specific Foucauldian methods of analysis, the main thrust of which involves the identification of power/knowledge relations, provides a useful way of illustrating and characterising the practice of teaching. Teaching practice, as an active school and classroom based exchange is an exchange that occurs as a performance under the critical gaze of others and, increasingly, it is the teacher as subject that is exposed rather than the knowledge transmitted. The problem of ‘teacher effectiveness’ remains open to Foucauldian analysis incorporating regimes of truth, games of truth, subjectivation and normalization. Governmental and political control of teaching practice through an intensified regime of system-wide accountability is the first identifiable key feature that characterizes TER discourse and debate. It occurs within a neo-liberal and neo-conservative economic and political social
context. A core and important feature of this type of political and economic control is surveillance through an ever-present gaze. An important aspect of surveillance is the Foucauldian conception of governmentality. It has a distinctive controlling purpose in a contemporary post-Fordist world. I now turn to this particular aspect of Foucault’s thought.

2. Governmentality

The Foucauldian interest in how power is implemented deals with the complexity and techniques of governmentality. In his description of governmentality, Foucault is concerned with the tendency to ‘rationalise’ aspects of political affairs, including the function of a state. His idea of governmentality specifically focuses upon aspects of political economy and apparatuses of either governmental or individual security that seek to regulate behaviour, and more broadly, define actions. Specific features and core characteristics of governmentality for Foucault (1991) include:

1. The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections; the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit complex, form of power, which has as its principal form of knowledge political economy and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security.

2. The tendency which, over a long period and throughout the West, has steadily led toward the pre-eminence of this type of power that may be called government over all other forms (sovereignty, discipline, etc.) resulting, on the one hand, in the formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses and, on the other, in the development of a whole complex of savoirs.

3. The process, or rather the result of the process, through which the state of justice of the Middle Ages, transformed into the administrative state during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, gradually became governmentalized. (pp. 102-103)

Implicit in his elaboration of the major themes mentioned concerning governmentality, Foucault essentially critiques the tendency to reduce to “a unity or singularity based on a certain functionality” (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 137), the problem of the state.

Indeed, the neo-liberal paradigm in education has coincided with contemporary public sector reforms that have resulted in enterprise forms of education. This represents a shift away from perhaps what may be termed a culture of dependency, to one that is seen more in terms of self-reliance (Besley & Peters, 2007). Established practices and knowledge developed through earlier times, generally Keynesian, are now to some extent, discredited. The distrust of “expert knowledges” (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 159), such as that of teachers, often developed through practice and ‘on-the-job’ experience, has been superseded by the “calculating science of actuarialism and accountancy (“the audit society”)” (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 159). The neo-liberal paradigm in education and its ramifications, distinguished by an emphasis on the individual, has marked out the classroom teacher practitioner through a defining discourse centred
on classroom TER and its relationship to student learning outcomes. There is an obvious human capital theory component to this relationship, one that links a nation’s economic growth and broader prosperity to education and, more specifically, classroom educational practice. Hence, a need for system control and observation.

The application of Foucauldian critique and the idea of governmentality to an understanding of the neo-liberal approach to public education policy requires a perspective that takes account of the question of how power is exercised. Besley and Peters (2007) suggest that the neo-liberal paradigm of education must be viewed from within the Foucauldian perspective of governmentality. This is in order to fully fathom the relationship that exists between the rationality of government that permits and also requires the “practice of freedom of its subjects” (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 132), a relationship founded upon governmental control and forms of self-government. It is a relationship that is also founded on an “active reconstruction” (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 133) between government and self-government through a type of individual “responsibilization” (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 133). A Foucauldian investigation of the neo-liberal political and economic project and education identifies the distinctive features of neoliberalism, that, in its most obvious form, manifests three specific and related components. Each component gains expression through the ‘individual’. The first component seeks “an economy of moral regulation” (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 133) through which the individual takes more responsibility for their own economic welfare. Secondly, and following from the first component, neo-liberalism has, according to Besley and Peters (2007), usurped the “natural and spontaneous order of characteristic Hayekian liberalism” (p. 133) by artificially arranging and contriving “forms of the free, entrepreneurial, and competitive conduct of economic-rational individuals” (Burchall, 1996, p. 23). Finally, the application of Foucauldian critique to an understanding of the neo-liberal paradigm and its relationship to education and teaching practice reveals a connection between ‘expertise and politics’, the main thrust of which is most obvious in the contemporary approach to forms of welfare. The development of “actuarial rationality and new forms of prudentialism” (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 133) are evident through discursive disclosures, cloaked in economic language and terms such as, “purchaser-provider, audit, performance and risk management” (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 133). A critical-theory approach to governmentality and its relationship to positivist TER is then an attempt at deriving and identifying system practices that “produce, enable, and legitimise the apparently incontestable ‘truths’ the subject holds most dear” (Bastalich, 2001, p. 52). It then must also be remembered that knowledge such as that produced by the positivist teacher effectiveness researcher and subsequently used by the education policy-maker is not simply a manifestation of pure research. Rather, knowledge of this kind arises through the complex interplay of relations between the political, economic, social and historical conditions at work, each with their own sets of rules and normative discourses. Indeed, the positivist teacher effectiveness researcher dispenses with home background, community context, individual student interest in school and learning, individual student aptitude and interests, peer
culture, prior teacher, prior schooling, start of school year student differences and the effects of out-of-school influences that also may include peer association (see Haertel, Rothstein, Amrein-Beardsley & Darling-Hammond, 2011).

3. Notions of Surveillance: The Gaze

Interwoven into Foucault’s theory of critique resides his articulation of ‘technologies of power’ constituted and manifested as and through subjugation of human beings by mechanisms of surveillance. His mechanism of surveillance theme is developed primarily in order to study and describe how the human subject as an object of knowledge particularly within “scientific discourses or truth games” (Peters, 2004, p. 54) eventuates. Observation and the act of observation of the human subject represent a core feature of Foucauldian analysis. Commensurate with the observational act sits an “apparatus of observation, recording and training” (Foucault, 1977, p. 173) and a process of instrumentation all working to progressively objectify the human subject through “subtle partitioning of human behaviour” (Foucault, 1977, p. 173). Foucault maintains that the exercise of power is not necessarily an acquired or appropriated property, it should be conceived more in terms of its “dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings” (Foucault, 1977, p. 26) thereby illustrating within its use a “network of relations, constantly in tension, in activity” (Foucault, 1977, p. 26). In that sense, power and its functionality is “operational” (Deleuze, 1999, p. 24) lacking in any specific substance or component and exhibited through “the set of possible relations between forces” (Deleuze, 1999, p. 24).

The intentional disciplining role of imposed technologies of power and surveillance mechanisms is documented in Foucault’s work on discipline (1977). In the area of education, Foucault mentions that a hierarchized model of observation is at work with defined and regulated surveillance mechanisms “inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency” (Foucault, 1977, p. 176). His use of Bentham’s Panopticon (1977, p. 200) with its consequent major effect “to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault, 1977, p. 201), has clear educational relevance for the current work and role of teachers in terms of TER. An ever-present “vigilant eye” (Perryman, 2006, p. 148) and the frequent use of “accountability in education” (Perryman, 2006, p. 148) brings with it a concentrated analysis of the classroom teacher practitioner as a ‘case’ for study. It is now the classroom teacher and their instructional practice that becomes a case for study “which at one and the same time constitutes an object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power” (Foucault, 1977, p. 191). The educational milieu and classroom situation with its related and associated influences and circumstances is no longer as important. For Foucault, it is the “individual as he may be described, judged, measured, compared with others, in his very individuality” (Foucault, 1977, p. 191) that remains the sole relevant detail necessary for documentation and, furthermore, it is the “individual who has to be trained or corrected, classified, normalized, excluded, etc.” (Foucault, 1977, p. 191). It is this aspect that is perhaps most valued
but seldom stated, by education policy makers in that contemporary education policy and direction are reportedly determined by what has been found by research to ‘work’ in the classroom and, as such, must be of worth and should be implemented.

In education as in most areas of contemporary society, there is a current obsession with efficiency and effectiveness. A heightened concern for “performativity” (Perryman, 2006, p. 150) centred on “performing the normal within a particular discourse” (Perryman, 2006, p. 150) runs parallel to the arguments raised by Foucault about the individual becoming the case for study. For the classroom teacher practitioner it has resulted in judgments about teacher performance and instructional effectiveness based on, in most instances, students’ learning outcomes and individual academic achievement. Moreover, it is evident in discussions on publication of school league tables, high stakes testing results and inspection reports. Jeffrey (2002), one of many writers in this area, notes that:

A performativity discourse currently pervades teachers’ work. It is a discourse that relies on teachers and schools instituting self-disciplinary measures to satisfy newly transparent public accountability and it operates alongside a market discourse. (p. 1)

This is linked with Foucault’s notion of “normalization” (1977, p. 183) in that only behaviour judged and accepted as normal is instituted by way of normalizing processes and procedures. As Foucault (1977) writes, “surveillance, and with it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power” (p. 184). For Foucault, particular knowledge and practices accompany normalization processes and procedures often established through articulation of rules and judgments in order that individuals follow ‘the rules’ by way of an educated or trained acceptance as opposed to a forced sense of subject coercion. In short, the enacted processes of governmentality mean linking successful system performance to assessment, appraisal and evaluation. Teachers become “agents and subjects of measurements” (Perryman, 2006, p. 152) as a consequence.

The boundaries then for school-system-led reform are found in normalization discourse. Schools and classroom teachers must adhere to this normalised discourse for successful demonstration of its parameters and inherent stated aims and objectives. A significant part of the attraction towards an ‘accountability ideology’ within education is its simplicity and reductionism particularly in terms of data generation (testing), its high-stakes consequence laden impetus and its emphasis on standards and performance (behavioralizing outcomes) (see Sirotnik, 2004). The shift towards accountability and performativity in education has also occurred within a political and legislative context that has moved towards an output oriented model featuring measurable student performance as opposed to an input oriented model incorporating measurable school resources (see Sirotnik, 2004). The drive towards accountability in education has led some researchers to describe it not as an:

...educational but rather political movement fuelled by economic concerns. Economic and political forces provide the main thrust behind the movement that has attracted many who really believe that it will improve education. These forces aim to hold
down costs at all levels of education while at the same time striving to maintain the economic and political status quo, complete with all its present inequities. (Martin, Overholt & Urban, 1975, p. 75)

This type of historical description is consistent with a Foucauldian approach that emphasizes the economic and political.

The treatment of classroom TER from within a Foucauldian perspective places it under scrutiny and highlights the taken-for-granted or accepted status of purely objectivist research methodology. It is proposed in this thesis that classroom TER and ideas linked to it, such as effective teaching, school effectiveness, value-add, student learning outcomes and teacher performance and capacity, serve “particular purposes in the constitution of knowledge and the exercise of power” (Lingard, Hayes, Mills & Christie, 2003, p. 127). The relationship between TER and instruments of control such as normalizing judgment is expressed by a regime of objectification that takes the classroom teacher as the case for study.

One of the major problems that confronts most educational systems concerns the need for developing a valid personnel evaluation system based on a strong theoretical framework. Unless the criteria for evaluating teachers emerge from tested theories on teacher and school effectiveness, evaluators cannot readily be accountable for how their judgements about teacher performance have been arrived at. The main theoretical models of TER research (TER) can be seen as a source for generating a set of criteria for teacher evaluation that captures the multiple teacher roles in a changing educational environment. Teachers themselves should also be engaged in the process of generating such criteria, if they are to accept them as a means for measuring their professional effectiveness. (Kyriakides, Demetriou, & Charalambous, 2006, p. 1)

The inherent processes of objectification are incorporated in technologies of power manifested through scientistic application of quantification techniques as the requisite ‘tools’ of analysis. The objectifying process for classroom teachers uses as its procedural method a research model as a defining mode of analysis. Placing TER under critical examination allows for the exploration of how the discourse of TER constitutes its own forms, functions and interests. In the study conducted by Kyriakides, Demetriou and Charalambous (2006), for example, the major aim of which was the generation of measurable criteria for teacher evaluation, the teacher as the object of study was fitted or described by a set of TER models. Each model has its particular set of characteristics. Seven TER models were identified and Chapter three considered them in some detail.

The steady ascension of positivist classroom TER heralds the constant examination of an individual teacher’s classroom instructional practice. The “ceremony of this objectification” (Foucault, 1977, p. 187) expressed as and through one of Foucault’s technologies of power–discipline–with the examination a core technique, is present in the research process used by TER researchers and is a form of “compulsory objectification” (Foucault, 1977, p. 189).
Foucault (1977) suggests that the “examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgement” (p. 184). It is expected that teachers and schools constantly review their work practices, in particular, how those work practices meet stated aims and objectives as stipulated by system authorities. Foucault (1977) suggests that the examination is constituted by three quite distinct properties linking the formation of knowledge and the exercise of power (pp. 187-191). First is the transformation made possible by the examination of the “economy of visibility into the exercise of power” (Foucault, 1977, p. 187). The technology of educational measurement prevalent in positivist classroom TER subjugates and corals teachers into “enactments of self-monitoring” largely through “development or checking of procedures for personal or group accountability” (Ball, 1997, p. 326). As Ball (1997) states, all of this “keeps the gaze in place” (p. 326) and is an active display of the prevailing technological apparatus used by teachers themselves, as they have been completely inculcated by an internalised “disciplinary mechanism” (Perryman, 2006, p. 155) that has made possible the “measurement of overall phenomena” (Foucault, 1977, p. 190). A steady and constant visibility “keeps the individual subjected” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 53), allowing for their possible manipulation and arrangement. Crucial information is left out, deemed irrelevant; for example, principal and school district leadership, school specific norms such as approaches to classroom management and implementation of curriculum, the ‘quality’ of a school’s entire teaching staff, the early childhood history of a student, parental involvement, peer culture, student attendance history and so on (see Haertel, Rothstein, Amrein-Beardsley & Darling-Hammond, 2011). In short, the entire focus shifts from broader influences of student achievement towards the individual teacher and their efficacy. Second is the introduction by the examination of “individuality into the field of documentation” (Foucault, 1977, p. 189). This allows for the possible description and production of written records. As Foucault (1977) writes:

The examination leaves behind it a whole meticulous archive constituted in terms of bodies and days. The examination that places individuals in a field of surveillance also situates them in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and x them. (p. 189)

Third, the examination “surrounded by all its documentary techniques, makes each individual a case” (Foucault, 1977, p. 191). Positivist accounts of classroom teaching practice, including the movement towards school effectiveness research, represents a “branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power” (Foucault, 1977, p. 191) with the individual classroom teacher practitioner the specific and particular subject–‘case’–for study, in the manner of the seven teacher effectiveness models outlined in Chapter three.

The work of Foucault (1977) neatly outlines how the measurement of overall phenomena developed and progressed over time. His analysis captures the transformation of the operation of power from one based on a sovereign model to that centred on persons or individuals. Indeed, his work bears testimony to the rising inadequacy of the sovereign and sovereign power due to
changing social conditions and practices. In Discipline and Punish (1977), Foucault traces how over time, in prisons, the military, factories, hospitals and schools, individuals acted and behaved based primarily upon a set of allocated “micro-institutional practices” (Bastalich, 2001, p. 55) that generally confined those same individuals to set spaces and tasks. Routinized activity was the norm, and maximum efficiency and productivity were assured through architecturally designed spaces that generally kept individuals separate, and under close scrutiny at all times. His studies of the development and progression of the measurement of overall phenomena, suggests that disciplinary techniques that link the hierarchical organisation of learning and employment “from simple to more complex levels of skill and knowledge” (Bastalich, 2001, p. 55), occurred as a deliberate manifestation of an exercise of power and control. “It is not a structure that emerges from a ‘natural’ human tendency to seek increased levels of expertise” (Bastalich, 2001, p. 55). Rather, the aim here is more utilitarian and functionalist, the essence of which is control, primarily over time and resources, generally human, upon which a multitude of data is gathered that makes possible the observation of a “new kind of object—an evolutive, progressive, and organic humanity” (Bastalich, 2001, p. 56).

Foucault’s analysis is then a study of the totally objectified and scrutinized individual which brings forth an understanding of how hierarchies operate. In particular, the operations of hierarchies and their effects upon people. The usefulness and efficiency of bodies and their habituated practices formed through hierarchical placement is for Foucault one of the obvious consequences and outcomes of acts of control and power. Foucault acknowledges techniques of discipline that regularize and confine behaviour. These disciplinary techniques aim to “capitalise the time of individuals, accumulate it in each of them, in their bodies, in their forces or in their abilities, in a way that is susceptible of use and control” (Foucault, 1977, p. 157). It is a disciplinary method that moves beyond a need of sovereign control, as individuals begin to regulate themselves. Foucault’s work on the disciplines reminds us that the individual as a subject of study is in some respects a product of an historical context. This work then is relevant to TER because it shows us that the vexed issue of effective teaching practice is another representation of the production of power. In this case, the power of positivist modes of research and inquiry, and the control and subsequent power exerted by education policy-makers over teaching practice through methods of observation and measurement.

Conclusion

A significant and core consideration of Foucault’s theoretical critical framework is his examination and analysis of ‘truth’ or of what passes as accepted or established truth. Foucault’s theoretical approach critically examines dominant perspectives of legitimation that are generally brought about through systemic ‘regimes’ often expressed by and of government. His analysis of ‘regimes of truth’ assists in the identification of the particular controlling and thereby constraining features and characteristics of a regime, thus exposing relationships of power and knowledge. This is of particular relevance to TER. The current emphasis in public education policy discussion and development rests on positivist forms of this research, particularly aspects of it that can capture
teacher behaviour and instructional practices that have an effect on the learning outcomes of public secondary school students. Moreover, as Gore (1993) suggests, “regimes of truth may be particularly relevant as a tool for the analysis of pedagogical discourse and practice inasmuch as disciplinary relations of power-knowledge are fundamental to pedagogy” (p. 60). Hence, Foucault offers a strategic pathway towards not only the identification of dominant classroom TER discourse, but also a critical analysis of the mechanism(s) that construct imposed positivist research discourse(s) and their effect upon classroom teacher practitioners.

A second contribution to the analysis of classroom TER is Foucault’s idea of governmentality. The key issue here is the constructed self as an object of study brought about through institutionalised forms and operations of power and control. In contemporary neo-liberal times, public school teacher practitioners are subject to dominant and system established forms of accountability and measurement that define successful school system and individual classroom teacher performance. This rhetoric of accountability brings at least two elements to the discussion of TER, and to the formation of public secondary school teacher practitioner subjectivity. It is succinctly put by Simola et al. (1998): “first, a constant self-reflection and self-evaluation as a new technique of the self, and second, a market-oriented “new entrepreneur” as the telos of teacherhood” (p. 80). This tends to reduce the debate and research emphasis of major educational problems such as school improvement and the learning outcomes of students to classroom teachers and their behaviour including their teaching practices. It suggests that classroom teachers rather than the “structural constraints of compulsory schooling, educational policy or curricular ideology” (Simola et al. 1998, p. 80) are the barriers and obstacles that must be overcome. Implicit in this part of the discussion is Foucault’s notion of surveillance and how particular and established dominant ‘technologies of power’ subjugate public school classroom teachers. It leads to considerations of mechanisms of surveillance and acknowledges Foucault’s analytical approach and tools of analysis incorporating technologies of the self and subjectivity in establishing the school-based parameters in which public secondary school classroom teacher practitioners operate.

Through the application of his critical framework, Foucault’s approach has the capacity to facilitate and investigate the established boundaries and ‘truths’ of positivist classroom TER theory. It can do this by revealing positivism’s particular view and observations of teaching practice for a system-prescribed set of accountability purposes, thus exposing issues of control and power that affect the contemporary public secondary school classroom teacher practitioner. The genealogical nature of Foucault’s work reveals the “discursive nature of power” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 55) defined by the properties and techniques of ‘biopower’–the examination–a core feature and element in positivism’s evaluation of contemporary classroom teaching practice. The broad discursive and critical Foucauldian illustration of power and control in terms of what practices produce is an indispensable feature of research into the problem of classroom TER. Nevertheless, there is still a missing element, that of the analysis and examination of
what produces practices. Indeed, Foucault is charged with not “giving enough weight to the contestation of practices” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 56). This is where a Bourdieuan emphasis on the analysis of structuring systems of practice and how agents negotiate power and resistance including questions of struggle within dominant systems, overcomes any inherent weaknesses in Foucault’s work. Chapter ve, the chapter that follows, turns to the work of Pierre Bourdieu and in particular his prominent study of a logic of practice.
Introduction

This chapter asserts the Bourdieuian notion of reproduction as a specific systemic function of schooling and education research. Specifically, the critical application of a Bourdieuian theoretical framework to classroom TER exposes the problematical nature of education research as a science of practice. To this extent, this chapter aims to outline and discuss significant and contestable aspects of classroom TER as a method and practice of inquiry for the evaluation of teaching and learning.

The Chapter unfolds in two parts. The first discusses a key feature of Bourdieu’s work: an examination of the education system and its role in social reproduction. This considers how dominant social classes seek to reproduce their relative status positions in society and the relationship of the educational system to the maintenance of reproductive strategies. The relevance here of Bourdieu’s social theory to the problem of TER and, in particular, aspects of his discussion centred on social reproduction, lies in consideration of the educational outcomes attained by students on finishing their post-compulsory years of secondary schooling. The discussion in this section of the Chapter is of social position and the argument, as it develops, suggests that particular sections of society are enriched and significantly benefit as a consequence of the necessary cultural and economic capital, largely through access as ‘players’ or agents in education. In other words, whilst it is acknowledged that effective teaching plays its part in the learning outcomes of students, it is argued that teacher effectiveness represents a part and only a part of the aggregated influence on the learning outcomes of students. The second part of the Chapter focuses on Bourdieu’s analysis of the science of practice. In aiming to study and examine the science of practice, Bourdieu (1977) states that one “has to construct the principle which makes it possible to account for all the cases observed, and only those, without forgetting that this construction, and the generative operation of which it is the basis, are only the theoretical equivalent of the practical scheme” (p. 11). In saying this Bourdieu implies that a realistic, veritable and credit-worthy method and mode of research analysis is necessary in order to honestly and accurately assess practice. It also must be acknowledged that practice includes a logic “which is not that of the logician” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 86). The analysis of information within a particular case inevitably involves interdependent aspects that by their nature and “by definition escape theoretical apprehension” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 87). Moreover, practical logic reduces all “thoughts, perceptions and actions” to a limited whole, generally by way of a “few generative principles, which are closely interrelated”, for the “sake of simplicity” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 87). A “sacrifice of rigour” represents the price paid for an “economy of logic” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 87). Bourdieu’s approach to the theory of practice is mindful of interdependent aspects within a situation that often are difficult to clarify and, moreover, may not in effect be conducive to analysis, particularly to a limited kind of objective analysis, hampered
by an apparent dis-attachment to the inherent interplay of agent(s) within the everyday. Bourdieu seeks to identify and thereby uncover aspects of research that conceal fundamental and derivative components of practice that are often not adequately represented by linear and discrete forms of inquiry. The significance of this part of the Chapter to a critique of TER is in the type of research used by educational researchers in order to analyse the relationship between the effectiveness of a teacher’s classroom teaching and the learning outcomes of students. Bourdieu acknowledges the limitations of particular forms of research and he devises a research approach that seeks to overcome specific difficulties encountered in the examination of practice. Drawing on his account, the study of teacher effectiveness requires analysis of information that resides within particular educational contexts and settings that influence the educational outcomes attained. This necessitates a method of inquiry that carefully traces all participatory influences on the effectiveness of a classroom teacher. Nevertheless, in saying this, it is the contention of this thesis that the intentions of the educational researcher and indeed of the research method itself in the examination of teacher effectiveness cannot quite capture nor vanquish all of the variables that impact upon classroom teaching and learning. Chapter nine of the thesis will address the excluded components of classroom TER in more detail.

1. Social Reproduction

The work of Pierre Bourdieu is capable not only of informing the examination of the contemporary practice of teaching, but also of informing the analysis of the broader practices and processes found in ‘systems of education’. Bourdieu’s theoretical focus in the area of education through an examination of relationships that exist within it has illustrated the structural basis to social inequity. Moreover, the application of Bourdieuan theoretical concepts to the role that schools and, more broadly, educational systems play in the lives of people has exposed the social and cultural processes at work in reproducing dominant class position. For example, an early study conducted in France by Bourdieu on the correlation between chances of access to the ruling classes and chances of access to higher education according to one’s social origin, indicates that the children of professionals, teachers, engineers and so on are more likely to gain access to higher education and have access to the dominant classes (see Bourdieu, 1973). Similarly, an early study conducted by Bourdieu on the chances of entering the dominant class and of fertility rates, indicates that the children of say unskilled workers have a 2.3% probability of entering the dominant class as opposed to the offspring of say a parent who is a member of the professional classes at 54.5% (see Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu’s work in researching school systems and education more broadly identifies particular legitimated cultural practices that include a systemic relevance usually seen if examination of the “hidden linkages between scholastic aptitude and cultural heritage” (Mills & Gale, 2007, p. 434) are uncovered. Despite contemporary discourses and theoretical debates emphasizing the ideologies of equal opportunity and meritocracy, the dominant classes exert significant influence upon educational direction ensuring that educational systems “reproduce the legitimate culture as it stands and produce agents capable of manipulating it legitimately”
Bourdieu’s work highlights the overwhelming influence of the dominant social group in society that “controls the economic, social, and political resources which are embodied in schools” (Mills & Gale, 2004, p. 2). For Bourdieu, the education system acts to preserve three core functions. The first involves transmission of the social and cultural ‘canons’ of society; an inherited cultural heritage passed from “generation to generation” (Bourdieu, 1973, p. 72) considered the “undivided property of the whole of society” (Bourdieu, 1973, p. 73). The school acts not to merely transmit the essential key skills and knowledge considered relevant, but also to socialize its participants into a “particular cultural tradition” (Swartz, 1997, p. 191), performing a function of cultural reproduction. A second function of the education system is to reproduce social class relations. The action and effect of schooling, Bourdieu (1973) argues:

...is unequal (if only from the point of view of duration) among children from different social classes, and whose success varies considerably among those upon whom it has an effect, tends to reinforce and to consecrate by its sanctions the initial inequalities. (p. 79)

Consequently, the education system reproduces “all the more perfectly the structure of the distribution of cultural capital among classes” (Bourdieu, 1973, p. 80). Thirdly, the education system “fulfils a function of legitimation” (Bourdieu, 1973, p. 84) in that by sanctifying the cultural heritage it dispatches, attention is diverted from the social hierarchies and reproduction functions that are necessary to perpetuate the social order.

Indeed, the work of Bourdieu in the area of social reproduction shows that educational systems and institutions actually work to exacerbate already prevalent social inequities. Foremost in his work on education and social reproduction, Bourdieu shows that schools act to maintain and enhance existing relationships of power through particular school based processes of student selection and instruction and school culture. Conferred privilege and bases of power persist in society by way of unequal distribution of cultural resources, specifically educational credentials, mechanisms of selection and cognitive classifications (see Swartz, 1997). ‘Cultural capital’ is a term commonly used by Bourdieu and represents the socially sanctioned or authorised value given to one’s cultural tastes, patterns of consumption, attributes, skills and awards (see Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002). Indeed, the preservation of social hierarchy occurs through the unequal distribution of one’s knowledge of the dominant culture (see Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000; Teese & Polesel, 2003). Bourdieuan analysis shows that educational systems “maintain the pre-existing order, that is, the gap between pupils endowed with unequal amounts of cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 20), thus highlighting the relevance and impact of social conditioning upon educational success. Employing the theoretical concepts of Bourdieu allows for the examination of imposed conditioning and recognition of structurally imposed forces which mould and frame behaviours of agents, including the permissible and allowable parameters for operation in a given field, expressed generally through the accumulated social or economic capital of an
agent. Schools and educational systems are active fields and are “fields of struggle” (Swartz, 1997, p. 121). As active and uid sites, there is the possibility not only of domination but also of resistance, though rarely if ever escaping the “logic of reproduction” (Swartz, 1997, p. 121). Through his work Bourdieu seeks to establish the situated connections of individuals, groups, and institutions embedded within a broad matrix of structured relations, the significance of which is to expose successful and consequently effective manipulation of capital existent in a chosen field. Bourdieuian analysis “affirms the primacy of relations” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 15) as opposed to “all forms of methodological monism” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 15), which tends to generate essentialist and inducted answers to questions of sociological importance. For Bourdieu, the interrelated connection between culture and economy and the “symbolic distinctions of culture” (Garnham, 1986, p. 421) depend on the associated class distinctions within the economy.

Notwithstanding this, Bourdieu highlights the class reproduction strategies used by agents seeking to maintain or improve their relative positions in the stratified order. Invariably the strategies used include investment of various types of capital in order to enhance or maintain field positions. By way of example, agents in the fields of law and medicine may invest heavily in education and also in activities of a typically cultural nature. In so doing, it may be expected that a type of ‘social capital’ is established providing a professional and social base of connections essential in maintaining and enhancing “honourability and respectability that is often essential in winning and keeping the confidence of high society, and with it a clientele” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 122). Maximising one’s positioning in a particular field requires attention to appropriate and relevant conversion strategies. Conversion strategies are a necessary part of maintaining and improving an agent’s position in a chosen field, and they depend upon two factors. The first involves the “volume and composition of the capital to be reproduced” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 125) and used for exchange. The second depends on the “state of the instruments of reproduction (inheritance law and custom, the labour market, the educational system)” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 125), which, in turn, depend on the power relations evident and acting between the various classes. Capital conversion strategies are required whenever there is significant structural change in the economy, bureaucracy or cultural markets. Converting capital from one form to another has relevance in the contemporary labour market as the currency of educational credentials provides access to and legitimizes entry into those markets (see Swartz, 1997). TER ignores the social and cultural capital embodied in schools. The teacher effectiveness researcher draws attention to classroom instruction and teacher performance as a distinctive indicator of student achievement. Furthermore, TER dispenses with strategies of reproduction that influence student achievement, preferring a limited process of inquiry focused exclusively on teaching practice.

Competitive effects between groups either struggling for entry into a market or fighting to maintain existing ‘class position’ often result in a need for capital conversion. This type of capital conversion effect is typically seen within the educational system. Bourdieu refers to it in terms of
class mobility in that the relationship between different classes and the educational system, which in various periods of time produces a ‘schooling boom’ through resultant changes experienced between jobs and employment and respective qualifications, intensifies the competitive quest for academic qualifications. Agents who make up the dominant social classes, primarily endowed with economic capital, tend to utilise the educational system, for 'ensuring' their social reproduction. Moreover, the incursion into the educational system of agents from class groupings who had previously under-utilised formal schooling, necessitates once dominant agents or players, who maintained educational exclusivity by virtue of their scholastic capital or qualifications, to heighten and intensify their investment. Consequently, the schooling system itself and the sites that represent and characterize it, become important locations and regions, capable of facilitating an almost continuous demand in and for education, producing and resulting in augmented qualifications (see Bourdieu, 1984).

The ramifications of increases in accredited scholastic qualifications, which represents in one form at least, an increase in cultural capital, leads inevitably to credential devaluation. It is often not recognised or little understood that the specific worth of an academic credential in terms of acquiring employment within the prevailing job market, simply put as the “rate of return on educational capital” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 134), is a “function of the economic and social capital that can be devoted to exploiting it” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 134). Paradoxically, those agents least endowed with the relevant economic and social capital necessary to exploit any educational investments made, fall victim to an accompanying de-valuing of the credential. Agents who already possess the necessary economic and social capital will usually triumph in accessing positions of status within a society or gain employment ahead of those agents lacking the required reserves of capital. The “dialectic of devaluation and compensation” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 135), often used as the strategy required to protect oneself against the effects of devaluation, and in doing so maintaining some hold within the employment ‘market’, only serves to further the growth in volume of qualifications bestowed.

Bourdieu’s studies in social and class reproduction have uncovered the re-conversion and reproductive strategies used by, in particular, the dominant social classes. Education has become a new and important source of “stratification” (Swartz, 1997, p. 181) in society, providing for status distinctions amongst the various sectors within middle and upper class social groups. Indeed, Bourdieu’s analysis in this area where he views social classes in terms of their relative volume and composition of capital, including social trajectory or movement through and between elds, enables a multi-dimensional examination of components embedded in class hierarchies. This has the advantage of considering what Bourdieu calls the ‘exchange rate’ between different types of capital, a key factor in class struggle. Moreover, Bourdieu favours a multi-dimensional analysis of components found within class hierarchies, because “additive linear models or one-dimensional mobility scales” (Swartz, 1997, p. 182) do not adequately treat the problem of class and social hierarchy. In terms of capital reproduction strategies, Bourdieu (1984) has found that actors of
a particular class pursue social reproduction strategies that will often maintain or enhance their relative positions in the social order. Recent Australian work (Campbell, 2005; Rowe & Windle, 2012) in the area of the middle class and its schooling tends to support the Bourdieuian theoretical breakdown and conceptualisation of strategic repositioning for educational advantage.

A constant and re-curring theme in the area of stratification involves the perpetuation of class position within a hierarchy. Strategies of re-conversion particularly within education often entrap or act to disadvantage agents least equipped to manage the requirements of the education market. Bourdieu (1984) refers to this as “allodoxia or misapprehension” (p. 142), where agents fail to recognise the ‘gap’ or difference between one’s objective chances of gaining employment as a direct result of their credentials or qualifications and the actual chances of gaining employment. In other words, a significant gap often exists between an agent’s aspirations and the actual probabilities of utilising a credential or qualification for purposes of employment.

In terms of classroom TER, it can be argued that one’s post school success at securing employment rests far more on the relationships already acting within the economy and employment market rather than their academic success. Indeed, it is a major contention of this Chapter that the contemporary emphasis on classroom TER in education policy formulation relates not only to a failure in abolishing the “system of relationships that unite academic success to social power” (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 217), but more broadly is a reaction to the often cited call for improvements in school site management emphasizing enhanced autonomy and accountability, in short, governance. In other words, “neither school effectiveness nor curriculum breadth” (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 217) and, moreover, a belief in overcoming the obvious inequities in the dominant system of social relationships that exist in society, can correct for the systemic imbalances that occur in the economy with respect to employment and vocational opportunity.

The overestimation by agents of the exchange value of the studies they undertake and of the possible future that the credential may bestow, is a result of the misapprehension developed by the failure to acknowledge the objective reality of one’s position and qualifications. Nevertheless, the “new system” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 154) of education allows considerable space for one’s aspirations, as it is largely ill defined and relies on uncertainty, thus offering a type of persistent sense of self-renewal and change. This is done through provision of lifelong learning and “schemes of continuing education (education permanente)” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 155). The new system of education operating within the broader and new system of “structural instability” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 156), now prevalent in the labour market, has also resulted in a shift in critical emphasis, which ostensibly favours self-examination with its theme of “personal critique and crisis” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 156). This is in direct opposition to the once accepted emphasis on social critique rather than self-introspection and evaluation of self-worth. The school system and the academic credential(s) that it bestows, is in any case, “less and less capable of guaranteeing access to the highest positions and is never sufficient to guarantee in itself access to economic
power” (Bourdieu, 1973, p. 98). The obvious difference in the structure of economic capital and the structure and distribution of cultural capital represents the distinguishable and defining feature of education and the academic market. Access to the dominant social classes or factions cannot be obtained simply by the meritocratic call of those ideologically disposed to the ‘positives’ of education. The possession and influence of economic capital and the “correlative capital of power and social relationships” (Bourdieu, 1973, p. 99) provides the necessary means through which possession and maintenance of cultural capital and economic and social power is assured. The academic qualification is a “weak currency” (Bourdieu, 1973, p. 99) and its value lies within the established limits of the academic market.

An analysis of the reproductive processes of the education system is by no means Bourdieu’s sole concern with respect to education. He is also interested in the world of the classroom teacher practitioner and, in particular, the practice of teaching and the influence exerted by forces external to teaching practice. Bourdieu has to this end examined the science of practice with particular and careful analysis of the academic study of practice. The following part of this Chapter is a discussion of Bourdieu’s theoretical approach to the academic study of the science of practice and consideration is given to Bourdieu’s idea of the ‘objective researcher’, an implicit and often unstated claim of positivist classroom TER.

2. The Science of Practice

The work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1990) reflects upon, amongst other things, an examination of educational practice from within the practitioner dominated domain, vis-à-vis teaching and the work and role of teachers in the educational process. Bourdieu’s work in the education area is not limited to the function(s) of teachers as education workers. His examination extends more broadly, incorporating an analysis of teacher function(s) as practice within the ideational educational pursuit. His work ranges to this extent across identifiable parameters, involving teaching as practice, and the associated educational outcomes of the process of education. Bourdieu’s research and analysis isolates the function of practice. It scrutinizes and examines practice and attempts to identify inter-connected and associative contextual information that on first inspection is concealed or seemingly unobtrusive, yet remain central to and impinge upon practice and further act on the outcome(s) attained. Bourdieu’s work in the area of practice attests to the complexities involved in any particular scope or range of functionality, thereby uncovering often misleading or indeed erroneous explication of events post practice, which may occur if an elementary or indivisible approach is adopted.

In the analysis and examination of educational practice and its relationship to student learning outcomes and academic achievement, one needs “to move beyond the ritual alternatives of separation and participation” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 104) common to purely positivist and interpretive models of research and to “develop the theory of the logic of practice as practical participation in a game, illusio” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 104). According to Bourdieu it is this that makes “it possible
to avoid the theoretical errors that are usually encouraged by descriptions of practice” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 104). The adoption of practice as practical participation in a game clearly distinguishes the researcher and the methodological approach chosen. Bourdieu attempts to unveil not only aspects of research that hide consequences and outcomes of practice, he resolves to identify the dominant processes, social patterns and constructions of society that are involved in and exert an influence over educational practice. Moreover, the Bourdieuan theoretical notion of game and illusio and their application to the field of education can be used to illustrate deficiencies in contemporary educational debates emphasizing the implicit and seemingly accepted belief in purely positivist narratives and conclusions; in particular, the linear relationship between educational practice and the learning outcomes and academic achievement of students.

Practice for Bourdieu is multi-faceted, composed of many parts all exerting influence upon and within the process of endeavour under consideration. Thus, any research activity, in its attempt to explain and then comment on practice should, if it is to be cognisant of all related elements, adopt an approach that at some point removes or objects, not only the issue in question, but the process or method of research itself. In other words, Bourdieu’s work not only attempts to examine and identify particular information or seeks answers to research questions in isolation, it asks questions of the action of the research itself, in a further attempt at rigorous application of inquiry. His notion of reflexive objectivity can be viewed as a genuine attempt to create a ‘space’ for much needed creative inquiry, allowing for reflective consideration of an issue or issues, often an aspect that is missing from purely positivist accounts of research, the emphasis of which is an “absolutization or naturalization” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 92) of in the first instance, knowledge generation, and then knowledge articulation and dissemination.

The complex nature of the research task presents obstacles requiring an applicable rational technique capable of bridging an apparent division between forms of knowledge. Information of an objective kind occupies and represents one aspect of obtainable knowledge, an aspect that is discrete and separate or discontinuous. Conversely, subjective knowledge provides information of the subject involved within practice. Bourdieu reminds us that consideration of both types of knowledge forms a complete picture and illustration of an issue under examination, thus depicting a full and complete account of a research question. Bourdieu’s theoretical approach to the study of practice frees the researcher from the either/or choice between objectivism and subjectivism. Both forms of research according to Bourdieu, whilst not entirely equal, are necessary as it must be remembered that “epistemological priority is granted to objectivist rupture over subjectivist understanding” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 10-11). Bourdieu talks of the knowledge gained from the objective/subjective link in terms of a gift that is obtained. The subjective or third-order knowledge gained from an analysis does not obliterate or diminish the gains from objectivist knowledge but has the power to integrate “the truth of practical experience and of the practical mode of knowledge which this learned knowledge had to be constructed against” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 4). Moreover, phenomenological or subjective analysis and objectivist analysis expose
“two antagonistic principles of gift exchange: the gift as experienced, or, at least, meant to be experienced, and the gift as seen from outside” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 5). Bourdieu makes the case for a research approach to the science of practice that does not stop at an account of objective ‘truth’. The reciprocal (subjective/objective) nature of knowledge defines the “temporal structure of gift exchange” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 5). This is consistent with a critical theory orientation which advocates that complicated interactions manifest themselves in relationships of power, values (ideological and political) and knowledge and can only be adequately and appropriately examined free of the imposed limitations of any particular form of inquiry. Furthermore, research should be capable of identifying “notions of intentionality and historical context” (Giroux, 1983, p. 15) which, as is often the case, cannot be adequately examined if constrained by a purely “quantifying methodology” (Giroux, 1983, p. 15).

Bourdieu’s theoretical approach to the study of practice considers the importance of the method applied to a study. A Bourdieuan exploration and analysis of the science of practice centres on the reason(s) for the research approach adopted and is not simply limited to questions surrounding the type(s) of analytical techniques available. It has its basis in Aristotelian notions of “habituation” (Steutel & Spiecker, 2004, p. 531) and Wittgensteinian approaches to a theory of knowledge. Indeed, the significance of Wittgenstein to the work of Bourdieu should not be understated. The objectivists or “idealists” (Wittgenstein, 1988, p. 33) attraction to singularly reduced factors for a given situation as a method of explication, does not take account of what Wittgenstein terms “spatial relations” (Wittgenstein, 1988, p. 23). Bourdieu’s theory of knowledge posits a “knowing subject” (Grenfell & James, 1998, p. 11) within the knowledge framework, thus suggesting that the two are not separate agents or entities. Bourdieu’s theoretical approach to knowledge acknowledges that a given situation cannot be fully explained by the ‘idealists’ appeal to “spatial spectacles” (Wittgenstein, 1988, p. 23). Indeed, Bourdieu’s work in this area restates earlier claims made by Wittgenstein that the “spatial spectacles” referred to cannot explain the “multiplicity of relations” (Wittgenstein, 1988, p. 23) existent in any given situation. The adoption and use of habitus, capital and field are fundamental components of Bourdieu’s research approach and are important in the synthesis of subjective and objective knowledge. Furthermore, his notion of game, considered in more detail in Chapter 8 springs from the inter-relationship between each of Bourdieu’s three fundamental theoretical devices, and represents the active involvement of players within social practice(s). Bourdieu’s work in the area of the science of practice provides for an approach that demonstrates a coherent methodology capable of ascertaining knowledge as a gift received from subjective/objective data generation and his “insistence on participant objectivation” (Mills & Gale, 2007, p. 439).

The economy of logic that characterizes much of what is the science of practice is often limited by boundaries that manifestly describe the needs of the practice. Relevance of a direct kind is elevated in importance and a sense of the practical “selects certain objects or actions, and consequently certain of their aspects” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 87) regarding “the matter in
hand” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 90). This tends to distort the research process by distinguishing between “properties that are pertinent from those that are not” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 90). Thus, a science of practice separates information provided in a given situation into categories, those considered important by the researcher from those considered irrelevant and so unimportant. It may also negate the obvious value of dialectical analysis and examination, which is capable of uncovering broader social and political considerations involved in the study of the social object (see Giroux, 1983). For example, Ballou, Sanders and Wright’s (2004) value-added TER separates and controls for socio-economic status (SES), demographics and peer effects. Their abridged and seemingly straightforward mathematical treatment of these important characteristics and descriptors – “Let $X_t$ represent the value of SES and demographic covariates in year $t$ that may affect test score gains” (Ballou, Sanders & Wright, 2004, p. 46) – distorts experience and knowledge maintaining an “approved self-deception” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 105) about teaching and learning that abolishes and strategically defers a “full definition of social reality” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 108). Indeed, the strategic effect of an “imaginary anthropology” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 108) that has “very real effects” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 108) is to present and so officialize the practice of TER with the intention of producing an “account of reality” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 110) that is indisputable.

Bourdieu’s theoretical approach deals with the aspect of broader social and political considerations when analysing practice. He points out that a substantialist treatment of a particular sociological research question or problem – classroom TER – may quite possibly ignore the relational, particularly in terms of social positioning. It is the identification of the relational aspects, generally of one’s position within a social space or structure, defined in advanced societies largely through economic and cultural capital, which distinguishes social distance between agents. The teacher effectiveness researcher does not deal with what for him/her represents quite arbitrary and ambiguous structural forces.

At the very centre of an analysis that takes as its major focus the study and examination of complex sociological issues is a need for clear and coherent identification and then explication of matters pertinent to the problem under consideration. Considerations of a sociological nature need to consider what Mills (1959) in a broad sense terms troubles and issues (pp. 14-15). Troubles occur within the character of the individual and within the range of his immediate relations with others, they have to do with his self and with those limited areas of social life of which he is directly and personally aware. (Mills, 1959, p. 15)

The “issues” Mills (1959) refers to relate to matters that “transcend these local environments of the individual and the range of his inner life” (p. 15). They refer to the many and varied forms of organised “milieux” (Mills, 1959, p. 15) incorporating the various structures of a society. In other words, Mills (1959) believes in a form of sociological analysis that makes sense of the personal troubles of milieu and the public issues of social structure. Bourdieu introduces ‘re exive objectivity’ in his analytical approach for the purpose of comprehensibility. It represents a way or
method for researchers to analyse and then interpret given situations of social practice. Invariably, those situations are embedded within various cultural fields composed of distinctive forms of conduct. The relationship between what may on initial inspection represent opposing domains of knowledge, is indeed an uninterrupted “continual dialectic” (Grenfell & James, 1998, p. 12) between epistemological domains or milieux, and not an uninterrupted continuous or endless conversation. Consequently, imposing arbitrary and quite random limits upon fields of knowledge for the purpose of explicability does not fully and completely recognise “constituent knowledge” (Grenfell & James, 1998, p. 13) in all of its varied manifestations. Indeed, remaining silent and leaving a gap in constituent knowledge does not recognise the sociological complexity and milieux of practice.

A research method, designed specifically for the analysis of classroom teacher effectiveness and the explication of the direct causal relationship between teaching and learning and learning outcomes attained, ought to consider the social processes acting not only within a classroom, school or school system, but account for influences that the ‘facts’ suggest speak for themselves. In doing so, TER as a constructed model of practice can aim to “integrate into its account of reality the representation of reality against which it has had to construct its ‘objective’ representation” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 110). If in short, “… it is possible to estimate a teacher effect even if all data for the teacher during the year in question are missing” (Ballou, Sanders & Wright, 2004, p. 40) equally, it reasonably follows, that the “explicit principles” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 102) of TER can be exposed for the limitations it places on teaching practice and student achievement. For that reason, a Bourdieuan critical analysis of classroom TER incorporates:

1. An analysis of the position of the field as a field of power;
2. Objectivation of the structural relationships occurring in a field and the positions occupied by agents who are in competition for legitimate forms of authority within the field;
3. An examination of the habitus of agents; which is essentially the particular set of dispositions acquired by agents who are active in a field. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 104-107)

Consequently, TER can be charted as a patent field of power that occupies a dominant and governing position within the field of education.

Importantly, the teacher effectiveness researcher’s functionalist analysis of student achievement and teacher practice owes much of what it depicts to an imperfect and incomplete illustration of teaching. Indeed, for the analyst, “time disappears” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 81) as science has a “time which is not that of practice” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 81). The teacher is caught in the ‘moment of teaching’, but a science of practice “tends to ignore time and so to detemporalize practice” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 81). TER misses its target and objective – the precise and de
tive scientific capture of teaching and learning—because “science is only possible in a relation to time which is the opposite of that of practice” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 81). Classroom instruction as a “time of action” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 81) for the classroom teacher is filled with actual and special “conditions which exclude distance, perspective, detachment and reflexion” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 82). The licence and freedom afforded the teacher effectiveness researcher through a “neutralization of practical functions” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 83) is at odds with the classroom teacher “who is involved and caught up in the game” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 81) of teaching and learning. Moreover, TER can only “challenge the relationships consciously established” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 158) between scientifically constructed accounts of practice. What it exposes is a dialogue and discussion about a mathematically derived analysis of classroom pedagogy and practice that is dependent on a reconstituted scheme of experience.

To this extent, the relationship between habitus and field forms an important component in the examination and analysis of practice for Bourdieu. Its importance is reflected in the knowledge gathered by recognizing that particular practices or perceptions do not necessarily flow from habitus alone, but can be generated and exist as a consequence of the “relation between the habitus on the one hand, and the specific social contexts or ‘fields’ within which individuals act” (Thompson, 1991, p. 14). Furthermore, those social contexts or fields embody distinctive properties one must accept in order to participate in what Bourdieu terms the ‘game’. However participation varies depending on one’s accumulated capital which essentially determines the position an agent occupies within a field by virtue of the distributed resources accessible in that field and possessed by the agent for exchange. In short, capital defines the boundaries of the field and it also is important in the influence or ‘currency’ that is embodied within a field. Field is a “structured system of social relations at a micro and macro level” (Grenfell & James, 1998, p. 16) and a particular or designated field is composed of the individuals, institutions and groupings that exist and operate within it. The relationships that operate within a field are structural and positions of agents (individuals, groups, institutions) can be mapped and located, leading to the possible identification of the principles generating existent relationships and positions. Bourdieu suggests that field and habitus are linked and that the nature or essence of things are the product of and between habitus and field.

For Bourdieu the term habitus governs practice. It does this through the structure(s) that produce it. The habitus represents an “acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 95) and it engenders all thoughts, perceptions and actions that operate within and are consistent with particular and prevailing conditions. There can be a social and cultural embodiment of habitus generally exhibited through how people carry themselves and the thoughts and feelings that they possess. The Bourdieuian notion of habitus has structure and agency as its centrepiece. Structure “mediates between objectivity and subjectivity” (Grenfell & James, 1998, p. 14) and is representative of a dynamic cause and effect, that is, as a “structured structure and a structuring structure” (Grenfell & James, 1998, p. 14). Habitus is:
...the strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations ... a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of in nitely diversified tasks. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 18)

In addition, habitus is an “endless capacity to engender products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 95). In one sense, habitus can be thought of as a type of conditioned inheritance, social and cultural, and implicit in its manifestation is an implied habit or “unthinking-ness” (Grenfell & James, 1998, p. 14) often expressed through one’s behaviour, actions or dispositions.

The theoretical study of practice then for Bourdieu rests on removing a totally objectivist reliance on what Bourdieu terms the “doxic” (1990, p. 26) attitude or experience. This attitude or experience for the positivist researcher in education is infused with a set of beliefs and practices that is “an inherent part of belonging to a ﬁeld” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 67). It is this belief in the established practices of positivist research in education and the researcher’s adherence to accepted creeds and articles of faith that illustrates the relationship between doxa and the instant attachment “established in practice between a habitus and the ﬁeld to which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that ows from practical sense” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 68). Positivist research adheres to a set of rules often based on a constructed model that supposedly accounts for all the variables acting in a chosen ﬁeld of practice. The idea that a rule or set of rules can “refer indifferently to the regularity immanent in practices” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 36), for example, statistical correlations, “allows a ctitious reconciliation of mutually contradictory theories of action” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 38) and so cannot completely analyse the problem at hand, particularly for example in the area of educational practice, classroom teacher effectiveness and the learning outcomes and academic achievement of public secondary school students. It is at this very point that a Bourdieuian research methodology has its most value in that habitus focuses on the subjective component of practice while ﬁeld concentrates on the objective, the intention of which is generation of knowledge about agents operating within a particular social space.

Positivist classroom TER is in its most extreme form a call to an exhaustive sense of reason. The Bourdieuian concept of ﬁeld is the necessary balance that a “Realpolitik of reason” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 73) provides, incorporating established historical knowledge including the practices and interests engendered by the actions of players and agents engaged in a particular social space. The examination of ﬁeld from a Bourdieuian perspective is an epistemic and scholarly re ection on the “historicization” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 114) of the subject and the social space that one occupies. The emancipatory action of a historicized examination and analysis of the subject and related social space “frees one from the Platonic illusion of the autonomy of the world of ideas (especially mathematical ones, but also legal or literary)” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 114). The
analysis provided by historicization, “historical reason” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 106) is, as Bourdieu
states, to ground reason and knowledge and in its fullest sense prevent or at least minimize the
impact of “privileged microcosms in which statements about the world that aspire to universality”
(Bourdieu, 2000, p. 106) generate and are constituted.

Individuals as players and agents active within a social space, the field of classroom TER,
guided by their practices and actions are impelled by efforts of strategy that in a sense of
anticipated belief and/or hope provide a return for efforts expended. Individual social practice is
not then a determined or set ture based on some pre-existing rules or procedures, but is more
an expression of how one personally negotiates according to their circumstances or position,
one’s motion or passage through a field. Interest is the elementary unit that focuses attention on
practices within a ‘game’—field—including and involving its stakes and risks. It is in its most
obvious form a way of maximizing profit and so has economic connotations. But, and this is
symptomatic of the break with a type of economistic logic introduced by the notion of interest,
Bourdieu reminds us that there is no action without sufficient reason, in short, “without investment
in a game and a stake, illusio, involvement” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 290). Teacher effectiveness
researchers conceal “even from themselves, the true nature of their practical mastery” (Bourdieu,
1990, p. 102) by enforcing on teaching and learning and so student achievement the “semi-learned
production, the rule … to the construction of an adequate theory of practice” (Bourdieu, 1990, p.
103). The scientific logic of TER is then “completely valid only if it is presented for what it is, a
theoretical artefact totally alien to practice” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 103).

Conclusion

Bourdieu’s notion of social reproduction including his conceptual development of practice and
game and their relevance to school education acts as a counterpart and supplement to Foucault’s
theoretical framework. Bourdieu demonstrates how “structured dispositions” (1973, p. 3) acquired
by agents acting within a particular field develop over time. Bourdieu’s theoretical tools of
analysis point to underlying contextual influences that come into play when considering school
education. A significant part of the field—game—of schooling rests upon successful manipulation
by the players of core axiomatics. The competent and strategic manipulation by the players of
economic and cultural capital is crucial to exert influence and so dominate the game. School
education and its orientation towards the legitimating function of modern society encompassing
the dominant economic, political and social order, reproduces the social and ideological relations
that already exist in society. Dominant and successful players in the educational game rely upon
a system of principles often ignored by the positivist classroom teacher effectiveness researcher
“which make up a particular mode of reproduction” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 60) and govern outcomes
attained. Thus, existent and dominant power relations continue.

The second component of this Chapter focused on Bourdieu’s theoretical analysis of practice,
which rests upon the interrogation of distinctive and characteristic condition(s) that make possible
the very experience(s) of the social world. Understanding the dynamics and mechanics of the practical model in question—classroom teaching practice—exposes strategies that incorporate it and what is more, underlie and define it. It is only when the researcher considers the practice in question from within the practitioner-situated domain and not from the elevated station of the purely rational or positivist that knowledge is gained. Two important features then follow. The first involves exposing and understanding the imposed limitations of a particular practice, be it of teaching or research technique/method thus revealing veiled and secreted assumptions. Second is the disclosure and coverage of false conclusions and suppositions about the practice in question.

The positivist teacher effectiveness researcher remains captivated by the arbitrary placement of imposed research constraints. At its most extreme it is thoroughly devoid of primary experience generally disapproving of any extensive examination and articulation of practical conditions of influence and control. Teacher practitioners, captives by in their case, the high political and economic stakes of broader and more complex structural limitations, notwithstanding the limitations of ‘tools of analysis’, cannot escape scrutiny and inspection. Accordingly, the critical case study of TER reflects a dialectical mode and process of examination, the favoured means through which it too is exposed to scrutiny and enquiry.
Chapter Six – An Interpretive Critical Case Study of Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Research

Introduction

In this Chapter I describe the theoretical assumptions that underpin my research methodology and the considerations made that led to working with data, generated by particular techniques. A key objective of the Chapter is the articulation of essential methodological parameters needed for the critical analysis of classroom TER. The Chapter has four major sections. The first discusses the methodological standpoint of my research. I do this by discussing the theoretical rationale for my study. I begin by considering the epistemological foundations of the thesis which reflect a constructionist theoretical perspective. This part of the Chapter refers to and makes explicit the interpretive nature and form of all research and inquiry. The section also includes an explication of critical theory, specifically the Frankfurt School an important and key theoretical component that informs the methodological orientation of constructionist epistemology. Section two of the Chapter presents the method and design of the thesis. It focuses on classroom teacher effectiveness research (TER) as a bounded critical case study with its specific and particular complexities and features that distinguish it as a system for extensive and theoretical critique. Section three is an explication of the techniques used to generate data for the thesis and has three parts. Part (a) focuses on data generation for the participant component of my research study. Part (b) refers to the utilisation of documentary evidence in qualitative research. Part (c) details the data analysis in this thesis. Finally, section four concludes the chapter with a discussion of ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality and protection from harm.

1. A Qualitative Methodology Informed By Critical Theory

The epistemological basis of this thesis is informed by constructionism. Constructionism is the view that all knowledge and therefore:

...all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. (Crotty, 1998, p. 42)

The constructionist view holds that “meaning is not discovered but constructed” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Understanding is fundamental and there is limited space for pure prediction (see Lather, 2006). As “discourse is dialogic and creates reality” (Lather, 2006, p. 38), a dialogic component to an interpretivist/constructionist understanding of classroom TER implies a non-transparent reflection of reality. Constructionism thus implies that meaning cannot be construed and portrayed in either purely objectivist or subjectivist parameters. As meaning is constructed, the researcher has “something to work with” (Crotty, 1998, p. 44). Meaning or knowledge emanates from an interaction between the objective and subjective. In grounding my inquiry in constructionism, I construct an argument that problematizes and critiques TER.
Constructionism incorporates a “social dimension of meaning” (Crotty, 1998, p. 57) to inquiry and, as a result, a social and political element applies. Intelligibility is constituted and maintained by socially endorsed and rated conventional systems involving, broadly speaking, the cultural, political and economic. The social origin of meaning and thus the social character that meaning imposes and introduces must also be considered and contemplated when embarking upon an analysis of research questions and problems. Hence, constructionist epistemology acknowledges that humans and their activities are described through their engagement with the world.

The methodology of this thesis directs attention onto TER by drawing on specific features of the interpretivist tradition. These features include: (a) meaningfulness of human action, (b) respect for and delity to the life world, and (c) an emphasis on the contribution of human subjectivity (that is: intention) to knowledge without thereby sacrificing the objectivity of knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In doing so, this methodology can be used to identify, understand and articulate the social, economic and political realities that frame and constitute the practices of the education system, which are expressive of prevailing macro economic and political manifestations.

This thesis, then, employs a qualitative research method for the study of classroom TER. In doing so, the thesis incorporates an interpretive approach to the problem of classroom TER because a significant component of the thesis lies in understanding and explaining broader issues of context. Interaction is a vital component of constructionism and the thesis sets out the political and economic implications of interdependent interactions that have exacting outcomes for classroom teachers. Thus, constructionism is receptive to “multiple viewpoints” (Lather, 2006, p. 39) and dialogic exchange forms the basis to informed decision-making. For instance Chapter two of the thesis outlined the major structural – governance – aspects of a neo-liberal political and economic system under which public education functions. Dominant and significant sources of influence and control on public education and classroom teachers include an “emphasis on performance, targets and accountability” (Craft, 2005, p. 49). These aspects of dominance and control necessitate a research method that is “re exive about the need for larger frames toward deeper understanding, especially macro-level demographic and economic changes” (Lather, 2006, p. 49). Hence, qualitative research is a:

...situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including eld notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3)

Such understanding of qualitative research embraces a range of possibilities for interpreting meaning particularly about dominant sources of control and permits a variety of methods to be undertaken in an investigation. All research is “interpretive; it is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the
world and how it should be understood and studied” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 19). The reasons that guide particular kinds of research about teaching and learning point to the values and motives that drive the investigation. This is an important and relevant issue, as this thesis seeks to identify specific and dominant political and economic imperatives that act as hidden and concealed forces that propel the debate about classroom teacher effectiveness, particularly education policy-making imperatives informed by positivist research.

In rejecting the positivist treatment of classroom teacher effectiveness, this thesis also rebuffs the tendency within TER to express all relationships and phenomena prevalent in the classroom as a uniform whole that are generally unaffected by external influences. Indeed, the methodology of the thesis in using qualitative inquiry has a “respect for the life-world, and attention to the fine-grained details of daily life” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 190), which positivist research cannot capture. Furthermore, qualitative research in the field of education, of which this thesis is an example, generally disputes the positivist researcher’s reliance on induction where a general law is inferred from particular instances. For example, Luyten, Visscher and Witziers (2005) suggest that:

In addition to explaining the relationship between features of school processes and school performance, studies should place more emphasis on the influence of non-educational factors in the school context (e.g.: neighbourhood, family, peer group) on schooling processes and on student achievement. More insight is needed into why and how school context interacts with school performance and with processes at both the classroom and the school level. (p. 259)

In short, the qualitative researcher is concerned with the historical, political, social and economic influences that affect the object(s) under study and examination.

The problematics then of specific social relations and practices that are often found and eventuate in public schools are expressed through aspects of domination, alienation and normative theory. The “ideal speech situation” (Morrow, 1994, p. 149), reflecting what is taken to be authentic and expert dialogue about teaching practice, leads to a “distorted communication” (Morrow, 1994, p. 158) suggestive of what ought to be the case that is sure of its position. The provision of teleological explanations of teaching practice, teaching behaviours and classroom action that is expressive of, and often given by, positivist classroom TER diminishes the impact of one’s life-world, rejecting and rebuffing the flux and interplay of classroom action. Therefore, to offset dominant positivist–endorsed systems of power, guided application of a qualitative methodology informed by critical theory problematizes TER. Indeed, the purposeful dynamism of critical theory is an “action-oriented” consolidation of investigation with the capacity to critically analyse TER because it focuses on “issues of power” (Lather, 2006, p. 38).

Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) indicate that there are particular and basic assumptions incorporated in critical theory. Foremost amongst these is that all forms of thought are socially and historically constructed by distinctive and dominant groups. The methodology of this thesis recognises that
a dialectical relationship exists between the subjective and objective. Furthermore, critical theory has a theoretical orientation that is predominantly political. Indeed, the application of critical theory to critiquing TER provides a conceptual framework that assists in understanding “its activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p. ix) that have been discussed in previous chapters of this thesis. For example, the specific neo-liberal political and economic parameters of a post-Fordist world highlighted and discussed in Chapter two, include amongst other things heightened and stringent accountability processes and the imposition of corporate style governance structures on public education. Indeed, the “general phenomenon” (Stake, 2000, p. 436) of classroom TER as a case for study, recognises that there are distinctive features and characteristics of public school teaching that are significant and yet often overlooked and ignored when seeking to research teaching practice. The methodology of this thesis seeks to broaden an understanding of teaching practice that TER often ignores. To this extent, critical theory has been used to “explicate the nature of the relations between part and part, and parts and whole” (Peters & Olssen, 2003, p. 4). In the first instance, the methodology used identifies the embodied technique(s) of TER that are themselves considered unique and discrete for the capture of effective teaching practice; for example, a scientific logic of practice accompanied by a quantifying/statistical centre and a distinctive subjectifying discourse. Second, the methodology used in this thesis draws out the nature of contemporary teaching practice within an education system that has its exacting and specific restrictions. For instance, the constraints imposed by a hierarchical school curriculum and the impediments of distinctive class based relations and the limits of distinctive class based interactions (see Teese & Polesel, 2003).

Critical theory does not seek to construct reality, it merely seeks to construct knowledge about reality by way of critical reflection and thoughtful deliberation. Any notion of ‘truth’ then derived by those subject to a constructionist and interpretive theoretical perspective utilising aspects of critical theory will tend to reveal more about the contextually embedded understandings of the particular individuals involved in the study rather than external and objective truths. The purpose and value of a research method and design that allows for the critical examination and interrogation of TER is that the experiences of a variety of stakeholders may be included. The aim is to capture these via interview and then critically examine and interpret these experiences with specific reference given to the “implications of different perceptions” (Patton, 2002, p. 98) in order to trace and source the ideas and views that contribute to classroom TER for the development of public education policy.

In its purest form, critical theory or the “critical theory of interpretation” (Rundell, 1995, p. 10) is a school of thought that expresses a need to know and explain in order to understand. But more importantly, critical theory challenges in order to bring about change and in that sense, it does not merely interpret an imposed view or indeed necessarily accept the status quo. If views of reality are constructs generally derived through socially and culturally embedded practices and beliefs, then the views and beliefs of that particular reality will be those of the dominant social order. The methodology of this thesis draws on critical theory so that “the spotlight on power relationships” (Crotty, 1998,
within education are exposed and analysed. The invocation of scientific knowledge to express and maintain a particular view reflects the dominant political and cultural position adopted by an individual, mirroring the Kuhnian (1970) view of the development of scientific knowledge. The consensus around interpretations of given data reflects the power exerted by pre-existing and socially constructed views of observations. In utilising a critical theoretical framework, the methodology of this thesis questions imposed forms of practice, thereby highlighting “contradictions between ideological representations and real states of affairs” (Peters & Olssen, 2003, p. 7).

Critical theory can then work to overcome what Lukacs (1999) terms a “phantom objectivity” (p. 83). Classroom TER with its “strictly rational” (Lukacs, 1999, p. 83) and totally enclosing methodological approach cordons and enfolds the relationship between people. The reification and condensation of classroom teaching practice, which is a relationship between people, to a thing, conceals aspects of its “fundamental nature” (Lukacs, 1999, p. 83), rejecting contextual influences. Crucial to the critical analysis and examination of TER is the adoption and application of a research methodology that highlights two essential elements. The first refers to an exposé of an ascribed and particular method of calculation, the purely positivist, the basis of which is a “universal calculus” (Lukacs, 1999, p. 129) imbibed by a faith and belief in the possibility of an exactitude of knowledge about classroom teaching practice that can purportedly be mapped, calculated and measured. Second, and perhaps of more importance, is a need to uncover and reveal that all human relations including classroom teaching practice are a social activity and that human action in all of its forms is contingent upon external influences, generally of a political, economic, historical and social formation and character.

In using a methodology based on critical theory, this thesis seeks to problematise the basic technique of TER that ordinarily relies on systemic ‘one off/yearly’ forms of student testing and assessment describing student achievement. Consequently, the methodology of this thesis positions TER so that it becomes the centre of examination and analysis.

2. Research Design – Case Study Analysis.

According to Yin (2009), case study research is the preferred research design if and when: (a) ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are posed, (b) a researcher has little or no control over events, and (c) a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context is under focus and consideration. A case study acts as the preferred “method of choice when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context” (Yin, 1993, p. 3). Furthermore, case study research provides for a rich, in-depth and extensive examination of the real-life situational context involving its associated and distinctive aspects. According to Stake (2000), a case may be “simple or complex” (p. 436), but resides within a “system” (p. 436) that can be studied. Indeed, it is “common to recognize that certain features are within the system, within the boundaries of the case, and other features outside. Some are significant as context” (Stake, 2000, p. 436). This thesis argues that classroom teaching practice is a complex activity and is influenced to a significant extent by external sources.
that can and often do impact upon the learning outcomes and academic achievement of individual public secondary school students. Thus, context is significant and matters. For these reasons, a case study of TER informed by critical theory that constructs knowledge of causal links between individual classroom teaching practice and student learning outcomes is needed. Deriving a critical sociology of classroom teacher effectiveness as part of a general critical theory of the social totality of teaching practice emphasizes the connection between school system learning outcomes and broader structural forces such as social class relations.

Case studies in general are characterized by the type of research question posed. One can engage in multi-case study analyses or limit inquiry to a singular case. In any event, a case study focuses on a particular phenomenon. This thesis considers the measurement and evaluation of classroom teaching practice as a specific and complex phenomenon that can be studied. The often problematic and complex interactions between classroom teaching practice and its “temporal context” (Yin, 1993, p. 3) can be documented if considered as a specific case for study. In addition, a critical sociology of TER can expose particular ‘interests’. The central and characterizing feature of positivist-informed TER is the documented outline of effective teaching practice. Specific and ‘certified’ aspects define what counts as an effective teacher and moreover effective classroom instruction. A representative ‘picture’ – or standard – of effectiveness can then be used to hold all teachers to a system – endorsed account of teaching practice. A nominal standard of ‘effectiveness’ can also point to system – generated benchmarks of student achievement that teachers through their instruction must meet.

A critical case study of classroom TER documents that people have the “capacity to interpret and construct reality” (Patton, 2002, p. 97), make decisions based upon perceptions or opinions of particular ideologies or beliefs and that the phenomenon of classroom teaching practice is not readily distinguishable from broader contextual, economic and political influences. Therefore, a critical case study of classroom TER is suitable and a preferred method of choice for its analysis. Indeed, in choosing to examine TER as a specific case study, foundational questions that include the ‘how’, ‘what’ and ‘why’ of socially constructed belief systems and perceptions focus attention towards positivism’s “intuitionism” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 20). To be specific, it begs these questions: How have the people in this setting constructed reality within certain constraints? What are their reported perceptions, truths, explanations, beliefs and worldview? And why? In addition, the research design of this thesis exposes limitations and restrictions “which is the pre-condition for full generalization” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 95) of TER. A critical case study brings “questioning to bear on the very conditions of measurement” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 94) re-emphasizing the “price-forming mechanisms” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 94) of the education system epitomized by relative levels of cultural, economic and social capital. Ragin (1992) states “every study is a case study because it is an analysis of social phenomena specific to time and place” (p. 2). As a result, a less distorted, or less ideological account of a phenomenon within its context is made possible. Classroom TER as a bounded case for study may then be re-conceived, re-interpreted, re-formulated, re-analysed and re-examined by and with reference to the broader and greater scheme of public
school-system accountability. A case study can document and speak to the inequities of the education system that TER often ignores and disregards, such as the “academic hierarchy of subjects in the senior school” (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 99). In doing so, a critical case study of TER can lead to a re-conceptualisation of the notion and idea of classroom teacher effectiveness and effective teaching practice, transformed and enriched by the practical actions of the agents engaged in its exchange and enaction.

Critical case study as a method of inquiry and interrogation makes clear and explicit an empirical bias often shown and expressed by over-loaded use of rigidly held systematizing and fervently enacted forms of empiricism. This distinguishes critical case study as a method of inquiry from other methods. It also guards against the “growing rigidity of abstract rationalism, and the concomitant standardization of individual existence” (Jay, 1996, p. 48), the dominant mode of life under advanced capitalism. Critical case study, prepares and makes room for the “crucial importance of mediation (Vertmittlung)” (Jay, 1996, p. 554) between subject and object in order to formulate a better and more informed version of classroom teaching practice and the work and role of classroom teachers. The composition of classroom teaching practice incorporates the “constant interplay of particular and universal” (Jay, 1996, p. 54). Hence, mediation acts as a:

...lever with which to overcome the mere immediacy of the empirical world, and as such it is not something (subjective) foisted onto the objects from outside, it is no value-judgment or “ought” opposed to their “is”. It is rather the manifestation of their authentic objective structure. (Lukacs, 1999, p. 162)

In short, the necessary and major aspects of the critical case study research method “allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 2009, p. 4).

This particular analysis in this thesis is then a specific critical case study of the problem of classroom TER that considers public secondary school classroom teaching practice as a case bounded by, and acting within, unique and characteristic post-Fordist structural features. Positivist classroom TER which represents a method for the evaluation of an individual classroom teacher practitioner’s pedagogical effectiveness, relies on the selection of actions or traits as observable phenomena that are considered to be descriptors of effective classroom teaching practice applicable in all contexts. The subsequent connection established between individual classroom teaching practice on the one hand and individual student learning outcomes on the other usually rests on an acceptance of a complex set of mathematical models and assignations, generally assumed and contrived by the researcher, which act as parameters or “conditions of acceptability” (Thompson, 2007, p. 5) for and of classroom teaching practice. Positivist interpretations of effective teaching practice tend to privilege carefully selected examples and frames of classroom action. The possibility of an explanatory dimension that interconnects those agents directly involved in the situation under observation and examination is diminished, thus holding them accountable for outcomes based on a type of false and technically manufactured estimation system.
As a specific theoretical construct, positivist forms of classroom TER (see Rowe, 2003; Ballou, Sanders & Wright, 2004) display characteristic features that of themselves have “no meaning” (Wieviorka, 1992, p. 160). Meaning develops when there exists the “means of interpreting it or placing it in a context” (Wieviorka, 1992, p. 160). When this occurs, a case study involving the critical examination and analysis of positivist forms of classroom TER is not viewed solely on empirical grounds. As such, the critical case study of TER brings “theory and practice together in a special way” (Wieviorka, 1992, p. 160) avoiding the unacceptable case of “pure empiricism” (Wieviorka, 1992, p. 160) without theorization, in short, that “Reality is objective and found” and that “Truth is one” (Lather, 2006, p. 38).

For this reason, the case of classroom TER is not “defined by its singularity” (Wieviorka, 1992, p. 160). To understand TER as a phenomenon requires its visualisation as a “combination of elements (which a historian calls causes or factors)” (Wieviorka, 1992, p. 160). The critical case study consideration of classroom TER as an idea for critical examination means that it can be analysed from a series of viewpoints rather than from an idiosyncratic or purely unitary perspective. This encompasses what Yin (2009) describes as the unique qualities and strengths of case study analysis, which is “its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence-documents, artefacts, interviews, and observations” (p. 11). This reflects a “rigorous methodological path” (Yin, 2009, p. 3), a key and core aspect of critical case study research and analysis.

3. Techniques

This study of the problem of classroom TER, utilised a compilation of techniques for the production, analysis and examination of data. The discussion for this section of the thesis is in three parts. Part (a) centres on a major technique used in sociological research for the generation of data: the interview. The discussion considers the specific process undertaken in the generation of data for the study under consideration. Part (b) is a brief description of documentary sources as specific forms of data. Part (c) outlines the process followed in analysing the data for this thesis.

Data Generation:

(a) Interviews-Participants

The extensive use of interviews as an investigative technique in research has been reported by Burgess (1995), who outlines various interview techniques and the differences between them. The interview as a “conversation with a purpose” (Dexter, 1970, p. 136) is often a preferred mode of data collection, the express aim of which results in a “rich, in-depth experiential account of an event or episode” (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 698). The interview as a technique of data generation for sociological research forms a key part of “multiple operations research” (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 155) and there are two major categories, either structured or semi-structured. Structured interviews are usually very focused and concentrated and include specific questions. Semi-structured or exploratory interviews are not as prescribed and are more free-ranging, allowing for engagement with the respondent in a conversation guided by key themes rather than prescribed, scripted questions. The
A semi-structured interview is concerned with “the unique, the idiosyncratic and the wholly individual viewpoint” (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 156). It usually takes account of “multiple world views” (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 156) and draws on the knowledge that a variety of players may have a multiplicity of views of a particular question and/or problem. The semi-structured interview explores the experiences of others and is generally considered a search for “meaning” (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 157) around a specific issue, question or problem. “This search for meaning is a search for multiple realities, truths and perceptions” (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 157), given and expressed by person(s) that have a particular position, expertise or insight, a relevant and important component for my study. In this study, I sought to conduct the interviews myself rather than allocate it to a third party. I considered it important that I as the principal researcher outline and discuss reasons for my interest into classroom TER with the participants.

Eleven participants were identified who were specific educational ‘policy actors’ at both the Victorian State level and also at a Federal or National level. Each was chosen with regard to their involvement in public education. This involvement included ideological or particular research interests in classroom TER, and it also included issues that pertained to aspects of teacher welfare, teacher industrial advocacy and teacher professional advocacy. My choice of potential participants/interviewees fell into five categories. These are listed below:

- Academic
- Victorian State government/ministerial bureaucrats (policy advisors, researchers, ministerial advisors)
- Victorian subject association-The Mathematics Association of Victoria (M.A.V)
- Australian Education Union-Federal
- School Principal Association (State)

A letter of invitation explaining the research was sent to eleven chosen potential participants. None responded to the initial contact that was made via formal letter, except for one potential academic participant who responded almost immediately, politely declining my invitation to participate in the research. A short message from the potential participant via email stated that his particular involvement in my research was superfluous as he felt that he was not sufficiently expert in the matter of classroom TER and inquiry. His expertise lay in the field of economics. This was a surprise given that in conjunction with the other chosen potential academic participant, he had written two major papers on the question of teacher quality and teacher effectiveness that gained some significant national media prominence, including print, radio and television within Australia. Interestingly, the other potential participant from the academic category never responded to any of my requests. Consequently, none of the academics identified as potential participants in my research participated in the study. I then made contact with each of the remaining potential participants directly via telephone. In doing so, I was able to secure eight participants for my research.
The breakdown in terms of category is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of participants:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian state government/ministerial advisors</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian Subject Association (M.A.V)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Education Union (Federal)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Principal Association (state-Victoria)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, eight participants were interviewed. Participants have been numbered from one to eight in the order that they were interviewed. That is, participant one was interviewed first, followed by participant two and so on.

Spradley (1979) suggests that three types of questions may be used in and generally define an interview. He classifies these as either descriptive, structural or contrast (pp. 111-112). Descriptive questions generally centre on engaging the participant in briefly outlining their involvement or activities. Structural questions attempt to focus the interviewee’s attention on providing information on how they organise and think about knowledge. Contrast questions seek to draw from the interviewee meanings about situations. They provide a basis for comparison between situations and particular events that occur in the interviewee’s world. Structural and contrast questions largely defined the interviews for this study, although I also used descriptive questions at times. I generally began each interview by thanking interviewees for their time and for agreeing to take part in my research. I explained that I wanted to ask them a series of questions pertaining to classroom TER and that the interview was largely unstructured. I pointed out the purpose and aim of my major research question and thus indicated to interviewees that I wanted our conversation to be as broad ranging as possible within the time limits and parameters set by my research interest. A list of the guiding interview questions can be found in Appendix 1.

Interviews with participants ranged from between thirty minutes to one hour. I was very mindful of time constraints and thus monitored the direction, depth and detail of each of the interviews, factors that Burgess (1985, p. 120) also mentions. Interviews were taped using an audio recorder and permission was sought and given by each of the participants prior to the interview taking place. Each interview occurred separately and on different days. One group interview took place, involving policy-participants four, five and six. These particular participants requested a joint or group interview, in order to efficiently facilitate and expedite my research request. All interviews were conducted at the participant’s worksites, usually the office of the participants concerned. The group interview occurred in a meeting room at their worksite. All interviews were designed to generate rich conversations around the central problem of classroom TER. In conducting the interviews I was conscious of and so did not wish to ignore the contextual and interpersonal. My aim was to engage the interviewees with the research process. Moreover, I was fully aware of the
interactional nature of an interview encounter and I was mindful of the social dynamic in operation, that may in some situations affect the conversation and ultimately the data generated. In the main I used questions that focused interviewee understandings and interpretations of particular aspects of classroom TER for the development and enaction of public education policy. An aim of the interview was to have participants speak to specific considerations of TER as a technique of inquiry for the development of education policy.

The analysis of interview transcripts was based on a technique informed by Critical Discourse Analysis (see Fairclough, 1992, 2003; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wootton, 2005). I return to a description of this technique below. The critical interpretation of classroom TER is based on the examination of respondent transcripts through the application of a manual coding and indexing process. I identified significant themes emanating from the transcript interviews. These included:

1. TER and how it is used to inform and develop education policy.
2. TER recommending ‘what works’ in terms of classroom instruction and student achievement.
3. Considerations of School context.
4. Teachers ‘making the difference’ to student achievement.

The manual coding and indexing process utilised for the analysis of transcripts closely resembles that described by Delamont (2002, p. 175). I used coloured (highlighter) pens to colour code extracts of the same or similar text. I then arranged the highlighted and coloured coded markings according to the textual material contained therein. The interrogation of data followed that outlined by Delamont (2002) where “the reading, rereading, and coding of the data should lead on to interrogating them” (p. 177).

(b) Documents

The recording and transcription of interviews were the principal form of data collection for this study. These were augmented by analysis of documentary evidence about TER and student achievement. The secondary source of documentary evidence consisted predominantly of government policy text(s), government reports, academic literature including journal articles and related research on classroom TER, and media reports (in the main, newspaper articles and media releases). All of the material in this category is available in the public domain and as such is publicly accessible. Analysis of this documentary data and evidence also hinges on the critical interpretation of discursive textual material. It too was manually coded based on a similar procedure as that outlined in section (a) above.

(c) Data Analysis (Critical Discourse Analysis)

The thesis utilises Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) informed by the theoretical concepts and ideas discussed and raised in Chapters two, three, four and five as the analytical approach for the
examination and analysis of participant interviews and transcripts. The specific theoretical concepts and ideas of these chapters include, for instance, the defining structures of neo-liberalism and its effect(s) on public education including classroom teachers. The theoretical frameworks of Foucault and Bourdieu are utilised within these chapters to first categorise and critique TER and also to explicitly focus my argument from within the governance structures that define contemporary neo-liberalism. Fairclough (1992) states:

there is no set procedure for doing discourse analysis; people approach it in different ways according to the specific nature of the project as well as their own views of discourse. (p. 225)

My research is motivated to understand and offer an alternative means of analysing and examining the problem of public secondary school classroom TER that is mindful of and specifically seeks to illustrate the wholesale and unmitigated reality of public school teaching through a consideration of broader dominant political and economic considerations. Moreover, it aims to clearly articulate that the work of the public secondary school classroom teacher occurs within a situational context that is dynamic and alive, constantly informed by the external. In so doing, through CDA, the thesis offers a critique of the classroom TER and policy discourse.

CDA is suitable as an analytical tool because it provides for the analysis of TER that is reflective of “wider structural and social inequalities” (Woott, 2005, p. 144). A “new global order of discourse” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 7) generally reflective of imposed system and world-wide political and economic change such as that experienced by the post-Fordist worker, is structuring knowledge and social practice. This suggests that the researcher comes with a priori claims about the character of classroom TER with the preconceived view that accurate and reliable data on what may constitute effective classroom teaching practice should include a thorough analysis and consideration of dominant and external contextual factors that impinge upon the work and role of the classroom teacher. Contemporary public education policy posits that the public secondary school teacher is at the centre of teaching and learning and, therefore, that student learning outcomes and student academic achievement are determined by the competence and effectiveness of the individual classroom teacher practitioner. I contend that the post-Fordist orientation of contemporary capitalist society involves a “conceptualisation of power and power struggle in terms of hegemony” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 99) and education policymaking privileges the production and distribution of positivist forms of discursive practice producing and culminating in the certain identification of effective classroom teaching practice. I use CDA to examine the ways in which the individual public secondary school classroom teacher is disadvantageously positioned by particular forms of research that inform public education policy. My use of CDA encompasses an analysis of the “enunciative modalities” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 43) that position subjects or agents in particular and characteristic ways. As Fairclough (1992, p. 43) notes:

Enunciative modalities are types of discursive activity such as describing, forming hypotheses, formulating regulations, teaching and so forth, each of which has its own associated subject positions.
As applied to this thesis, CDA is employed to uncover how classroom TER discourse marginalizes and harms the public secondary school classroom teacher. In short, whilst discourse analysis as a method or technique of analysis focuses on participant’s language, CDA as a form of empirical research “focuses on the interrelationships between discourse and wider social structures” (Wooffitt, 2005, p. 139). It has particular relevance in a post-Fordist world where the influence and importance attached by governments and policy-makers to new forms of industry – the ‘knowledge based economy’ – tends to dominate.

In using CDA, I examine how policy participants centralize teaching practice as an important part of a broader systemic framework of political and economic governance. For instance, contemporary post-Fordist economic and political strategies emphasizing the ‘learning society’ and ‘knowledge-based economy’ typify formulated presentations of the new world order. This includes selective, system imposed, representations and contributions highlighting taken-for-granted education inevitabilities, centred predominantly on notions of reform, measurement, performance, and improved learning outcomes. The work of teachers is of considerable relevance and importance. The specificity of Victorian State Labor Government (2003-2010) public education policy re-enforces a post-Fordist political and economic consensus on the conditions needed for successful involvement in the new world order. Central to this consensus is a decisive and distinctive discursive shift re-orienting educational debate towards an economic imperative and function. Its discursive legitimation is found in terms that emphasize and indicate a ‘changing society’, with references to an innovative workforce, national economic growth, complexity, results, learning culture, quality education, continuously improving schools, school system improvement, economic prosperity of nations and regions, and the identification of existing best practice teaching and schooling.

An essential component of my data analysis is to identify and make reference to positional placement within the education system. This brings about an important element in the study, that is, the extent to which teachers are positioned as the facilitators of change. Furthermore, if as Fairclough (2003) asserts that communicative discourse through texts occurs by way of (i) specific ways of acting, (ii) specific ways of representing, and (iii) specific ways of being, then CDA can be used to assess and comment on struggles of power and relations of dominance. Critical discourse analysis can be used to highlight the discursive strategies of positivist research. If seen in this context, a key claim of CDA is that major and significant social, political and economic processes and movements, such as neo-liberalism, have a partly “linguistic-discursive character” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 263). This suggests that core social, political and economic changes in society contain elements of cultural and ideological change that results in significant change for public education and so for the work of public secondary school teachers. Indeed, there are political connotations in dominant representations of teaching practice that has seen a proliferation of the “policy as numbers” trend (see Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 122; Lingard, 2010). The positional influence of the researchers involved (see Rowe, 2003; Ballou, Sanders & Wright, 2004; Hattie, 2003, 2009) asserts the “new public management” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 122) of a
positivist construction of teaching. The rise of “performance indicators and various league tables of performance measures” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 122) present the policy-maker with a set of system imposed evaluative tools against which teaching practice can be measured and compared. Teachers are then co-opted into a managerial game of compliance and performance.

4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues that required attention in this study included: (a) obtaining informed consent by the subject/interviewee after having been fully briefed about the proposed investigation and research; (b) protecting the interviewee’s information and respecting the confidentiality of data given and so offering the right to privacy thus protecting respondent identity and (c) ensuring that the interview was not a negative experience and no harm of any kind (physical or emotional) occurred.

(a) Informed consent

My task as researcher and interviewer was to obtain information while listening and encouraging another person to speak about issues relating to the problem of classroom TER. A list of indicative questions and an explanation of the research was sent to participants prior to interviews. This gave interviewees some indication before the interview of the type of issues that were to be canvassed as part of my investigation and was seen as an important component of the informed consent process. It was mentioned as part of this correspondence between myself as principal researcher and potential respondent, that the proposed interview if it was to take place was largely semi-structured, although in all likelihood, the interview would develop under specified themes as set out in the list of preliminary questions sent. None of the respondents expressed alarm or unease regarding questions asked or issues covered. Interviewees were all informed of my preference for taping the interview and all agreed to be taped. All of the interviewees were given the opportunity to receive and review a copy of the interview transcripts. All of the interviewees consented to the use of interview transcripts for the purposes of my research.

(b) Confidentiality

The guidelines for confidentiality were set out in the permission form on ethics approval as stipulated by University guidelines. The names of those interviewed were not to be disclosed to persons external to myself and my supervisor. Specific interview comments were also to remain confidential. The use of pseudonyms in publications and the omission of specific information that potentially would reveal the identity of the interviewee were some of the strategies used to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. All of this information was conveyed to the participants prior to the interview taking place. None of the interviews conducted provided data that could be regarded as highly sensitive by the participants. As it is important that any meaning that is constructed and interpreted by the researcher in relation to the research question reflects the collected and collated data interview transcripts were cross-checked with interview recordings. This also included cross-checking and cross-referencing with key contemporary education policy documentation regarding classroom TER. The interpretation, evaluation and representation of data notwithstanding, cannot “guarantee
absolute methodological certainty” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 871) and it must be remembered that the researcher is not a neutral observer at the “game of knowledge” (Smith & Deemer, 2000, p. 877). The interpretation(s) I make of the interview transcripts seeks to make meaning of them. In doing so, I recognise my biases and dispositions that in large part reflect my personal experiences, having worked as a secondary school teacher and now working as an academic whose major research interest includes analysing and critically interpreting specific forms of TER.

(c) Protection from Harm

The research question that stems from the examination of classroom TER did not supersede the “human side” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 662) of those interviewed for this study. As the sole researcher I was mindful of treating the respondents/subjects with respect at all times and viewed them not as numbers or objects but as knowledgeable human beings with valuable contributions to make regarding my area of interest.

Conclusion

This Chapter has outlined the methodology and research method for the critical case study analysis, interpretation and examination of classroom TER. The first section of Chapter six dealt with constructionist epistemology, indicating the interpretive aspects and theoretical foundations of qualitative inquiry. This form of research recognises that the problem of TER can be studied critically, thus reflecting a major contention of qualitative inquiry, that there are multiple constructions of reality.

Based in a critical constructionist approach, this analysis and examination of the problem of classroom TER uses critical discourse analysis to interpret data derived from semi-structured interviews of policy-participants.

What now follows are two Chapters that detail the analysis of this data. The first of these chapters, Chapter seven, gives an account of the particular type of classroom TER used for the development of education policy. It also identifies the first of the major concepts as presented by the interview data. The second of these Chapters, Chapter eight, provides an account of the role of the individual public secondary school classroom teacher practitioner and the school in enhancing individual student learning outcomes and student academic achievement.
Chapter Seven – Believing in ‘What Works’

Introduction

The focus of this Chapter is on the analysis of classroom teacher effectiveness research (TER) for the development of public education policy. The Chapter draws on education policy documents from within the Australian State of Victoria: specifically, the Victorian Government’s Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Blueprint for Government Schools (2003, 2008) also known as ‘the Blueprint’. The Chapter also draws on interview data with eight participant interviewees described in Chapter six. None of the participants are directly identified in the Chapter and are referred to as policy participant # 1, 2, 3, and so on. Participants # 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are all employees in the DEECD bureaucracy. They are involved in the conduct, development and dissemination of education research for the DEECD with a particular interest and expertise in teacher capacity, teaching practice and school improvement. Participants # 2, 3 and 8 are non-bureaucrat participants. While not currently practising classroom teachers, they are representatives of the teaching profession in their respective teacher professional organisations where they hold senior positions. Participants # 2 and 8 are involved in professional advocacy (non-industrial) and the development of teachers including secondary school principals. Participant #3 is involved in the industrial representation of public school teachers.

At issue in this Chapter is the exclusive belief in a particular kind of evidence-based education research for the development of public education policy. Indeed, the theoretical frame and structure of TER is supported by four identifiable beliefs. These are:

- There is a direct (cause-effect) relationship between teaching practice and student achievement. Hence, teaching practice can be measured in terms of student achievement and teachers can be held accountable for their performance.

- All teaching practice is observable and quantifiable. Hence, teaching can be staged and teachers can be held accountable for how well they adhere to recognised and staged teaching practice.

- Teaching practice is the only variable that matters. All other influences on student achievement remain constant or vary uniformly. Hence, teaching ‘makes the difference’.

- Teaching practice varies independently of other influences. Hence, ‘good’ teaching is good teaching everywhere, in every circumstance.

The Chapter explores the policy context of public education outlining policy determinations of ‘what works’ for the improvement of student learning outcomes. As the first of two data analysis
chapters, it aims to engage critically with participant responses around TER and student achievement. This involves a critical examination of major public education policy documentation with respect to classroom TER drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Foucault and Bourdieu.

The discursive positioning of teachers as actors within the educational process, specifically with respect to teaching and learning, leads to constructed versions of what may be possible. This has consequences for the teaching profession. As Fairclough (2006) suggests, and which has resonance for teachers, “people’s lives are increasingly shaped by representations generally produced elsewhere” (p. 150). Central to this point then is a need to critically examine and seek to scan and probe representations of classroom teacher practitioners by focusing on the “politics of representation” (Fairclough, 2006, p. 150). For instance, “whose representations are these, who gains what from them, what social relations do they draw people into, what are their ideological effects and what alternative representations are there” (Fairclough, 2006, p. 150)? These ve interests form the schema for the analysis of interview data in this Chapter. The analysis is constituted under six headers. The headers identify aspects of the research conducted as part of this analysis. In broad terms they provide and point to the inherent suppositions informing the analysis incorporating facets of teaching practice and performance, evidence and student learning. The core concern at the centre of the analysis is an identification of teacher effectiveness and classroom instruction as the specific initiators of ‘what works’ to raise student achievement.

The Chapter begins with a discussion of the legitimation of education research as a field of practice. In particular, the discussion illustrates the growing interconnection between public education policy development and implementation and distinctive forms of education research. This sets the scene for the subsequent analysis of the interview data generated in this research, specifically in relation to naming the fundamental and significant centre point of classroom TER and its role in public education policy with respect to teacher performance and student learning and achievement. The analysis includes an account of ‘evidence-based’ research and its role in adding value to the evaluation of school and teacher-based instructional practice(s). The Chapter concludes by drawing out from the data major concepts for further analysis in Chapter eight. The first of these concerns the classroom teacher practitioner as the major determiner of individual student learning outcomes. The second concerns the influence of school context on student learning outcomes.

1. Legitimated Practices

An important consideration in education research as a field of practice is a belief in ‘what works’ or as Briggs (2008) suggests, what will “work” (p. 20). Two significant and at times competing conceptual frameworks dominate the field. In Lingard and Gale’s (2010) account of the field’s development, a key consideration is the initial dominance of educational psychology. The methodological orientations of education psychology’s disciplinary and theoretical frameworks includes a conception of research that is positivist, quantitative, correlational and has cause and effect relations (see Lingard & Gale, 2010). This represents one end of the education research
spectrum. The other includes a “diversification of research and researchers” (Lingard & Gale, 2010, p. 39) which includes “poststructuralist and postcolonial educational research” (Lingard & Gale, 2010, p. 39). Despite this, particular forms of education research assert and maintain a legitimised dominance, generally within public education policy-making domains. As Lingard and Gale (2010) note:

...there are ways in which some policy developments today, including research accountabilities, might work to delimit these broader definitions of educational research and usher in a new empiricism, as governments seek to construct a gold standard of quasi-positivist experimental design within social science research. In this context, there is a way in which governments can be seen to govern through data with policy being increasingly constructed as numbers. (p. 39)

Implicit in quasi-positivist experimental designs that focus on the centrality of the classroom teacher and student learning outcomes are empirically randomised control trials that can be quantified and measured (see Lingard & Gale, 2010). In other words, evaluations of teacher practice and its relationship to student achievement are captured through discrete one-off ‘set-ups’ of practice.

In a “policy as numbers” (Lingard, 2010) context, evidence-based research, understood as productive of numerical data and findings and ‘devoid’ of researcher bias, promises a certain confidence for policy makers and government departments. The prestige advanced by specific and discrete research specializations, particularly those emanating from within psychology as opposed to education per se, historically at least, bears this out (see Lagemann, 2000). Indeed, one of the major reasons for embracing psychologised and behaviourist conceptions of teaching and learning is in order to maintain field dominance and control. The authority that the education researcher holds by virtue of their position as the “searcher for truth” relegates the teacher practitioner as “merely the person concerned with application” (Lagemann, 2000, p. 61). This reflects a conception and view of education, and teaching and learning in particular, that suggests improvements can be made through and “by scientific knowledge generated outside of schools and totally apart from idiosyncratic circumstances of particular teachers, children, and classrooms” (Lagemann, 2000, p. 62).

In Victoria, the Government’s Education and Early Childhood Development Blueprint for Government Schools (2003) – the Blueprint – is claimed to be informed by “extensive research into patterns of student outcomes, the factors that influence them and the performance of schools in delivering them” (p. 3). This encompasses a fundamental and vital element, the classroom teacher. The need for improved results rests on “designing, implementing and evaluating programs to meet student needs and the centrality of the teaching-learning relationship” (DEECD Blueprint, 2003, p. 3). A priority of the reform agenda in public education and expressed by the Blueprint (2003) is enhancing the skills of the education workforce in order to enhance the teaching and learning relationship. The creation and support of a performance and development culture mirrors this priority (see DEECD Blueprint, 2003). In the Blueprint, research that produces evidence of a particular kind is central to this endeavour. Specifically:
Research shows that a good performance and development system in schools improves student learning outcomes by identifying the specific areas where a teacher’s performance can be improved and by providing targeted professional development to do so. (DEECD Blueprint, 2003, p. 19)

Moreover, a heightened and intense focus on teacher performance with respect to classroom instruction which includes a persistent attention to improvement particularly in terms of student achievement, is dominant:

Schools with a focus on a performance and development culture will improve teacher effectiveness and therefore student outcomes by emphasising better performance management and creating an environment of continuous improvement. (DEECD Blueprint, 2003, p. 20)

That is, the centre of attraction and rallying point in terms of an education policy reform agenda is the efficacy of classroom instruction and effective teaching practice. Positivist forms of education research draw specific attention to this aspect. Participant #1 frames it thus:

All the research would say that the quality of instruction … has the greatest correlation in student learning and student performance.

Furthermore, an effective classroom teacher is able to draw on their disciplinary knowledge base and transform it, rendering it accessible to students:

... effective teaching requires an interaction between the teacher and the students around content and so teachers have to, by having that deep knowledge base ... go into the classroom to translate that into a series of activities that make that content accessible to kids. (Participant #1)

Participant #1’s comments illustrate and capture the essential and major arguments involved in considerations of teacher effectiveness and its relationship to student learning outcomes. First, the received and trusted emphasis on evidence-informed research that secondly, unquestioningly verify quality of instruction and position teacher performance as the decisive element in student learning outcomes. Effective teaching is evident in teachers’ capacities to make deep knowledge content accessible. In brief, (improving) teacher performance, understood narrowly in terms of (improving) classroom pedagogy, becomes a proxy for (improving) student learning. The validation and proof of what works in terms of teacher effectiveness is established through “hard research” (Participant #5). The information gathered can be trusted and is considered credible because it invariably contains an “inherent in-built research mechanism” (Participant #5). The educational “program continues to be informed by international research and the findings of what the teachers and what the kids are doing” (Participant #5). This may appear uncomplicated and trouble-free, but it portrays an easy and smooth, one could argue, straightforward knowledge generation process for teaching and learning. Indeed Participant #1 appears to say as much by suggesting that “All the
research would say”. Yet it would be more accurate to suggest that only some education research, suggests that teachers and the quality of their pedagogy is the most important element in student achievement (e.g. Hattie, 2009).

In much education policy-making what constitutes effective teaching practice for enhancing the learning outcomes of public school students is informed by a cause-and-effect logic. The problem of poor or inadequate academic performance is no longer a symptom of perceived shortfalls in state funding or other resource de cits. Rather, imperfect and de cient academic student performances re ect de cits in teachers’ classroom instruction and ineffective teaching practice. Consequently, poor educational outcomes can be overcome through adherence to best-practice teaching that enables effective learning and raises educational performance. This exempli es the centrality of the classroom teacher (see Larsen, 2010) and ‘best practice’ teaching. The views of several participants in the study re ected this. Participant #2, for example, suggested that “ultimately, in the long run, it is the teacher that really matters”. Participant #1 similarly noted that:

There has been a great deal of emphasis over the last couple of years in engaging in the research base to understand what quality teaching entails both in terms of entry point, accreditation, and preparation of teachers and the quality thereof.

As a result of this, and in seeking to regularise and institute a system-wide approach to teaching and learning, one predicated on a “new apparatus of certiication and regulation of teachers” (Connell, 2009, p. 214), imposed policy-maker constructions of effective teaching practice surface. There is an emphasis on the importance of the:

... development of standards and being able to de ne professionalism and …
commitment to investing in the most effective type of professional learning that the research base says will assist teachers to grow and learn on the job. (Participant #1)

2. Naming the Focus: Teacher Performance and Student Learning

The “orthodoxy” (Oancea & Pring, 2008, p. 16) of positivist education research that reports on what has been found to work in classrooms reduces and diminishes the importance and relevance of context. The “technicist ascendancy” (Clark, 2005, p. 289) in education research accommodated by investigatory processes charged with nding the factors that report on ‘effective’ teaching practice, treat teaching and learning as a technical enterprise. Variables, a term synonymous with the positivist researcher, which may have signi cant in uences on the mechanism(s) of causation, particularly in terms of learning and understanding and other than those that may be directly attributable to the classroom teacher, are found to exert little in uence by way of enhanced student learning outcomes (see Rowe, 2003).

This “scholastic epistemocentric” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 50) attempt to nd and de ne ‘what works’ as an exercise and search for best practice teaching, should rst and foremost recognise and understand the practical realities experienced by those agents and practitioners that are subject
to the analysis in question. Quite often, this is not the case. Generally, positivist research analyses of teaching practice are completed in a manner that leads to a “mistaken and distorted” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 50) understanding of practical reality and/or practice. Whereas, a more robust understanding, rather than an enhanced or titivated ‘evidence-based’ account, is made possible by disclosing the unique characteristics and differences evident between practical and scientific knowledge. The crucial thing that matters, as Bourdieu (2000) illustrates, is the recognition of knowledge; practical and scientific, reasonable reason abutting scholastic, theoretical, reasoning reason. A key consideration is the extent to which classroom teaching practice – a contextually situated activity – lends itself for measurement and quantification purposes, particularly if and when judgements centred on effectiveness are made based on research that separates and disregards key and important features of classroom instruction. For instance, Barker (2008) states that “the empirical evidence that particular strategies or methods can be applied consistently and reliably to produce better results is relatively limited” (p. 677).

The Victorian State Labor Government’s education reform agenda between 2003-2010, emphasizes the improvement of learning standards and outcomes for Victorian Government school students. A firm political commitment to social justice and equity is highlighted in that education policy has been geared towards addressing educational disadvantage.

Despite all that has been achieved over the past four years, we need to concentrate further upon improved learning outcomes for students. Some groups of students continue to have poor levels of literacy and other basic skills. These students can be concentrated in particular schools and particular areas of the state. They tend to have high rates of absenteeism from school and are more likely to leave school early. There are also high variations in outcomes between classes within schools and between schools with similar student populations. (DEECD Blueprint, 2003, p. 2)

Indeed, the case for prioritising student learning and teacher classroom instruction is provided by emphasizing inadequate levels of student achievement:

There are still students who leave school early, with poor levels of literacy, numeracy and other core learnings. These poor student outcomes are concentrated in some schools and some regions. Data show high concentrations in some regions and schools of students who have poor outcomes in literacy and numeracy, high school absenteeism, poor VCE/Year 12 results and low school completion. There are high variations in student outcomes between classes within schools, which highlights the importance of quality teaching. Furthermore, there are many schools that achieve outstanding results, and others with similar student populations that do not. (DEECD Blueprint, 2003, p. 9)

In an attempt to address these deficiencies, the Blueprint (2003) invokes research evidence and mentions three key features of our school system that require immediate attention. The
centres on a need to address the “high concentration of poor outcomes in some schools and some regions” (DEECD Blueprint, 2003, p. 10). The second specifically focuses on the school and the work of teachers: “Within a given school there are frequently high variations in outcomes between classes. This points to the centrality of the teaching–learning relationship” (DEECD Blueprint, 2003, p. 10). The third feature compares schools and student outcomes. A priority for the government is to address disparate variations in outcomes between schools with similar student populations and cohorts. Schools “can improve, and there is a need to look towards the factors that build school performances and build a culture of continuous school improvement” (DEECD Blueprint, 2003, p. 10).

Moreover, an important consideration for the Victorian State Government is maintenance of an education system that complements a post-Fordist economy.

The demands of our increasingly sophisticated economy and a more complex and rapidly changing society require us to address these poor outcomes and, indeed, to improve educational outcomes for all students. Education and training underpin the development of a highly skilled, innovative workforce as a critical enabling factor for social, cultural and economic growth in Australia. (DEECD Blueprint, 2003, p. 2)

Any analysis of teacher performance and student learning outcomes is bounded by this form of discourse. The specific and defining focus is performance.

If I focus on the last four years, in particular, 2003, when the Government Blueprint was launched by Minister Kosky, it was in some respects a defining moment, in recent times, in terms of focussing the government system on its performance and drawing a line in the sand between differential outcomes, between schools, between classes and so there was a very clear agenda around student learning, about building the capacity of the teaching workforce and about continuous improvement in schools. (Participant #1)

The legitimation of school system improvement enacted and directed through quality teaching and learning predominantly represents deliberations about school education. Indeed, student learning is:

... centre stage and ... teachers would be assisted not only in terms of being given what was considered to be 21st century curriculum but the tools and the resources to actually develop their capacity in the classroom to translate that curriculum into powerful teaching. (Participant #1)

This recognises the emphasis on key and core terms synonymous with neo-liberal economic and political aims and agendas; terms such as performance, differential outcomes, building capacity, tools, continuous improvement and powerful teaching. These are all terms that display the linguistic and discursive character of neo-liberalism, at least within education.
Significantly, education policy elevates the centrality of the classroom teacher and their practice above that of individual student social background and ability. Indeed, as Connell (2009) makes clear, “school teachers and their quality have become a focus of widespread policy debate” (p. 213) in recent years. Likewise, there is a tendency to consistently outline policy failure in relation to education system inputs, particularly financial and other resource inputs. For example, the McKinsey Report (2007), an education report on school system reform compiled by McKinsey and Company suggests that:

… despite substantial increases in spending and many well-intentioned reform efforts, performance in a large number of school systems has barely improved in decades. (p. 13)

The focus then on teacher quality manifested through quality classroom instruction to enhance student learning as the main outcome of education is explicitly made in the McKinsey Report:

The available evidence suggests that the main driver of the variation in student learning at school is the quality of the teachers. (The McKinsey Report, 2007, p. 15)

Participant #1 puts it this way:

In terms of a government saying … with the release of the McKinsey Report, regardless of whatever else happened, sometimes it takes a catalyst, like an international consultancy company that says if you want to be the best performing system in the world then you’ve got to attract the best people, you have to develop them and you have to have quality instruction.

Education-system led evaluations of student outcomes and teacher performance legitimates the subsequent authorisation of action to address teacher quality issues, which tend to centre on perceived inadequacies relating to classroom instruction. The equalisation of scholastic outcomes in terms of academic achievement is a core aim. The removal and excision of disparate educational outcomes not only across the school system, but from within classes of the same school is sought. Dominant policy precepts permit and commission action providing for an undisputed systemic resolve to combat student under-achievement.

3. An Accepted Fallacy

Framing public education policy discourse in terms of a human capital component is consistent with a focus on student achievement and the outcomes of education. Persistent educational disadvantage as a matter of interest, “particularly regarding achievement differences between students from different socio-economic backgrounds” (Mills & Gale, 2010, p. 29) necessitates a response. For example, Victorian Labor Government education policy (2003-2010) expresses a desire to tackle under-achievement.
Communities and schools need assistance to improve outcomes for students. This is a challenge that is becoming even more critical as we move towards a more knowledge-based economy; and the focus cannot just be on schools that have the poorest outcomes. There is an ongoing challenge, within and beyond Australia, for all schools to maintain and improve their students’ performance. (DEECD Blueprint, 2003, p. 9)

This forms an indispensable and important characteristic of contemporary public education policy and direction, one that incorporates an economic reform dimension. As the Blueprint (2003) claims:

Reform is necessary to help schools meet this challenge-to improve their practices and performances. Reform is also achievable. The challenge is to identify existing best practice, drive all schools to aspire to achieve it and support this with strategies and initiatives to spread best practice throughout the school system. (p. 9)

Implicit in the move towards reform is the productive capacity of schools and teachers to prepare students for the new post-Fordist economy:

We know that schools for all students including older students, have to do more than what occurs inside the classroom so integration of instruction of generic or employability skills would appear to be a significant issue … it always comes up given what employers have to say about the attitudinal considerations of students emerging from classrooms. (Participant #7)

The systemic facilitation of reform particularly in terms of student achievement and teacher practice represents a shift in emphasis towards outcomes of schooling and, in particular, the role of classroom instruction, which prioritizes teacher effectiveness. The vital and important consideration in enhancing student learning outcomes and, by implication, academic achievement is the teacher and their classroom performance. Indeed, it is regarded as “absolutely crucial; it is as simple as that, absolutely crucial” (Participant #8).

Comments such as this forget and/or gloss over the unequal processes of education. Indeed, categories that define student populations and for that matter schools are ignored. Key and essential criteria that includes social origin are not worthy of consideration. The categorical assuredness that the comment conveys dismisses education system relationships prevalent in Australia. Unequal selectedness by virtue of school system attendance, public as opposed to private (i.e. independent), fragments the school population. Successful school-system “acculturation” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 73) is expected for students endowed with the requisite level of cultural, social and economic capital. In Australia, students of this kind are increasingly concentrated within the private school sector (see Perry & McConney, 2010).

An obligatory acceptance of effective teaching practice and its relationship to student achievement highlights an unequivocal and intended emphasis on teacher performance. Positivist evidence-based research models of teacher effectiveness provide for a level of confidence amongst policy-participants:
I would have to say that we are probably at a point where the research on teacher effectiveness is probably at the highest point that it has ever been. (Participant #1)

Indeed, the centrality of the teacher and their classroom instruction is essential across all year levels. In addition, the role and importance of the teacher includes an ability to identify and establish how particular individual students learn thus personalising the learning process for students.

We have views about what teacher effectiveness may be and what we have to do about it … in terms of the capacity to teach well, in all subject areas including traditional VCE [Victorian Certificate of Education] subjects … in relation to remedial action where students simply do not have the literacy and numeracy skills to cope … about the personalisation of learning. (Participant #7)

The worth and import of TER is noticeable:

We came to the view around any teacher effectiveness research ... it best be drawn on rigorous research ... what we try to do is look at the national and international research that really has some good rigour around it ... [that places] importance on the teacher within the classroom and I think that goes without saying. Intuitively we know that, and there is a lot of good research around that backs that up. (Participant #4)

These comments reflect and reinforce the objective distance that positivist evidence-based TER tends to invoke. What is more, they are disowned. A mysterious and synchronous rendering of what TER illustrates enters the spoken view, centred chiefly on its stated importance to student achievement. Indeed, the privileging of teacher performance and their capacities is expressed by the following comment:

Having done policy development around effective schools and VCAL [Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning] ... teachers and their abilities are important. (Participant #6)

A significant system-led configuration of a teacher’s classroom instruction that emphasizes performance and the link to student achievement also marks a “very strong shift to evidenced based” (Participant #1) reform in public education. Central to this shift is a marked and theoretical re-branding of teaching practice as an important and indispensable function of schooling, while contextual influences are immobilized. The deployment instead of an elevated stance for positivist evidence-based research, highlighting its certainty and absoluteness, works to successfully ameliorate context, intricacy and complexity. A commanding and attractive theoretical compilation of teaching practice postulating as to the true nature of teaching and learning and student achievement becomes, as Bourdieu (1977) states, a case of “learned ignorance” (p. 19).

Indeed, the decisive and prominent emphasis placed upon the centrality of classroom instruction and teacher effectiveness has a consistent dialogic component. There is always reference to “seminal research based on data” (The McKinsey Report, 2007, p. 15) usually followed by comparisons of teachers and their respective classes in terms of grades attained. Moreover, clear and
definite parameters are set out as indicators of positive and purposeful change that effectuates results in successful school systems. The McKinsey Report (2007) outlines the following:

To improve instruction, these high-performing school systems consistently do three things well:

- They get the right people to become teachers (the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers).
- They develop these people into effective instructors (the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction).
- They put in place systems and targeted support to ensure that every child is able to benefit from excellent instruction (the only way for the system to reach the highest performance is to raise the standard of every student). 

A calculation of accuracy and verisimilitude in order to make certain the genuine validity of “research and a good evidence base” (Participant #4) is then what propels the teacher effectiveness debate. The “instantaneous view of facts” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 82) that a linear view of teaching and learning provides, obliges us to perceive teaching practice and student achievement as a relationship free of constraints, be they constraints of social, historical, economic or political origin. Significantly, important and core oppositions presented in a simple way serve to verify composite and complicated relations by eliminating divisions and possible uncertainties. For instance, value-added measures of school and teacher effectiveness incorporate statistically derived adjustments, estimations and corrections (see Chapter three).

The methodology of obtaining value-added measures involves estimating that part of a student’s score on an outcome measure that cannot be predicted knowing his or her background and/or prior levels of ability and attainment. Much depends upon ensuring that adjustments have been made for all relevant intake characteristics and that each of these have been measured reliably. To the extent that this is not done, under-adjustments are likely to occur that will favour those schools with more advantaged intakes (see Hill, 1995).

The explicit “only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction” McKinsey statement noted above, and additionally, “the only way for the system to reach the highest performance is to raise the standard of every student”, testify to a particular and biased ignorance. It is dismissive of complicated relations involving for example, cultural differences, social position/class and gender amongst others. A scientific logic of practice that excludes uncertainty, ambiguity and indistinctness forecloses on the conditions and functions of contemporary teaching practice and the work of schooling. In the first instance, the statistical vagaries of TER define its indeterminate disposition and character. Secondly, the indefinite and doubtful – imprecise–characterisation of “classroom and school relations” (Gale & Densmore, 2000, p. 144) by metricated forms of measurement “sweep away … the real, really lived-in world” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 82). It is a logic that surrounds itself
with concocted artefacts of productive endeavour and inquiry, concealing aspects of practical knowledge through a misleading discourse reminiscent of the “intellectualist tendency inherent in the objectivist approach to practices” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 19). The conditions for its existence are predicated on the operation of an impeccable pedigree of scientific logic of practice that obliges consent and agreement.

The prioritisation of effectiveness, particularly in relation to teacher and classroom instruction privileges educational initiatives that are based upon what is considered to be rigorous research. In broad terms, the essential and fundamental core requirement of effectiveness, and its relationship to student learning outcomes has a functional purpose and orientation. The research effort, transacted through regularisation, comprises key features that produce tangible results. There is an operational component attached. Hence, “it is about using knowledge of the students and identifying which approach is effective” (Participant #5). The need to establish certainty and a factual basis to practice dominates.

There has to be a link made to evidence based research and policy. Now, whether that comes from reputable empirical research that has been done internationally in terms of the studies that have been done ... I guess the availability in terms of the internet to be able to look inside educational jurisdictions and draw on some of the research that they have commissioned around particular priorities ... whether it is literacy, numeracy, whether it is studies that have looked at or tried to do both the quantitative [data generation] and analysis of those, that within a teacher’s repertoire have the greatest correlation between student learning and performance. (Participant #1)

The theoretical dependence engendered by particular and formalised instances of classroom instruction and teacher performance makes possible generalized aspects of teaching practice. We “scanned the research, looked at all the models and constructed a professional learning model” (Participant #1). As a result, an “instructional repertoire ... the modelling ... establishes the classroom climate, the high expectations, respectfulness” (Participant #1) needed for effective teaching practice. Hence, a compartmentalized picture and articulation of teaching practice and classroom instruction is made possible. The limits then of a pure objectivism never explicitly referred to in an evidence-derived view of teaching and learning enables a rationalism to teaching practice which “makes obedience to the rule the determining principle of all practices” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 23).

Tacit and implied policy participant acknowledgment of positivist evidence-based research that furnishes the required educational change needed to improve student learning outcomes and academic achievement, passively asserts a range of major research features. Pring and Oancea (2008) make reference to them. First, there is a view that educational knowledge can be ascertained through a guided process of inquiry based on universal principles of research found across all disciplines. Second, there is the gift of a superlative or golden standard of research that correlates closely to experimental medical modes of research. Third, is the realist articulation of knowledge thereby regarding with favour promises of objectivity that affirmatively answer serious practical questions.
about teaching and learning. Fourth, is the implicit consent given to the process of inquiry that by its 
very formulation controls knowledge and sets out findings as a body of accumulated facts. Fifth, is 
the recognised undertaking that knowledge generated has been amassed via a thorough process of 
inquiry that has bounded and pre-gured frameworks of rigour ensuring quality.

A contrived measurement and judgement of practical action that estimates and appraises 
teacher practice and student achievement supplants regularity for the unstated irregularities of 
schooling. An imagined coherence ful is functions of research, but oversimplifies and distorts the 
practical. Nevertheless, the contented utilisation of positivist forms of evidence-based TER enacts 
a developmental generality choosing to link effective teacher performance and classroom instruc-
tion to student achievement. In short, ‘good’ teaching is effective teaching regardless of circum-
stance and so student achievement reflects ‘good’ and effective teaching.

4. Using Evidence

An important requirement of positivist evidence-informed research in public education is a need to 
establish agreement on aspects of classroom instruction through “readily interpretable syntheses” 
(Slavin, 2008, p. 5) leading to the elimination of disagreement or doubts about teaching practice. 
The need for a “good evidence base” (Participant #4) and the steady propagation of a “body of 
knowledge” (Lagemann, 2000, p. 236) on matters of educational interest propels policy partici-pant commentary on the link between teacher practice and student achievement. The link between 
teacher practice and student achievement “is very strong ... it is not coming because somebody has 
just said it, somebody has said it, but we are testing it, in practice and the data for that is improv-
ing student learning outcomes” (Participant #5). The utilisation of evidence to inform practice 
rests on “hard research” (Participant #5). Indeed, key components of educational programs are 
designed and contain “inherent research evaluation mechanisms” (Participant #5) that validate 
them as t for service. This approach to knowledge generation ensures that “every step of the 
educational program continues to be informed by international research and the findings of what 
the teachers and the kids are doing” (Participant #5). This is also the case with respect to teacher 
attitudes and behaviours and implied links between effective teacher practice and student achieve-
ment: “teacher attitudes generally reflect learning outcomes” (Participant #6). Participant #4 
articulates this view further:

I think there is clear research now on this particularly around the teacher, what they 
believe their students can achieve and so where teachers hold the view that students 
can reach high potential then they usually do and where teacher’s expectations are 
lower then obviously that is what we see coming through in the outcomes.

The expressed and objectified certainty that equates student achievement and teacher practice is 
a manifestation of a scientific construction. References to “hard research” including “inherent re-
search evaluation mechanisms” denote the objectification of a practical function. The detemporal-
ization (see Bourdieu, 1990) of teaching practice and student learning leads to a theoretical logic of
reification disguising and making redundant modulated aspects of classroom action. Policy participants “without conscious reflection” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 92) and seduced by the idea of a measurable and finely tuned scientific logic of practice are caught in “the matter in hand, totally present in the present and in the practical functions that it nds there in the form of objective potentialities” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 92). Scholastic inquiry and its claim to ‘truth’ established through the methodological pause over practice, represents a substitution of knowledge (see Bourdieu, 2000). This alteration of experience, from the practical to the theoretical, is actually an epistemic shift towards the active theoretical selection of “significant features” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 51) thought to express and encapsulate, beyond all possible or likely confutation, experience and/or practice. Positivist TER, a homiletic expression of what is accurate and correct about teaching practice and student learning, cannot dissociate itself from the “scholastic fallacy” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 50). The universalizing of a particular case through constructions or depictions of reality and the manifested vision of the world that is favoured cannot justify claims to ‘truth’ about teaching practice and student learning regardless of an expressed belief and acceptance by policy-makers of its stated aims and evidence-derived outcomes.

The justifications used by adherents for regimes of national testing, for example, tend to use this approach. The belief in the importance of national testing centres on objectified measurements of student performance that, by implication, directly connect with the performance of the classroom teacher practitioner, the school and, at a broader level, the schooling system. Its legitimacy rests on forming judgements about academic performance. Educational governance through school and system comparison is made possible regardless of validity. The de-contextualised nature of its operational mechanism defines its structure. There is a post-Fordist focus, the emphasis of which includes a labour market orientation incorporating the identification of core skills, such as literacy and numeracy, and the promotion of a type of compulsory life-long learning. The strategic normalizing efforts of systemic national testing conceptualised as a device to drive up academic standards has an embedded “maximisation principle” expressed in terms of “metricity and singularity” (Elliott & Lukes, 2008, p. 100). Good and effective educational outcomes are derived in quantifiable terms that are generalisable and applied across the education system. Knowledge gathered in this way about individual student academic achievement and the schooling system with its particular descriptions of one-off curriculum and subject content performances, underpins the neo-liberal technocratic ascendancy in education. The essential characteristic, “namely, that instrumental effectiveness is the primary criterion for evaluating policy decisions and that this implies a clear and measurable specification of desired outcomes in the form of targets” (Elliott & Lukes, 2008, p. 92), defines the public education policy context.

Indeed, the public education policy context is very much immersed in a universal objective relevance. The articulation of strong links and connections between classroom teacher effectiveness and learning outcomes is constantly made in major policy documents that include a performative policy discourse.
An accreditation scheme for performance and development of schools will be introduced. Accredited schools will improve teacher effectiveness and therefore student outcomes. (DEECD Blueprint, 2003, p. 6)

This connection is given added significance and exaltation, particularly amongst many of the interviewees, as it is based in and emerges from evidence-based research:

The whole learning situation, you know … knowledge sharing, network building, capacity building … all this comes from good research and a good evidence base. This is then what drives and pushes upwards the kind of education policy statements we may be seeing. (Participant #4)

According to Participant #5, program implementation, particularly that centred on teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes, is “very much coming from what teachers and school leaders are saying and marrying that with what the international literature is telling us” (Participant #5).

The appropriation of positivist evidence-based TER including its claims and findings aim at symbolic universalisation of official interest. The official representation of teaching practice stemming from what the research finds, is first and foremost “objectified in language” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 110). The “principle of the magical efficacy of this performative language” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 110) lies in the authority and recognition bestowed on it by those from which it emanates. The integration of practical classroom action into articulated versions of ‘what works’ are dominant representations of teaching and learning situations backed and authenticated by official system authority. The substantiation that is given to it and that it receives is corroborated by the “unanimity of the group” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 110) attesting to its objectivity. Participant #7 puts it thus:

The basis of my discrimination is the authority with which some accumulator of research either presents information or is influential in a forum … what I would tend to do is not look at specific studies … but would look for research findings collectively as they relate to a policy issue that I might be interested in.

The presence of a product that is the work of a “body of specialists” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 20) is the symbolic surety that functions as the formulated basis of recommendation and acceptance. Participant #7 alludes to this in that his policy determinations and policy advice are based upon the authority and officialization bestowed upon specific research evidence by the power it is granted through the “group which authorizes it and invests it with authority” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 21).

5. Specialized Evidence: A Search for Certainty?

The movement towards an indisputable and unquestionable evidentiary basis (see Seidel & Shavelson, 2007) that seeks to quantify the value that a classroom teacher has added to the individual learning outcomes of particular students represents a contemporary shift in education
research. Value-added models of TER stem from the desire to clearly distinguish and ascertain the value that a classroom teacher has added to the individual learning outcomes of particular students (see Chapter three). Yet, its validity in terms of addressing teacher effects and student achievement is and remains uncertain (see Gorard, 2009). Participants tended to recognise the uncertainty of value-added TER in its present guise. Nevertheless, for most participants in this study, value-added modes of TER held some promise.

I guess ‘value-added’ is a term that is still evolving … but it is something that we here in Victoria [Australia] are looking at but looking at it very carefully ... we are looking at what is happening overseas, looking at the research, looking at the various ‘value-added’ models and so on. ‘Value-added’ is definitely an area of interest but it is slowly, slowly at the moment until we can definitively generate or provide a policy on that. (Participant #4)

The obvious complexity involved in evaluating and commenting on educational outcomes is illustrated by the next comment. Of particular interest is the recognition that quantified analyses of student achievement is perhaps an exercise in statistical manipulation rather than accurate and meaningful portrayal of classroom teaching and learning. Consider the following comment from Participant #3:

One of the problems is that ‘value-added’ takes on many different meanings for different people. Some people believe that you engage in ‘value-added’ analysis when you compare, for example, one year three cohort with another year three cohort and not take into consideration the variety of social differences that may occur. Other researchers consider ‘value-added’ where you consider the outcomes of children in year three and then you look at their outcomes in year five and then in year seven. These are all interesting concepts that seek to reduce education to mere statistics. Education is more complex than that. (Participant #3)

Neat and seemingly plausible value-added calculations of teaching and learning as organising systems of logic reduce and generalise teaching practice substituting a specialized almost mechanical procedure as a process of and for classroom action. The allure and attraction of a simple mechanical process of analysis offers the policy-maker a practical efficacy justifying in their view possible solutions for future action. Participant #1 makes reference to this when discussing value-added TER:

We have some local work developed and there are significant problems attached to ‘value-added’. I don’t think that we have actually found the right model yet that gets rid of all of the noise to be absolutely confident, but the point will come I think where there will be a break through. We will be able to determine the true ‘value-add’ of schools in terms of what they add over time. (Participant #1)

This comment tends to comply with recent stated government action centred on school improvement.
A more finely tuned approach to school management will be put in place to assess school performance against a balanced set of measures and to implement a broader range of strategies for school improvement. This approach covers the three major outcome areas of student learning, student wellbeing, and pathways and transitions. ‘Value-added’ measures will be included as these are developed. (DEECD Blueprint, 2008, p. 26)

The intended development of value-added models of teacher effectiveness signifies constructed accounts of student achievement. Note references in the text to a “finely tuned approach” and a “balanced set of measures”. Positivist representations and constructions of teaching and learning become the “determining cause” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 21) of student achievement based on teacher practice and classroom pedagogy.

Indeed, a corrected metricated score signifies the ‘value-add’ of the school and by extension its teachers to individual student achievement. The following comment acknowledges this and also reinforces the importance of ascertaining and evaluating student achievement based on effective teaching practice. The explicit individual teacher contribution to student achievement is mentioned including the base indicator of socio-economic status.

I don’t know how important it is in terms of educational research but I can offer a comment in terms of policy development and it is fundamental. The vexed question of the contribution of the school and the contribution of the teacher and the contribution of the teacher to particular individuals as opposed to more generally, is critical to questions of how you might improve both outcomes for the students individually and collectively and improve the operation of the school system. So, the question of ‘value-add’ in the first place is fundamental but very vexed. I’d add that we know that when we try to look at ‘value-add’ we tend to use student family occupation as an indicator of base capacity and then what a school achieves. The achievement of students corrected for that student family occupation background is the dominant measure of school achievement but it is vexed for a number of reasons. (Participant #7)

The intended objectivist homogenization of teaching practice, classroom instruction and student achievement based on improvised and programmed models of positivist research standardizes and regularizes action. The transcendence of classroom “conditions of existence” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 80), which include social, political, historical and economic instances of influence, are ignored. These can range from and include shaping education so that only discrete and measurable outcomes benefit from and have system authority. Nevertheless, the social, political, historical and economic instances of influence that include the economy and school, qualifications and jobs, employment, underemployment and unemployment, structural inequality, managerialist structures of school governance, issues of school funding, and the curriculum, compose and represent a possible collection of features that impact on student achievement. Indeed, the complex issues of in...
ence, as for example, social class/origin and educational success constituted by “cultural capital and class ethos” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 87), necessitate understanding the transformations and development of student achievement and teacher practice from two sides. The first is as a specific part and facet of the education system that second, is composed of and encompassed by the “ensemble of the social characteristics which define the initial situation of children” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 89). Assigning the “two-fold interrelation” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 87) – student achievement or under-achievement and classroom instruction – is to misapply and indeed misunderstand the conditions and means of the education system as a system of power.

It is the system of factors, acting as a system, which exerts the indivisible action of a structural causality on behaviour and attitudes and hence on success and elimination, so that it would be absurd to try to isolate the influence of any one factor, or, a fortiori, to credit it with a uniform, univocal influence at the different moments of the process or in the different structures of factors. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 87)

Positivist classroom TER seeks to accomplish this. Moreover, it attempts to resolve the theoretical supposition between teacher practice involving classroom instruction and student achievement. An imposed system of logic transcends classroom action dispensing with and substituting an un-contrasting and normalised series of reference points for teaching and learning and student achievement.

6. A Self-evident Logic

The search for an unerring and reliable source of indisputable evidence reporting on effective teaching practice and student achievement enunciated by the rise of value-added research imports further complications. The confident articulation by policy participants that an economy of ordered metricated inquiry under the guise of value-added research will be found only suggests that a broader framework of educational governance is evolving. Yet, the problematical and uncertain nature of this research, whilst acknowledged by interviewees does not lessen the view that it is sure to happen. Indeed, the dominance of a value-added teacher effectiveness model of practice brings with it many tensions but this doesn’t impede its destined implementation.

Value-added research as a form of evidence-based educational research has specific properties of positivist theoretical logic. The fundamental and highly economical process of evaluation that it offers unveils an approximate illustration of teaching and learning devoid of oppositional aspects of practice. An internalized positivist value-added systematization of inquiry as a form of evidence-based research neglects to produce its own set of arbitrary contingencies. The self-evident findings that it espouses accord with particular and objective modes of inquiry that hold to a doxic order of authority. The separation and truncation of teaching practice and classroom instruction from “their real conditions of existence” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 96) provides for a false analysis of student achievement. The work of Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) reminds us to guard against restrained and con ned examinations of complex systems. Indeed, their work rejects pure and
simple depictions of learning and teaching. Emphatic reified and usually strictly metricated models of educational practice seeking a causal relationship and link between teaching practice and student learning, hides and masks core information. A feature of the school system is the “perpetuation and legitimation of social hierarchies” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. xi) found in the bias that already favours the “possessors of inherited cultural capital” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. xi). The "structure of the distribution of cultural capital" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. vi) requires more than the absoluteness on offer by particular forms of classroom TER.

Consequently, the “single principle” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 85) model and explication of student achievement as evidence of effectiveness, that often intermingles classroom teacher effectiveness, student motivation, learning, connectedness to school (engagement and well-being), and teacher attitudes/beliefs into a mathematically ordered relationship cannot but cause confusion, uncertainty and tension. This is despite policy-maker confidence in models and indicators of effectiveness.

One of the things that we have found to be hugely effective when I came in with the Blueprint … we looked at the research around effective schools and we adapted a model … we have eight correlates of an effective school … we have used that as the basis for a lot of our decisions around school improvement. (Participant #1)

Nevertheless, tensions exist in terms of policy prescriptions depicting models of educational effectiveness that includes effective teacher practice and student achievement.

I reckon that there is a lot of colour and movement in education. You know, there are lots of people running around with lots of ‘gusto’, but there is not much change actually happening …in the classroom. In depth change is something that we really have to work at … it is very hard. It is not an easy process to go through and you need to give people a lot of support to actually make it happen. (Participant #8)

But, at the centre of a refined teaching and learning model, despite requisite support, lies a technique or techniques of measuring and checking that are held up and compared against theoretical constructs. Their validity, established through an explicit and embodied functionalist apparatus, the purpose of which is a defined and determinate outcome, can never quite fully account for or approximate to actual classroom performance. This applies equally to teachers and students.

The transformation then of teacher practice by targeted system-led direction and intervention lays open for scrutiny the individual classroom teacher. Value-added TER provide the school administrator and policy bureaucrat an opportunity to measure and assess educational progress. The simple process of imputative recognition and identification that value-added forms of teacher effectiveness provide dissects and dissolves what teachers do into “specific, auditable competen-
cies and performances” (Connell, 2009, p. 220). This has the effect of narrowing teacher practice and classroom instruction at a time when to make a difference, public education and the work of schooling “needs to become culturally richer” (Connell, 2009, p. 220).

Conclusion

This Chapter analyses the explicit and effectual relationship between instructional practices of the classroom teacher practitioner and the learning outcomes of students. The seemingly established acceptance of the accumulated body of evidence-based research, pointing to the causal relationship of the classroom practice(s) of teachers and student achievement is what informs policy-participant responses and narratives and furthermore, is the pivotal foundation of ‘what works’. In essence, technized representations and modelled depictions of effective teaching practice by policy-makers rely on positivist accounts of practice and classroom pedagogy. The policy-maker and school system administrator gain from their institutionalized inception and of cial consecration and sanctification. Of cial models of effective teaching practice subjectivize classroom teachers holding them accountable for their practice. Their ideological effect, characterised by a neo-liberal performative emphasis, has a dual focus. First, it subjugates classroom teachers so that their practice can be carefully mapped and evaluated against standardized norms. Secondly, it elides context thus dispensing with broad and detailed expositions of teaching and learning. To this extent, positivist teacher effectiveness representations of effective teaching practice withhold alternatives to practice.

The Chapter has considered how particular types of education research gain legitimacy and the ascendency within the sphere of education policy, particularly in terms of classroom teacher effectiveness and its causal relationship to student learning. The specific content of policy prescriptions centred on effective teaching practice and student learning has facilitated the broad thrust of policy participant justification for an evidence-based approach to education research. But significantly and more importantly, the development and utilisation of particular forms of education research feature prominently and remain influential in representations of teacher classroom pedagogy and student learning. A salient and specific example of this is value-added models of TER. Bearing this in mind, and in terms of ‘what works’, in the following Chapter I consider: first, the idea that the classroom teacher practitioner ‘makes the difference’ to the learning outcomes of public secondary school students and, second, the relevance of school context to student achievement.
Introduction

The central intent of the preceding Chapter is an analysis of the Victorian education policy context that uses particular forms of TER to inform and guide teaching practice in Victorian secondary schools in order to name and so establish ‘what works’ for enhancing the achievement of disadvantaged students. The Chapter drew on education policy documents from within the Australian State of Victoria: specifically, the Victorian Government’s Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Blueprint for Government Schools (2003, 2008). It also drew on interview data with eight participant interviewees described in Chapter six. Chapter seven provides and outlines the important background and basis to the specific and characteristic features of the ‘what works’ argument. The analysis in Chapter seven revealed several specific features of relevance. First, technical representations of effective teaching practice dominate policy-maker beliefs about ‘what works’ to enhance student achievement. Second, governments and school-system administrators are the ‘players’ with the most to gain from positivist accounts of ‘what works’. Third, classroom teachers are marginalized as their practice becomes subjectivized holding them accountable for learning outcomes and student achievement. Chapter seven has foregrounded the relevance and significance of two crucial and related educational constituents pivotal to student learning, the classroom teacher and schools—or ‘schooling’.

This Chapter considers the major theme of student learning outcomes. As with Chapter seven, it draws on the Blueprint for Government Schools (2003, 2008) as well as participant interview transcripts. An explicit aim of the Chapter is to critically engage with the theme of student learning outcomes and, in particular, the influence that teachers and schools have in making differences to student achievement. In so doing, the Chapter distinguishes between varying articulated versions of what makes the difference to student achievement. There are three versions under consideration. Each has been distinctively identified and separated out according to its specific and defining attribute and feature. The first considers the classroom teacher practitioner as the major determiner of individual student learning outcomes. It includes their classroom pedagogy capability and competence and it also incorporates improved strategies of learning and assessment all of which form the basis of a “productive pedagogies” (Lingard, Ladwig & Mills, 2001, p. xiv) approach to learning. This approach to learning privileges the classroom teacher and teacher pedagogy. Recent work by Hayes, Mills, Christie, and Lingard (2006), for example, states that it is “good teachers who make the greatest difference to student outcomes from schooling” (p. 1) and that individual classroom teachers “have more impact on student outcomes than do whole-school effects” (p. 1). Moreover, “particular classroom practices are linked to high-quality student performance” (p. 1). But, they also point out that “there are limits to what teachers and schools can do, although they can make a difference” (p. 2). A second version of the differences that can be made to student achievement concerns the influence of school context on student learning outcomes. In particular, consideration is given to
the “general issues” (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett, 1982, p. 31) and contribution of schools in enhancing student achievement. This stems from a basis of critical examination that emphasizes the difficulty of explaining educational disadvantage and inequality “without bringing in the school” (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett, 1982, p. 26). It is a version given prominence in Australia by several theorists such as Connell et al. (1982) and Mills and Gale (2007, 2010). In general, this version of making the difference considers the “social background of educational success” (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett, 1982, p. 15) of the disadvantaged. The third version suggests that schools and teachers do not make a difference in terms of enhancing student achievement or reversing disadvantage. Yet, students, teachers and policy-makers invest heavily in the ‘game’ of education to bring about desired outcomes. Indeed, this version explicitly reiterates the Bourdieuan (1973) conception and view of the education system, namely that “the contribution made by the educational system to the reproduction of the structure of power relationships and symbolic relationships between classes” (p. 71) is a defining feature of school. All of the versions either have the teacher and their individual classroom instruction, and/or the school as delineating attributes. More importantly, each version is further characterized by the intrinsic albeit concealed functions of the education system, notably, the “structure of relations between the classes” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 192).

The Chapter begins with a detailed consideration of the first version, the teacher making the difference. It is this version that has an acute contemporary relevance, as it specifically targets classroom pedagogy as the major determinant of student achievement. The argument unfolds with reference to the Foucauldian notion of “regimes of truth” (Foucault, 2008, p. 19). The suggestion is that the productive capacity of classroom teachers to make differences works as a regime of truth. Specifically, the tendency to underplay context is overlayed by education system expectations. An unwitting development is the steady subjectivation of classroom teachers. The Chapter then moves to an examination of the second version, the school and context making the difference. This version of what may ‘make the difference’ is connected to broader sociological issues of significance and pre-dates the contemporary pre-eminence given to the performance of classroom teachers. The foremost consideration is context, in particular, the school. An outline of how context is used in education research is provided. I argue that context, specifically, school context, is significant in that student achievement has definite links to school and broader social, historical, political and economic influences that affect student outcomes. The third part of the Chapter considers the systemic ‘game’ of education. Students, teachers, and policy-makers all have a stake and investment in education including the outcomes derived from it. A commitment to and belief in what public education can achieve defines the invested sentiment of the concerned players. But it is clear that the ‘effects’ of the school system as a system of dominance and control adds to rather than ameliorates disadvantage.

‘Making the Difference?’ 1: Classroom Teachers

Professional teaching practice is developed and produced at the “intersection of power and knowledge” (Gore, Ladwig & King, 2004, p. 1). The significant consideration in the argument about teacher effectiveness is the extent to which a classroom teacher and their particular classroom teaching practice makes a tangible difference to the learning outcomes of individual students. Indeed, the
important and distinguishable feature is the extent to which a classroom teacher and their practice make ‘the’ difference to student achievement irrespective of context. The ‘making the difference’ theme in contemporary terms implies that teachers through their classroom pedagogy need to raise individual student achievement. Their teaching practices and the outcomes derived directly correlate. A recent Auditor General’s Report (2010) on Teacher Performance from the Australian State of Victoria typifies and illustrates the classroom instruction and student achievement connection.

Research shows that teaching quality is the largest in-school factor affecting student learning at about 30 per cent. (p. vii)

In a similar way, the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS, 2001), from which the productive pedagogies emanate, expresses a basic assumption that enhanced student learning outcomes require “quality pedagogical and assessment practices” (QSRLS, 2001, p. xi). A particular focus for the QSRLS (2001) is the extent to which “the core business of high quality teaching and learning” (p. xiv) is addressed in terms of specifying “what aspects of pedagogy require focus, why, for whom, and to what end” (p. xiv). Implicit in the QSRLS (2001) are the associated findings concerning “the direct causal theory that classroom practices, such as those measured by the productive classroom practices model (including both pedagogy and assessment), lead to improved social and academic outcomes for students” (p. xix). The specific and actual practices of the classroom teacher over and above that of erstwhile influences are the features that matter when dealing with student learning outcomes. All else is beyond the control and sway of the education system.

System articulated descriptions and constructions of teacher practice to enhance student achievement reveal political and ethical dimensions. In the education field, only particular forms of knowledge have significant and important value. Indeed, evidence derived representations of the classroom teacher produce routinised “regimes of truth” (Foucault, 2008, p. 19) involving teacher performance and classroom instruction. The explicit authorization and exercise of power by one group of individuals over another is a significant implication. Moreover, a ruling regime of truth-telling about effective teaching practice is automatically established, suggesting only particular teaching practices and classroom teachers make the difference to student achievement. In other words, it is “excellence in teachers that make the greatest differences” (Hattie, 2003, p. 4). Participant #8 holds similar views:

I would agree with that (that teachers make the difference). Again, if you look at Teese’s stuff, and I forgot the figure, but, I don’t know, the kid brings a certain percentage, the school so many percent, but it is the teacher with the greatest percentage effect. (Participant # 8)

Participant #8 again:

I was just reading some stuff from Barry McGaw recently, you know similar sorts of statements again, that teachers make the biggest difference. Also, the McKinsey Report that came out recently, you know that teacher effectiveness is the thing that is the most important thing.
The specific reference of Participant #8 to teachers making the difference to student achievement is the central feature of the teacher effectiveness debate. It signifies the extent to which classroom teaching practice has become the pivotal distinguishing point of relevance when discussing student achievement. There is no doubt that the work of Teese and McGaw deal with student achievement issues, but the work of these researchers is not specifically centred on or directly relevant to teacher effectiveness. Nonetheless, their work and that of others (see Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006; Hattie, 2003, 2006) is significant when explicitly examining claims about what makes the difference to student achievement. Indeed, even though Participant #8 makes reference to Barry McGaw, he is actually referring to the work of Hattie (2003). I return to Hattie’s work below.

Teese and Polesel (2003) alert us to a persistent and problematic educational issue, the inability of the education system to successfully dismantle and ameliorate the “system of relationships that unite academic success to social power” (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 217). Even with significant changes to the curriculum and greater levels of school site management including as Teese and Polesel (2003) state “greater autonomy and greater accountability” (p. 217), there still is not any appreciable change to the level of social inequity. Structural inequalities within the education system rather than teacher practice and classroom instruction are significant issues for Teese and Polesel.

A hierarchical curriculum needs a stratified school system. This enduring, but evolving relationship between curriculum and schools underlies the patterns of social inequality which are such a marked feature of mass secondary education and whose persistence and predictability show that they are ‘structural’-related to the whole way in which knowledge is organised in the curriculum and how power is accumulated in school systems to exploit it. (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 12)

Teese and Polesel’s research tends to suggest that specific and institutionalised structures of power including the knowledge stored in certain prestigious school subjects, the resources available to schools and the curriculum itself make the difference to student learning and achievement.

This structure links two forms of institutionalized power. On the one side is the knowledge which is codified in school subjects and which represents an historical asset or infrastructure built up over time by generations of use and adapted to the needs and culture of the most educated families. On the other side are the resources concentrated in schools and deposited by successive generations to extract social and economic advantages from the knowledge formalized in school programs. In this structure, it is the curriculum which is the central element. (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 12)

Whereas, McGaw’s recent work (2006) delves into matters of education system effectiveness and efficiency. He focuses on the outputs of school systems. Again, like Teese and Polesel, McGaw is not overly supportive of the notion that ‘teachers make the difference’ in terms of student achievement, even though he favours an education system that ensures “teachers, individually and collec-
tively, are open to evaluation and accountability” (p. 235). Neither does the QSRLS report, at least not in explicit terms, although it asserts that specialized and definite “productive pedagogy patterns” (QSRLS, 2001, p. xiv) have a direct “impact on student outcomes and school performance” (QSRLS, 2001, p. xiv).

In his meta-analysis of student learning, Hattie (2003) identifies and quantifies major sources of variance in terms of student achievement. These sources include:

… students which account for about 50% of the variance of achievement … home which accounts for about 5-10% of the variance … schools which account for about 5-10% of the variance … principals are already accounted for in the variance attributed to schools … peer effects which account for about 5-10% of the variance and teachers who account for about 30% of the variance. (Hattie, 2003, pp. 1-2)

Apart from students, classroom teachers display the greatest metricated variance in terms of student achievement. This is a significant finding. Hattie (2003) moves to say that it is “what teachers know, do, and care about which is very powerful in this learning equation” (p. 2). Consequently:

We need to direct attention at higher quality teaching, and higher expectations that students can meet appropriate challenges-and these occur once the classroom door is closed and not by reorganising which or how many students are behind those doors, by promoting different topics for these teachers to teach, or by bringing in more sticks to ensure they are following policy. (Hattie, 2003, p. 3)

The references to higher quality teaching or in other words, productive classroom practices, “fits within the research tradition of school reform framed around improving pedagogy” (QSRLS, 2001, p. 5). A focus on teacher professional development through the “creation of teacher professional learning communities within schools which are focused on enhancing teacher knowledges and practices” (QSRLS, 2001, p. 5) is implied. But Hattie’s research does not end at suggestions of higher quality teaching. It makes explicit that teaching rather than curriculum or student numbers in class makes the biggest difference to student learning and achievement. This finding is at odds with the work of Teese and Polesel (2003), which emphasizes the hierarchical and so unequal imbalances prevalent in mass secondary schooling.

As new subjects make their entrance, acquiring the status of disciplines or sub-disciplines, more space is created for new populations, but also more distance within the curriculum for established groups to assert difference and superiority over their emerging competitors. (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 17)

To believe that teacher effectiveness overrides and so cancels out dominant and influential elements in an education system, such as the nature and hierarchical allocation and division of curriculum choice, fails to adequately inquire into the contributions that the “system makes, qua system, towards reproducing the structure of class relations” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 195).
This becomes an important point when one considers the ‘school’ and the difference(s) it makes to student achievement. An “ad hoc and all purpose” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 195) answer for student achievement – the effectiveness of classroom pedagogy (teacher effectiveness) – presumes and supposes the “educational system’s neutrality” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 195).

This teacher effectiveness argument with its emphasis on quality teaching and classroom instruction is also found in the McKinsey Report (2007):

Studies that take into account all of the available evidence on teacher effectiveness suggest that students placed with high-performing teachers will progress three times as fast as those placed with low-performing teachers. (p. 12)

It is an argument that is given a definite education policy signiﬁcance and importance.

Research shows that teaching quality is the largest in-school factor affecting student learning at about 30 per cent. Managing teachers’ performance and their development is critical both for helping teachers to improve their skills and for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to achieve its goal to improve the quality of teaching in government schools. (The Victorian Auditor-General’s Report: Managing Teacher Performance in Government Schools, 2010, p. vii)

The implication from both of the above documents is that classroom teachers and their pedagogical instruction are responsible for student achievement. Context, including classroom context, and the effects of peers (see Thrupp, 1999) are ignored as are any of the institutionalized structures of power identiﬁed by the work of Teese and Polesel: specialized school subject/content knowledge, school resources and curriculum (see Teese and Polesel, 2003).

Participant #2 puts it this way:

You mean is it the teacher that makes the difference? I suppose the answer has got to be yes. There has been a lot of effort made … getting students to try and learn mathematics using computers and so on, in short, replacing the teacher, but it has been found that this doesn’t work. Ultimately, in the long run it is the teacher that really matters. A good teacher is better than no teacher, but there are some teachers out there where you might learn better without them.

The comments by Participant #2 suggest that, in his view, classroom teachers do make the difference to student learning and achievement. He refers to efforts made to have students learn mathematics using computers. The implication here is that educational aids or tools – calculators, perhaps speciﬁc computer programs – rather than classroom teaching and pedagogy per se matters in terms of student achievement. He then suggests that it is classroom teachers that affect student learning and inept or ineffective teachers and teaching does matter. This is shown by his reference to “there are some teachers out there where you might learn better without them”. His
comments tend to illustrate and reinforce the view that it is teaching that has the most impact on student learning outcomes and student achievement.

DEECD central of ce has committed to improving the quality of teaching, and teacher effectiveness is the greatest in-school influence on student learning. It should therefore be a priority that schools be fully informed of the quality of teaching. (The Victorian Auditor-General’s Report: Managing Teacher Performance in Government Schools, 2010, p. 36)

Put simply, good teaching has a positive effect on student learning and achievement. Bad teaching has a negative effect on student learning and achievement. Schools and their teachers need to be aware of good teaching practices and engage in them to benefit their students.

Conversely, the complexity involved in teaching and learning is rarely mentioned by any of the participants in this study. The exclusive point of reference for enhancing student learning and academic achievement is the effectiveness of classroom teaching. Interestingly, Participant #4 appears to wrestle with the complexities of teaching and learning but is at a loss to clearly articulate an argument of what matters with respect to teacher practice and student achievement.

… because of the number of factors and variables in any school, in any classroom … I think there are issues there where you can’t say it is this or it is that, but what does improve outcomes, we can look at a range of factors, variables; and we can look at schools that sit within the same socio-economic grouping and see or think of the complexities, or differences there, so I think it is very complex, but at the same time the research is strong around teacher effectiveness in terms of outcomes. (Participant # 4)

Participant #4 initially suggests that there are a “number of factors and variables” that must be accounted for in dealing with teaching practice and student achievement. Indeed, her comment aligns with the work of Hayes et al. (2006), that schooling “… entails a complex interweaving of the modernist and postmodernist and the local and global” (p. 10). She implies that it is simplistic to attribute student achievement to one factor or variable. Further, she suggests that the entire issue of teaching and learning and how research evaluates effectiveness is “very complex”. Participant #4’s clear message is that in terms of student learning and achievement, it is teacher practice and classroom instruction that matters. The associated complexities or differences of particular schools or indeed students are secondary to individual teacher practice and classroom instruction. The message from Participant #4 is one that is consistent with research from school effectiveness more generally: “schools and especially teachers do make a difference and that it is not so much what students bring with them but what they experience on a day-to-day basis in classrooms that really matters” (Hill, 1995, p. 13).
The view expressed by Participant #5 delves further into the issue of student achievement and teacher effectiveness by explicitly mentioning specific and precise features of TER thought to contribute to student learning and achievement.

My personal knowledge of this area goes back to the '1970's' when Peter Hill said that the three things that make a difference are time on task, teacher expectation and purposeful teaching. So that’s not new ... only looking at or trying to answer that question that teachers are the difference ... it is actually a far more complex and sophisticated thing than that. Some researchers actually identify specific standards of what makes a teacher productive but my personal view is that to say that teachers are the difference is oversimplifying it.

The similarity of these particular features – time on task, teacher expectation and purposeful teaching – to well known and historically established variables of learning can be traced to Carroll’s model of school learning in which he articulates five “basic classes of variables that would account for variations in school achievement” (Carroll, 1989, p. 26). These are: aptitude, opportunity to learn, perseverance, quality of instruction and ability to understand instruction (see Carroll, 1989). Carroll categorises the five features thought to contribute to achievement into two classes. Three are expressed in terms of time: aptitude, amount of time a student needs to learn a task and opportunity to learn. Two are expressed in terms of achievement: quality of instruction, ability to understand instruction. Two of the features that Participant #5 highlights have a specific teacher focus: teacher expectation and purposeful teaching. One is expressed in terms of time: time on task. These particular aspects of Carroll’s model of school learning have a performance focus. Participant #5 acknowledges this by suggesting that “specific standards of what makes a teacher productive” even though student learning and achievement is a “complex and sophisticated thing” (Participant #5). The emphasis on standards of teaching practice and teacher productivity links to student achievement specific standards of what may make a classroom teacher productive.

The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) have well-established professional teaching standards and indicators of performance (see Victorian Auditor-General’s Report: Managing Teacher Performance in Government Schools, 2010). Participant #5 did not explicitly mention any of the standards, although as a Victorian DEECD employee with a responsibility for teacher professional development and teacher capacity, she would know of their existence. A significant component of the DEECD teaching standards includes indicators of teacher performance many of which are linked to classroom instruction, teaching practice and student learning. For example, one of the DEECD professional standards requires classroom teachers to demonstrate and model excellent teaching and learning skills. This standard is demonstrated by consistent and highly effective use of a range of strategies for teaching and classroom management which provide for structured teaching, maximisation of time on task and opportunity for each student to learn and experience success (see Victorian Auditor-General’s Report: Managing Teacher Performance in Government Schools, 2010). Regardless of her stated view that
some “researchers actually identify specific standards of what makes a teacher productive”, she acknowledges that to isolate individual teachers and their practice as the difference in terms of student achievement is an oversimplification of the matter. Participant #6 appears to corroborate this view somewhat and acknowledges that there may be other issues at work in relation to student achievement that need further consideration:

... just to look at one factor and teachers and their abilities are important but there are a whole lot of provision issues, you know infrastructure, schools themselves, the environment(s) that students are and want to be in ... some of them don’t want to be in school by the time they get to school ... we have to try and set up programs where they can get to sit outside the formal setting ... you know there are multiple factors and to focus on one I doubt would generate very successful policy.

Classroom teachers hopefully can and indeed should make a difference to the learning outcomes of students. But as Hattie (2009) also notes in some of his more recent research, “... the current mantra, that teachers make the difference, is misleading” (p. 108). He goes on to state that not all “teachers are effective, not all teachers are experts, and not all teachers have powerful effects on students” (Hattie, 2009, p. 108). The “important consideration is the ways that teachers differ in their influence on student achievement – what it is that makes the most difference?”(Hattie, 2009, p. 108). The implied contention is that some teachers are not as effective as they could be. Teachers may vary in terms of their effectiveness but a positive trajectory – vector – of effectiveness can be developed for all classroom teachers once research isolates what it is that makes the most difference in terms of teaching practice and classroom instruction. Indeed, the Victorian Government’s Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Blueprint – the Blueprint – for Government Schools (2003) has this as an aim. It articulates a message of teacher performance and the identification of teacher incapacity that will be addressed through specialized professional development:

Research shows that a good performance and development system in schools improves student learning outcomes by identifying the specific areas where a teacher’s performance can be improved and by providing targeted professional development to do so. In 2004 the Government will introduce an accreditation scheme for performance and development culture schools, with the objective of having all schools accredited by 2008. Schools with a focus on a performance and development culture will improve teacher effectiveness and therefore student outcomes by emphasising better performance management and creating an environment of continuous improvement. (Victorian Government’s Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Blueprint for Government Schools, 2003, pp. 19-20)

There is clear reference in the above policy statement that a teacher’s classroom performance improves student learning outcomes. The undeniable certainty about a teacher’s performance and
the direct influence they have on student achievement is made in the statement confirmed by “research”. The political dimension of the teacher effectiveness debate arises as a result and assumes that a classroom teacher’s performance requires improvement to enhance student achievement. The political dimension of the making the difference theme is picked up by Participant #3.

... it appears that accountability ends at the classroom door, namely where teachers are held responsible for everything and governments accept responsibility for very little.

In expressing this view, the Australian Education Union (AEU) participant does not dispute the effect that teachers can have on student achievement. He articulates much of what the majority of participants have already stated about teachers making the difference, but he is also concerned to articulate a view that teachers work within particular contexts. Indeed, the over-riding contextual recon guration of education that seeks the preparation of “students for new kinds of work and labour relations” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 116) has given “rise to a particular conception of accountability” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 116). Education policy-makers “steer educational practices relating to curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation towards the values of the market” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 116). Teachers have been positioned by governments and policy-makers to make ‘the’ difference.

We can make a difference, we do make a difference but the narrow interpretation that has been placed by policy makers in modern times, that teachers are ‘the’ difference, seeks to position them, that is policy makers and governments whereby they can abrogate their responsibility towards the provision of a quality public education for all students. It locates the teacher as solely responsible. Now, I don’t want to be misinterpreted here, we accept our responsibility ... we are accountable when it comes to the educational well-being of the child, but we don’t work in a vacuum. We work in a context and that context is created by policy-makers both within and outside of the classroom. (Participant #3)

The fundamental argument of Participant #3 is that contemporary education policy detaches and disconnects the reproduction of class relations from a situational context. Context as it is used here refers to the “structural and operating properties” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 203) of a neo-liberal Anglo capitalist society that emphasizes “the values of the market and system efficiency” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 116). His reference to teachers working within a “context and that context is created by policy-makers both within and outside of the classroom” points to what Teese and Polesel (2003) refer to as the “economic dependence of the Australian population on secondary education” (p. 1), which has “grown to such an extent that today, for most families, there is no refuge from the demands of academic success and no asylum for academic failure” (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 1). Moreover, the contemporary condition of this contextual neo-liberal predicament also seeks the “production of self-regulating individuals” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 117). In addition, his comments clearly mark out the systemic tensions that prevail in a mass
secondary education system encapsulated by TER distinctively asserting classroom instruction as the marker of student achievement.

The management of these tensions resides, on the one hand, in the curriculum as a set of differentiated opportunities for learning and recognition, and on the other hand in the range of schools available to families to exploit these opportunities. (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 12)

Participant #3 acknowledges the influence of accountability, indeed, he stresses that teachers accept their “responsibility … we are accountable”. But he recognizes in his articulation of context that contemporary education systems “increasingly draw control back towards the centre” (Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006, p. 85). Indeed, it is a context that imposes regimes of “standards testing and even audits of teacher performance” (Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006, p. 85).

An implicit assumption and/or finding of TER is that student achievement is enhanced through effective teaching practice. The thrust of contemporary education policy turns research assumptions into expectations. Seldom if ever is it acknowledged that the education system owes its particular characteristics and functions as a viable system upon institutionalized conditions that seek to reproduce the dominant order. The comments of Participant #1 that follow reflect quite strongly the articulated view that the functional capacity of the education system to effect change, depends upon the teachers within a school. The social conditions in which the school operates including the economic and political are not considered. The “pedagogic work” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 111) of the classroom teacher rather than any broader manifestation of influence –culture/class –is the important characteristic here. This view also holds in terms of broadening the pedagogic work of teachers in order to fulfill specific functions as outcomes of schooling.

I think that at times there is a fair degree of rhetoric. What we have concentrated on particularly over the last couple of years is a human investment strategy and our main argument is that schools will not improve unless you invest in the knowledge and skill base of the educators within those schools. (Participant #1)

The precise and delegated process of education system institutionalization invested with the required level of “pedagogic authority” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 111) that a teacher and by implication the work of schooling has fuls and thus perpetuates “its social function of conservation and its ideological function of legitimation” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 102). Few of the participants, apart from Participant #3, focused on these aspects of schooling. This probably reflects two things. First, participant #3 is a senior federal union official with the AEU. He has a responsibility to highlight education resource and governance issues. The human capital component of teacher effectiveness is only one aspect of the student achievement argument. DEECD policymakers view the human capital component of teacher effectiveness from one primary perspective, that is, teachers remain the most important and vital resource in education and that student achievement correlates directly to the investments made in terms of teacher capacity particu-
larly in terms of pedagogy. The “steering at a distance via performance measures (including testing) as a new form of outcomes accountability” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 119) accentuates teaching practice and student achievement highlighting outcomes. Secondly, from the perspective of most of the policy-participants, particularly those from the DEECD, broader considerations of context including that of government education policy and direction do not require substantive problematisation and critique. Policy-maker participants are charged with the responsibility of driving the new teacher effectiveness agenda. Specific and important contextual themes of educational significance are only tacitly mentioned, yet the need for “conversations about what quality teacher practice looks like … then putting in place the structures and processes that enable teachers to learn on the job” (Participant #1) is consistently articulated. But this view misses and neglects broader influences on student achievement or at the very least, ignores their relevance. Likewise, it augments and amplifies the role of the teacher beyond that which may be feasible and realistic.

Bourdieu (1984) has argued that for any proximal representation of reality to have some form of validity requires a research approach that moves beyond a “social physics-which uses statistics in objectivist fashion and a social semiology which seeks to decipher meanings” (p. 482). The individual public secondary school classroom teacher suffering from positional disendowment is displaced and ensnared. Teacher practices born of habitus now challenged and contested by imposing field structures are re-configured. Participant responses generally illustrate the changing ‘rules of the game’ for public school classroom teachers reflecting changing doxic (see Bourdieu, 1977) attitudes towards classroom teaching practice and the outcomes of schooling. The generally stated truism that appears to function as a guiding principle, that individual classroom teachers make a significant difference to the learning outcomes of students, and that education research supports this most strongly is rarely contested by the participants. Heterodoxical (see Bourdieu, 1977) interpretations of what may be the case regarding individual classroom teaching practice and the learning outcomes of individual students defers to a dominant established research and policy-making order. A mediated discourse of what is achievable and indeed of what is actually the case, that individual student learning improves regardless of circumstance, rests on effective individual classroom teaching practice and rests on it solely.

In The Logic of Practice (1990), Bourdieu refers to a sense of investment that agents make in the ‘game’ and the outcome of the game. The game is given an “objective sense” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66) made possible and through the “practical mastery of specific regularities” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66) inherent in the everyday practice that makes the “economy of a field” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66). The field of education comprised of its many components including, but not limited to the sub-field of educational practice, is accompanied by an intrusive and ‘objectifying’ logic of practice. This occurs through positivist TER expressed as an enacting process of practices “filled with sense and rationality for every individual” thus providing the “consensual validation” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66) upon which belief in the ‘game’ of teaching and learning is founded. A teacher’s involvement and membership in a field of practice implies a “feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1990,
manifested by a “sense of capacity for practical anticipation” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66) of events and instances made sensible and intelligible through an “objectively directed” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66) sound and prudent path. The reflection of an often uncritical acceptance given to ordinary scientific or ‘scholastic’ modes of thinking that usually without any pre-conceived or malicious intent, impose a “fundamental adulteration” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 134) of the object under consideration. It also can and usually does lead to the application of a form of Kantian ‘universal validity’, particularly when “conditions of historical and social validity” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 134) are ignored or perhaps arbitrarily given or described, produced during and in contrived or managed conditions whose very “particularity” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 134) is missing or inadvertently avoided. When debate and talk about ‘making the difference’ occur, what is actually reflected is a universalization of the particular case generated through a “thoroughly theoretical manner” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 134). It is accompanied by the scientific application of a universal point of view removed from the practice under consideration. For instance, when some of the participants agree that individual classroom teacher practitioners are the most important variables in teaching and learning and/or that ultimately individual classroom teachers ‘make the difference’ to the learning outcomes of individual public school students, then concessions are made to “mechanisms of measurement” (Foucault, 2008, p. 93) promoted as the advancement of calculable ‘rational’ truths. Accordingly, it is the classroom teacher operating as individual ‘change agent’ within an educational ‘system’ comprised of its many and varied parts, upon which accountability rests and improvements are sought.

The narrative expressed in contemporary education policy and positivist forms of education research reflect knowledge generated about classroom teaching practice by “expert systems” (Fairclough, 2006, p. 150). These taken-for-granted narratives enter the working lives of classroom teachers. Increasingly, the working life and classroom experiences of the public secondary school teacher are fashioned by “representations produced elsewhere” (Fairclough, 2006, p. 150). The emphasis placed upon classroom teacher effectiveness by policy-makers implies an imposed classroom teaching agenda. It seeks “rigid prescriptions” of what it deems effective teaching practice “based in research” (Floden, 2009, p. 509) regardless of context. In essence, a positivist TER and policy orientation conscripts the classroom teacher into specific forms of subjectivation.

The supremacy and dominance of classroom TER within the educational field masks and silences educational contingencies that have a marked impact on student achievement. These are many and varied. Hattie’s (2003) work outlines up to thirty three “possible influences” (p. 4). Each of the contingent variables has a designated and quantified effect size on student achievement and its source is identified.

The subjective subscription that evidence derived and positivist accounts of teacher effectiveness implicitly imply requires particular emphases of style or individual discipline. The achievement orientation of TER suggests that all teachers can strive to make the difference to student learning by focusing more on particular teaching practices. Individual classroom pedagogy and
teacher performance can be improved through the intentional subjection of one’s practice to the forms of thinking implicit in contemporary TER. In basic terms, a teacher’s mindset is important, and whilst it is important to “get the right people into the job”, getting them “trained properly” (Participant #8) is crucial. Classroom teachers need to comprehensively examine their practice and think deeply about their lessons. New ways of teaching must be learnt.

I mean if you are looking for a change, people actually have to learn new ways, a new way of doing something, so you have to displace what they are currently doing and that is pretty ugly, pretty challenging. (Participant #1)

A specific aim is the development of a consistent pedagogical approach that emphasizes deep and meaningful learning. A type of self-monitoring is sought and teachers need to constantly reflect upon core lesson aims. Planning is important as are the expectations that teachers have for all students. The teaching workforce and its capabilities are vital. Contemporary Victorian education policy enacted between 2003-2010 emphasizes this basic point about attracting the “best people to teaching” (DEECD Education Blueprint, 2008, p. 28). Notwithstanding this, the policy approach adopted seeks to:

... create a wider range of entry points for the teaching profession in government schools, including establishing a scheme to encourage high-performing graduates from other fields to enter teaching. This will be modelled on the best elements of existing successful programs, such as Teach First in the UK and Teach for America in the USA. (DEECD Education Blueprint, 2008, p. 28)

In addition, the essential focal point is that student achievement is primarily enhanced through the efforts of the education workforce.

There is clear evidence that the quality of the workforce is the major factor driving quality in schools and early childhood services. Excellent service provision can only happen when the right people are attracted, recruited, and supported to do their jobs as effectively as possible. (DEECD Education Blueprint, 2008, p. 27)

Teacher training schemes, such as Teach First, Teach for America and their Australian counterpart Teach for Australia, represent an alternative teacher training pathway. Their emphasis is on linking student achievement to teacher practice(s) (see Skourdoumbis, 2012 in press). These particular schemes of teacher training are characterised by several principal features centred upon recruitment, preparation and school placement. First, they aim to recruit “academically able new college graduates” (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin & Heilig, 2005, p. 3) into teaching. Teach for Australia aims to recruit and select “outstanding university graduates from all disciplines who, as Associates, will boost student achievement in their classes and become leaders able to affect systemic change” (Teach for Australia, 2009, p. 2). Their “mission is to confront educational disadvantage by transforming outstanding graduates into exceptional teachers and inspirational leaders”
Second, a short intensive course of teacher training and preparation is offered to associates. Teach for Australia “associates” (Teach for Australia, 2009, p. 1) undergo a six week training program offered by The University of Melbourne before they are then placed into disadvantaged secondary schools. School placements occur after very short albeit intensive teacher preparation and training programs. A core aim of teacher training programs such as Teach for America, Teach First and Teach for Australia is to place teacher associates into disadvantaged secondary schools, the major purpose of which is to address and focus on student achievement.

Our immediate objective is to improve student outcomes in areas of educational disadvantage by attracting and supporting graduates to teach in disadvantaged schools for two years. (Teach for Australia, 2009, p. 2)

Recent evidence suggests that any appreciable student achievement gains occur if teachers stay “in the schools that have invested in their training” (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin & Heilig, 2005, p. 23). In the U.S., 50% of Teach for America trained teachers leave teaching after two years (see Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin & Heilig, 2005). There is no comparable Australian evidence available to date, although recent print media reports from within Australia support US findings (see The Age, Thursday January 12, 2012, p. 1).

A regime of truth that has as its telos the identification of effective teaching practices to enhance student achievement implies persistent and consistent delivery of high quality lessons. This is difficult to achieve. Consistency of lesson delivery and lesson reception is problematic, and a system imposed universal uniformity of teaching practice is perhaps illusory. Feinstein (2003) suggests that contextual influences such as one’s socio-economic status and family background characteristics continue to have a major impact upon educational attainment throughout one’s school life.

SES [socioeconomic status] continues to be important as children mature and outweighs the importance of 22-month scores for high and low-SES children, but for all children the early score is a guide, together with family background information, to final educational qualifications and academic performance. The lesson for policy-makers is clear … There is mobility (as one would expect) after 22 months or 42 months, but this is mainly for high or medium-SES children. Low-SES children do not, on average, overcome the hurdle of lower initial attainment combined with low input. (Feinstein, 2003, pp. 86-87)

Yet, at least one of the policy participants, Participant #7, a senior DEECD policy-maker makes the point that schooling, or in this case early childhood education, is significant in seeking to address disadvantage.

… the example that is perhaps more cited in this department than any other is the material that Estelle Morris brought with her a couple of years back when she visited … and she was the Minister of Education in the U.K. … and it was that chart
that showed the crossover between very able students from low socio-economic backgrounds in the U.K. … versus not so able a cohort from a much better socio-economic background, and plotted at two years of age or some such … the very able despite socio-economic background were much higher up the test of what one can do, but that there was a crossover point that occurred before they got to school that had the higher socio-economic kids outperforming the low socio-economic kids, and this has been a telling argument in the policy debate and the extent to which the state should provide early childhood education.

In other words, according to this view, teachers and school make a difference.

‘Making The Difference?’ 2: Context – The School

The achievement of public secondary school students cannot be explored in isolation; it occurs within the context of a school. Indeed, to:

… grant the educational system the absolute independence which it claims or, on the contrary, to see in it only the reflection of a state of the economic system or the direct expression of the value system of ‘society as a whole’, is to refuse to see that its relative autonomy enables it to serve external demands under the guise of independence and neutrality, i.e. to conceal the social functions it performs. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 178)

The issue of context in studies of schools and education more generally is well documented. The early use of the term context in educational inquiry has been prevalent within particular educational sub-fields including comparative education and language education (Seddon, 1993). It has also been used in some fields of psychology. In terms of the general educational literature, context has been associated with student motivation (Anderman & Maehr, 1994); student achievement (Eccles & Lord, 1991); educational outcomes for minority students (Arias, 1986; Davis & Jordan, 1994); teaching practice (Russell, 1993); school change (Boyd, 1992); and student learning (Kilgore & Pendleton, 1993). These studies tend to reflect the critical relevance and importance of context in the determination of educational phenomena. Even so, the term ‘context’ is still a “highly ambiguous notion” (Seddon, 1993, p. 5) and is only “occasionally” (Seddon, 1993, p. 5) a major focus and aim of inquiry. References in the literature refer to the context of education (Arias, 1986), context of failure (Skiba, McLeskey, Waldron, Grizzle & Bartley, 1993), context of teaching practice (Russell, 1993), social context (Helwig, 1993), organization context (Kilgore, 1991) and of course, school context (Boyd, 1992; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Haynes, 1991; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994).

Seddon (1993) in her study of context contends that its importance is viewed as significant because the contemporary experience of schooling is one seemingly of continual “contextual change” (p. 6), particularly in relation to what she terms the “milieu, institutional matrix and medium of meaning within which educational practice occurs” (p. 6). In addition, this

... contextual change is a reality which impinges on the participants of schooling as
a quite tangible force. It is experienced as new sets of constraints, and new opportunities. Context is no longer something simple and taken for granted, a backdrop to whatever is important. It is palpable and present. It is forced to the front of educators’ attention and is central to their lived experience. (Seddon, 1993, p. 6)

Context also has an abstract meaning with particular references to the general external environment that education operates within. It can also be used politically to either defend or disparage “a particular social, institutional and discursive setting”. (Seddon, 1993, p. 7)

Notwithstanding all of the above, most of the literature emphasizes the uniqueness of ‘school context’ to each school. In a very general and broad sense, school context seems to describe and include but is not necessarily limited to the physical nature of a school, its resources, its population, its social environment and extraneous influences that act upon it. Gale and Densmore (2000) characterise the contextual influences acting on individuals in schools through “systems of domination” (p. 64) that are ideological in nature. Descriptions of the ideas and practices that are manifest in the school, “attempted and achieved … through discourse” (Gale & Densmore, 2000, p. 64) include its ethos, its organisational and teaching practices, its policies, and the ideas and beliefs held by its teachers and school leaders. As a result, the contextual character of a school, the parameters of which are framed by strategies of “legitimation”, “dissimulation” and “reification” effects bounded “parameters of ideological domination” (Gale & Densmore, 2000, p. 65).

Recent work by Mills and Gale (2010) has drawn attention to context as an important consideration and explanation for student academic achievement. Mills and Gale (2010) make a case for the consideration of context that acknowledges academic differences between students from different socio-economic backgrounds and extend their argument to incorporate not only what they term the immediate lived experience of students, but, external considerations and constraints that may operate to perhaps affect student learning and achievement. Indeed, school contributes to student achievement/under-achievement. They acknowledge that a thoughtful and considered documentation of student achievement cannot be done without specific attention given to context:

Our focus is on the broader social, political and economic influences that adversely position students and schools. (Mills & Gale, 2010, p. 29)

Indeed, positivist TER reduces

… the functions of the educational system to its technical function, that is, reducing the ensemble of relations between the educational system and the economic system to the ‘output’ of the School … condemning one instead to abstract comparison of statistical series derived of the significance which the facts measured derive from their position in a particular structure, serving a particular system of functions. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, pp. 178-179)

The key issue here is the importance of and extent to which extensive documentation of student
achievement is mapped against the broader social, political and economic influences that act to adversely position individual students and schools and so affect achievement. A central concern in any detailed examination of the context of the school and student achievement needs to be the “degree to which working-class families are disabled by the schooling system” (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett, 1982, p. 32). The issue of social class cannot be separated out from the outcomes of schooling. Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett (1982) for instance point to this very thing in their research regarding schools, families and social division:

Classes are not abstract categories but real-life groupings, which, like heavily-travelled roads, are constantly under construction: getting organised, divided, broken down, remade. Significant parts of this activity occur in and around schools. (p. 33)

Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) make a similar point.

In short, the technocratic notion of ‘output’ has the function of preventing analysis of the educational system’s system of functions: if it were carried out, such an analysis would forbid recourse to the implicit or explicit postulate of the ‘general interest’, by showing that none of the functions of the educational system can be defined independently of a given state of the structure of class relations. (p. 184)

As a result, the deductions of positivist TER dwell upon and exist within an exclusive and technocratic ideology of domination inscribed by a “certain type of economy” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 185). Moreover, it fails to adequately configure and so characterize the “particular structure” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 188) of the educational system, that is itself subordinate to the totalizing effects of the economy.

A key aspect raised in the interviews of policy-participants was the idea of school context and how it was thought to contribute to student learning and individual student achievement. In addition, respondents were also asked to comment on how social class as a specific school compositional construct affects student achievement and if indeed TER dealt with it in any meaningful and obvious way. Once they were directly questioned about it, respondents almost without exception considered school context to be an important aspect of student achievement and that school context was a vital consideration and component of educational research. This is an important point to make as none of the participants had explicitly mentioned context until they were specifically questioned. This tends to suggest and demonstrate that TER silences issues of context. Discussion tended to centre on the ‘how’ of school context considerations. That is, how is school context considered, in terms of education research that also has as its focus issues of teacher effectiveness and classroom teacher performance? And how are policy considerations regarding school context and its particular contribution(s) to individual student learning and academic achievement assessed?

I think it is very important but not exclusively, it is not solely important. Public policy should never be seen or formulated within a narrow prism of a single child or
single school. (Participant #3)

The inference here is saying that empiricist interpretations of schooling should be broad in nature. Narrow and reductionist versions of educational attainment distort and limit interpretations of broad based influences, such as class and cultural capital.

...within the context of public policy, broad public policy on a national stage or a state-wide stage, there must always be the capacity to address the social inequities that exist in our society. We do not live in a classless society; we do not live in a society, which can be described by any stretch of the imagination as a level playing field. (Participant #3)

The “social inequities that exist in our society” are represented in the inequities that exist within the schooling system.

Economic marginalization through school is experienced more often by children of manual workers and the unemployed. School has become a link in the re-creation of poverty. This is because, while dependence on completed secondary school has grown, achievement in the programs offered by schools is closely linked with socio-economic status. (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 9)

Indeed, the absence of a “level playing field” (Participant #3) underscores the institutionalized inequity of exclusion prevalent in the education system. Schooling privileges those classes with the most cultural and economic capital and furthermore, school “is better able than ever ... to contribute to the reproduction of the established order, since it succeeds better than ever in concealing the function it performs” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 167). In addition, a full and detailed analysis of schooling is:

... therefore meaningful only if it leads to the construction of the system of relations between, on one side, the school system conceived as an institution for the reproduction of legitimate culture, determining inter alia the legitimate mode of imposition and inculcation of academic culture, and, on the other side, the social classes, characterized, with respect to the efficiency of pedagogic communication, by unequal distances from academic culture and different dispositions to recognize it. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 101)

For this reason:

If we are to give all students the tools, the wherewithal to be able to participate fully in the twenty-first century, we have got to recognise that some students require additional help, additional support. Concentrations of poverty require for example, a concentration of help to overcome intergenerational poverty that impacts on schooling, on education. (Participant #3)
In other words, the school and so its classroom teachers cannot do it all (see Thrupp, 1999).

The pre-constructed effect of a public education system that is itself linked to the broader political and economic “structural properties and operational characteristics” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 186) of a society works to disadvantage the least advantaged. Participant #2’s response on this point is, “obviously yes … there is obviously tremendous difference between one school and another” (Participant #2). There should be no surprise in this for the education system owes its existence to a set of historical circumstances and situations that are themselves indicative of controlled and planned configurations of class relations. Teese and Polesel (2003) suggest, structured school system “inequality is compatible with historical progress” (p. 13) and for Participant #2, “socio-economically … context is extremely important … there is in my view tremendous differences between students in classes within the same school” (Participant #2). The last comment by Participant #2 is a reference to compositional effects, which I return to shortly.

Connell (1993) portrays the problem of under-achievement and educational/school disadvantage as a failure of accurate characterisation. As a result, the educational problem of student under-achievement and disadvantage is a constructed set-up. As Connell (1993) states:

The effect of this false geography of the problem has been to locate the problem in the heads of the poor or the errors of the specific schools serving them. The virtues of the educational mainstream are taken for granted. (p. 24)

The easy and undemanding assumption, that disadvantaged public secondary school students are under-achieving and that classroom teachers and schools are to blame, is the contemporary representation of the making the difference problem. Its policy expression advances an educational reform process that emphasizes effectiveness and efficiency as a remedy for action.

After twenty or thirty years of experts not finding top-down solutions, the search is still on for a technical fix. Thus the ‘Effective Schools’ movement; and on a wider front, the neconservative attempt at school reform via national testing and twentieth-century versions of Payment by Results. (Connell, 1993, p. 23)

Participant #1 picks up the point about external system-wide testing.

…we have external assessment … [years] 3, 5, 7 and 9 … and they essentially provide the system with longitudinal data about whether kids are performing at benchmarks. (Participant #1)

But her concern is centred more on how data “can be disaggregated down to the classroom individual level” (Participant #1). Her specific concern relates to how “quality assessment enables those teachers to understand what the nature of student learning problems are” (Participant #1). In other words, she would rather that system generated data on student achievement be “disaggregated” (Participant #1) and specific to the individual student and classroom teacher, thus indicating
shortfalls in achievement and perhaps pedagogy. Her comments appear to imply that teachers and schools should use system generated data about student achievement as a way of treating under-achievement. Specific and unique structural inequities are inconsequential. Participant #1 re-situates the problem of ‘achievement’ back towards individual teachers and schools.

The work of Connell (1993) illustrates the overt inequality and disparities prevalent in the education system that work towards maintaining and entrenching disadvantage. Any claim to classroom teachers and schools making the difference to student achievement needs to contend with the aspects Connell (1993) outlines. First amongst these is the institutional shape of the education system rewarding selectedness and thereby enhancing the life chances of the already advantaged, displacing the under-resourced and under-privileged. Second is the problem of the economics of education, in particular, the funding disparities that may exist. Third is the exclusion practised in schools by way of an instituted culture of routine. Fourth is the permanent presence of a hegemonic and dominant curriculum order that privileges specific forms of knowledge. Fifth is the social function and role of education and of a body of organised knowledge as a whole. A social justice element totally reliant on classroom teachers and schools making the difference to student learning outcomes will not overcome these complex problems. In short, it cannot because the education system is designed and assembled in a manner that sets up competing interests. Bourdieu (1984) uses the metaphor of a race to demonstrate how the dominant always work to maintain their authority and control, and in so doing, offset and balance misplaced position.

... whenever the attempts of the initially most disadvantaged groups to come into possession of the assets previously possessed by groups immediately above them in the social hierarchy or immediately ahead of them in the race are more or less counterbalanced, at all levels, by the efforts of better-placed groups to maintain the scarcity and distinctiveness of their assets. (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 161)

The educational race as it is practised in Australia with its competing interests (e.g. private versus public) is a unique and distinctive hierarchy “on two planes – the social and the academic” (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 119). In the race for academic distinction and academic reward, the dominant classes maximize and exploit “individual advantage by pooling resources in segregated schools” (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 121). This particular competitive strategy of action is afforded the dominant classes and safeguards their positional status. TER is silent on these matters, a point I return to shortly.

Similarly, Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) outline five attributes that comprise the contemporary education system in terms of its selectivity and uniqueness. These include: pedagogic action, pedagogic authority, pedagogic work, work of schooling and school authority. These specific attributes bring about delegated outcomes for schooling. They act to keep order and maintain control. They form and constitute a symbolic function investing the education system and teaching practice with a logical action capable of restructuring and transforming lives yet, in the main, serving to reproduce and maintain disadvantage perpetuating dominant social and economic conditions of existence. Theoretically at least, schooling and teaching practices make available
to all opportunities that would be excluded if one did not engage in the education system. This is true up to a point, for the requisition of the chances made available through schooling and teaching practice(s) is appropriated by the capital – economic, social, cultural and political – one has at their disposal. Any resultant individual life chance transformation(s) in terms of student achievement gained is obtained by virtue of exclusion and selection. Accordingly positivist TER in its account and description of settled and known links between classroom pedagogy and student achievement should be the subject of dispute and challenge. A total rebuff and denial of its value and worth is not reasonable or to be sure defensible for it too represents a specific and designated section of education research. Nonetheless, positivist TER becomes a case for contestation and examination for the reason that it marks out and pronounces on teaching practice and student achievement through its special and exact structure of metricated classification and organisation. In other words, it is characterised by a precise and exacting dialectics of teaching practice for the purpose of espousing improvement to student learning outcomes and enhancing student achievement. In so doing, TER neglects analysis of the “specific, systematic characteristics the educational system owes to its essential function of inculcation” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 194). The manifestation then of a momentous and significant problem eventuates and it relates to the alleged autonomy of the school system.

One of the reasons why it is not easy to observe simultaneously the educational system’s relative autonomy and its dependence on class relations, is that a conceptual grasp of the class functions of the educational system has been associated, in the theoretical tradition, with an instrumentalist representation of the relations between the School and the dominant classes, while analysis of the structural and operating characteristics that the educational system owes to its essential function has almost always gone hand in hand with blindness to the relations between the School and the social classes, as if ascertaining the fact of autonomy presupposed the illusion of the educational system’s neutrality. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 195)

Therefore and perhaps for this reason, the specified and targeted prominence given to “teaching activities and tasks” (Participant #1) so that teachers “have a better idea of … [and] far greater understanding of what quality looks like, what proficiency looks like at different levels” (Participant #1). These comments again demonstrate the faith expressed in “activities and tasks” with the capacity to ‘make the difference’ yet ignore context and classroom compositional effects.

Thrupp, Lauder and Robinson’s (2002) work regarding school context takes up the aspect of “compositional effects” (p. 484) and student achievement. Compositional effects refer to the “characteristics of a student group” (Thrupp, Lauder & Robinson, 2002, p. 484). If compositional effects play no part in student learning and academic achievement, then school effectiveness and improvement depends largely on the “instructional and management policies and practices of schools” (Thrupp, Lauder & Robinson, 2002, p. 484), thus holding them “highly accountable for their performance” (Thrupp, Lauder & Robinson, 2002, p. 484). Conversely, if compositional
effects are thought and found to significantly contribute to student learning and academic achievement, then it might be the case that a school’s effectiveness, academic performance and improvement is not necessarily affected by the “initial nature of the school intake” (Thrupp, Lauder & Robinson, 2004, p. 484), but also by the subsequent student interaction with each other notwithstanding the broader and “general social context of their schools” (Thrupp, Lauder & Robinson, 2002, p. 484). In broad terms, social class matters and as Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) state, an educational system can only “fulfill its function of inculcation only so long as it addresses itself to students equipped with the linguistic and cultural capital – and the capacity to invest it profitably – which the system presupposes and consecrates” (p. 99).

Compositional effect as a specific and substantial aspect of school context and how it is incorporated into TER was not specifically addressed by the respondents. If anything, respondents appeared to skirt this specific issue.

Well, if you mean by school sites and contexts … you mean students or the concentration of recent arrivals, if you mean sensitive to in terms of locational disadvantage then most certainly we [consider context]. So, we black spot, for a range of reasons and we have extensive spots and we have exemplary spots and all of them are interesting because they throw light on the challenges we face and what we need to do about it. (Participant #7)

Alternatively, the view of Participant #8 is interesting. He admits that, for him at least, context may not have a significant influence on student achievement. Confusion is expressed about classroom teaching methods, and if or how context is involved. “Well, I don’t think it [context] has been considered all that well” (Participant #8) in terms of TER. He suggests that as an issue, context has only become fashionable in terms of education research in recent times and that context tends to be intermingled with broader education issues such as leadership.

It is probably taken into consideration a bit more now than in the past, although I hear it more in terms of leadership development and things like that. So, they are talking about making things more context specific. For example, how a leader in a particular context is a very effective leader but not necessarily an effective leader in a different school context. Context is something that has been pushed a lot by people like Richard Teese and others in terms of low socio-economic impact on student outcomes, so there is those sorts of things. (Participant #8)

In mentioning leadership, Participant #8, a former Principal of a large metropolitan secondary college on the suburban fringes of Melbourne’s south eastern suburbs, tacitly acknowledges one of the central contemporary elements of “effective school reform” (Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006, p. 25). Indeed, a substantial foundation for effective school reform is “school leadership of a particular kind”, a 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”
Importantly, school leadership has not necessarily been found to enhance student learning to an appreciable extent (see Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006; Hattie, 2009). The relationship between school leadership and student learning is advocated in the research literature generally in terms of the facilitation of effective school based practices for enhancing student achievement.

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. (Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006, p. 26)

Surprisingly, Participant #8 does not make any link between how school leadership as an aspect of school context can impact on teaching practices and so student achievement. In point of fact, Participant #8 appears to rule out, at least to some extent, the effect(s) of context on student achievement.

In terms of teaching methods in a classroom, I’m not sure how context impacts in any real way but the assumption is and has been that you can teach any kid in a small way. (Participant #8)

On the other hand, he appears to recognise that socio-economic status and culture as components of context – classroom composition – may impact on student achievement.

My school had a lot of different cultural groups and different socio-economic groups too; in terms of the cultural groups we knew it, understood it, tried to work within the cultural groups and sometimes that impacted on teaching in the classroom but we weren’t as intuitive on the socio-economic even though for years we had been saying that it has an effect on learning outcomes, but how you actually do it to influence your teaching, getting a scaffold to do it is difficult. (Participant #8)

The mediated imperative to overcome or at least seek to remedy or lessen the effect of disadvantage neglects consideration of intricate and complex systems of practice that work to maintain disadvantage. Participant #8 appears to be struggling with this when he mentions grappling with socio-economic issues and the identification and implementation of effective classroom teaching practices to try to overcome them. Moreover, the dominant power relations prevalent in the education system including that of school choice – type of secondary school, for example – predetermines to a significant and sizeable extent, educational destiny (see Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000). The prevailing view regarding school context and student achievement amongst participants was that it was a key consideration for researchers and school leaders alike. Participant #4 sums it up best:

Again, I would say one hundred per cent school context is taken into account. (Participant #4)
In short, participants gave ‘general’ responses to school context. There was an implied belief in the difference a school can make to the level of student achievement.

‘Making The Difference?’ 3: Investment in the ‘Game’

The implied investment in the “speci c productivity of pedagogic work” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 71) – the ‘game’ of school education – is that schooling and teaching practice makes a substantial difference to the learning outcomes and academic achievement of students. The systematic organisation of schools that owe aspects of their practical rationality and consistency upon symbolic regularities of practice impose speci c orientations of disadvantage as impending outcomes. Indeed, as Bourdieu (1973) states:

An educational system which puts into practice an implicit pedagogic action, requiring initial familiarity with the dominant culture, and which proceeds by imperceptible familiarization, offers information and training which can be received and acquired only by subjects endowed with the system of predispositions that is the condition for the success of the transmission and of the inculcation of the culture. (p. 80)

Participants did not acknowledge this aspect of schooling, particularly aspects of socio-economic difference, preferring instead to focus on and af rm what schools should and can achieve.

I think, well that’s our/their bread and butter, that is why we teach. I mean all of the aims of policy whether hard or soft have got one end in mind and that is great outcomes for all kids regardless of postcode. That’s often cited isn’t it, you know about equity, so, I think schools not only can but they do [make the difference] that’s their role and their bread and butter. (Participant # 5)

In general, policy participants held and af rmed the view that schools have the necessary capacities and competences to effectively deal with present-day challenges. Several participants outlined the relevance of data sourced directly from schools regarding this matter.

Participant #4 on this issue:

... we really need hard data ... we draw lots from schools in terms of research in which we look at what the research is telling us ... what is actually happening in schools and it is all about supporting them in their enacting ... so I am very optimistic and in my experience schools are very keen in wanting to address the big issues.

The contention that schools are “very keen in wanting to address the big issues” re ects a Victorian DEECD continuous improvement program and effort that is primarily focused on serving “all young people in the state” (DEECD Education Blueprint, 2003 p. 2). The exact and precise centre and focal point is a strategy of continuous improvement, which emphasizes teacher performance
Since 2003 DEECD has undertaken an ambitious school improvement program to improve the teaching and learning environment in schools and address identified weaknesses in teacher performance management. Its strategy has been to give school leaders the skills to create an environment for teachers to teach as well as they can, and for students to improve their learning outcomes. (The Victorian Auditor-General’s Report, 2010, p. viii)

The continuous improvement strategy undertaken by the Victorian DEECD has culminated in the production of an instructional model that describes the “capabilities that teachers need to be effective in the classroom” (The Victorian Auditor-General’s Report, 2010, p. viii). The model of classroom pedagogy is but one contemporary and current aspect of the continuous school improvement strategy with a specific focus on student achievement.

The credence and faith given to education system strategies of school improvement for enhancing student achievement shows and replicates a basic Bourdieuan premise that specific convictions and beliefs are an intrinsic and innate feature of all fields. Indeed, Bourdieu (1990) implies that belief is “an inherent part of belonging to a field” (p. 67).

Because native membership in a field implies a feel for the game in the sense of a capacity for practical anticipation of the ‘upcoming’ future contained in the present, everything that takes place in it seems sensible: full of sense and objectively directed in a judicious direction. Indeed, one only has to suspend the commitment to the game that is implied in the feel for the game in order to reduce the world, and the actions performed in it, to absurdity, and to bring up questions about the meaning of the world and existence which people never ask when they are caught up in the game—the questions of an aesthete trapped in the instant, or an idle spectator. (Bourdieu, 1990, pp. 66-67)

The belief expressed by the Victorian DEECD policy participants in the processes of school improvement, a major component of modern education systems, for enhancing student achievement displays membership of their field as administrators of education policy. Participant #5 for example mentions that in the contemporary education system:

... it is correct to say that there are strategic processes in place, we have a central office, and there are regions and of course networks so that there is a collaborative structure so that schools are in a position to monitor how well they are doing.

The implied suggestion here is that schools have the capacities to monitor and inspect themselves in seeking to address issues of student achievement. Similarly, the Victorian DEECD’s strategy
of continuous school improvement “involves teachers self-assessing improvements in their classroom practice” (The Victorian Auditor-General’s Report, 2010, p. viii). Participant #4 reiterates the strongly held view that schools “use data so well” and indeed, that it is a particular “strong point” of schools. This encompasses the view that schools in recent and contemporary times are administratively suited to deal with complex issues of student achievement:

I think we have already touched on that in that our schools are self-governing schools and that we provide advice/support and that it is the school leadership, school council to adapt/adopt based on the context of their staffing, their environment, etc. (Participant # 5)

There is a particular political significance here as well with the suggestion that some governments are better able or at least more prepared to assist schools in the complicated area of student achievement:

And particularly, sort of, policy positions that come through when a Labor government in Victoria took over from Kennett, you know trying to pull everyone together so I suppose the key, the corporate policy goals, the Department meeting those key and big policy goals, you know of retention, transition, and, now that we have the early childhood coming into the Department looking at zero to eighteen as a system, so I think the big picture, when you look at the big picture and what it is on about in terms of policy, in Victoria, I think that schools would support those kinds of aims and it comes down to well … the grass roots level and how does it work for them and did they feel supported and able to achieve those aims … like retention … that is one of the challenging ones in terms of keeping kids at school. (Participant # 4)

The exclusive and unambiguous reference by Participant #4 to the policy position of the Victorian state Labor government signals a clear political demarcation. The Victorian State Labor government made “education the number one priority” (DEECD Education Blueprint, 2003, p. 2). In terms of any “big picture” (Participant #1) education system policy direction, student learning and achievement became a focus.

Over the last six years there has been a major focus on further developing the curriculum, school leadership and teaching and learning in government schools. There has also been $42.1 million invested in new initiatives specifically for schools with poor literacy and numeracy achievement. This funding was in addition to the $120 million spent annually to improve literacy and numeracy in government schools. (The Victorian Auditor-General’s Report, 2009, p. 1)

Participant #1 is unequivocal about the importance of student achievement for the Victorian State Labor government. Indeed, for her, particular governments are prepared to deal with the educational and social issues of schools to a greater or lesser extent: “Oh, very much so, probably more so now over the last four years [2004-2008]” (Participant #1).
Conversely, Participant #3 suggests when it comes to how well schools are suited to dealing with complex issues of student achievement:

They can, but they do not operate in a vacuum. This is where we have to be very careful. Conservative governments and neo-conservative politics have promoted notions of devolution under the façade of flexibility and local school control. [But] it is about shifting blame, shifting responsibility … to the local level. Yes, schools have a pivotal role to play, yes schools should be determining and providing a course and direction for their students, but ultimately they do not operate in a vacuum and we can’t allow governments to abrogate their responsibility in funding quality provision in public education for all students. (Participant #3)

Interestingly, the Victorian Auditor-General’s Report into Literacy and Numeracy Achievement (2009) expresses a view that lack of funding may be an issue contributing to student under-achievement.

The literacy and numeracy achievements of students from low-SES schools need to improve significantly to meet expected levels. Funding to address social inequity in literacy and numeracy achievement equates to around 3 per cent of the total schools’ budget. This is very low in light of the large achievement deficit of students from low-SES schools. (The Victorian Auditor-General’s Report, 2009, p. 5)

Similarly, the recent Gonski Report (2011, p. 16) into school funding in Australia found that:

Not all states and territories have the same capacity to fund their school systems adequately. It would appear that some, due to current economic realities or the need to support a larger share of educationally disadvantaged students, struggle to provide the resources needed in schools. As such, the funding that is provided to schools does not directly relate to schooling outcomes, and does not take into account the full costs of educating students to an internationally accepted high standard of schooling.

Upholding an avowed sense of effecting change in terms of student achievement has strong attachments to a stated investment and belief in the schooling system and its pedagogic processes. Participant #1 perhaps says it best:

… in a school, if you have agreement about what is important … what quality practice looks like, about what a professional culture looks like, you have actually reached agreement about how teachers will work and learn together … and then put in place processes and structures and then determine at different stages to bring in the expertise in the areas that you need to increase, and you are aligning all the resources, you get to ensure that it ends up benefiting the classroom.

But, at an important level, the belief expressed by Participant #1 ignores the specific relationship
between the productive capacity of pedagogic work – the education system – and its definite link to the inculcation of communicative actions connected to particular social groups. Moreover, it also ignores the specific and non-calculable excesses of inhibiting orders of practice. The work of Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) states:

Analysis of the variations in the efficiency of the action of inculcation which is performed principally in and through the relation of communication thus leads to the primary principle underlying the inequalities in the academic achievement of children from the different social classes. (p. 71)

In other words, analysing and seeking to identify academic achievement and the disparities therein is a search into the differences between social classes. The school or for that matter teachers and their classroom actions in terms of instruction, whilst important, merely reproduce and replicate inherent variations and similarities between social classes. The undeniable and definite outcome of the education system is in effect the constant working and treatment of the distance between the productive capacity of pedagogic work, “a process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a durable training, i.e. a habitus” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 31) and the family or social background of students. Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) put it this way:

Indeed, one can put forward the hypothesis that the specific productivity of all pedagogic work other than the pedagogic work accomplished by the family is a function of the distance between the habitus it tends to inculcate (in this context, scholarly mastery of scholarly language) and the habitus inculcated by all previous forms of pedagogic work and, ultimately, by the family (i.e. in this case, practical mastery of the mother tongue). (p. 72)

The ensuing and resultant product of the education system is the perpetuation of transmitted conditions of dominant bias through the “status authority” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 108) of teachers and schools. The constructed techniques of distance exhibited in the education system guarantees an efficacious incapacitation of the already disadvantaged, and this in spite of policy participant beliefs in the competence and ability of schools and teachers to make the difference. One should not expect otherwise, for policy-makers have a significant investment and commitment to the education system, subscribing to its stated suppositions and presumptions, in other words, “doxa” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66). Rarely if ever will policy-makers “break from the game completely” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 82), for to do so implies “renouncing all the stakes” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 82), and as a result giving up on the “illusio” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 82) afforded by the totalizing de-temporalizations of positivist inquiry.

Conclusion

The central argument of this Chapter is that contemporary Victorian public education policy (2003-2010) expects classroom teachers and schools to make the difference to student learn-
ing outcomes and academic achievement. The Chapter has sought to present the argument from within three specific making the difference conceptualisations. The first making the difference conceptualisation focuses predominantly upon the classroom teacher and the teaching/pedagogical practices they use to improve student achievement. The exclusive proposal of this conceptualisation is effective classroom teaching practice definitely and unambiguously improves student learning outcomes. Accordingly, context is either irrelevant or of minor concern. The currency of this conceptualisation dominates contemporary public education policy at present. The second conceptualisation identifies the school and so context as a principal and crucial feature of making the difference. The specific focus of this conceptualisation is in terms of emphasis, that is, schooling rather than individual teaching practice, or for that matter, social class makes a difference to student achievement. The third conceptualisation contends that neither schooling nor individual teaching practice makes any sizeable and substantial difference to student learning outcomes and academic achievement. The work of schooling merely serves the interests of the already socially dominant and advantaged and so to a certain extent and to be more precise, serves to reproduce prevailing inequalities.

In presenting this account, this Chapter has attempted to characterise each of the conceptualised versions systematically. Treating the making the difference problem in this manner illustrates how issues relating to student learning outcomes and achievement have evolved over time. The current manifestation is symptomatic of a public education policy process and expression with an acute and invasive teacher effectiveness focus. Where Chapter seven attempted to offer the public policy context that has as its focus the identification of ‘what works’, this Chapter claims that public education policy not only expects classroom teachers and schools to make the difference, they are the difference. The analysis brings forth several distinctive features. First that teachers make the difference, although this is contested somewhat by several policy participants and is seen to be too simplistic as an explanation for student learning outcomes and achievement. Second schools are crucial in seeking to overcome disadvantage and they are well-positioned to act on it thus a rejection of the Bourdieuan notion that classroom teachers and by implication schools, maintain the status and distinctions of the already dominant and advantaged.

Chapter 9 which follows concludes the thesis. It seeks to address classroom teacher effectiveness as a whole thereby re-engaging with the research and interpretations depicted in Chapters 7 and 8.
Chapter Nine – The Effective Critique of Teacher Effectiveness Research

Introduction

This thesis has examined the problem of classroom teacher effectiveness research (TER), which is often used to inform and develop public education policy in the state of Victoria, Australia. More specifically, it has focused on positivist determinations of effective classroom teaching practice for enhancing student achievement derived from this research. In Australia, as elsewhere, education reforms carried out over the past fifteen to twenty years have brought about major changes to the way education is managed and implemented. As illustrated in this research, these neo-liberal economic and political reforms emphasise a pro-market bias and ideology. They give the impression of consumer choice and individual responsibility, with much of what they stand for suggesting that the free market is the “best mechanism for allocating resources” (Gale & Densmore, 2003, p. 104). They also secure and solidify stringent accountability controls to measure and monitor school and individual classroom teacher instructional performance for the purpose of improving and developing student achievement. Notions of quality and effectiveness are crucial aspects of these reforms for the public education sector.

In this final chapter I re-engage with the major questions that first propelled this research. To reiterate, these include: What counts as valid and worthwhile classroom teacher effectiveness research for the development of public education policy? In exploring this question, the research also sought to answer related questions, including: a) What dominant economic, social and political influences frame the classroom teacher effectiveness agenda in the contemporary educational context? b) To what extent does researcher bias influence contemporary classroom teacher effectiveness research? and c) To what extent has an account been given of context, either school or otherwise? In addition to these questions, the chapter also re-visits the rationale for the approach taken in the study. In brief, the thesis sought a critical hermeneutical exploration of the problem of classroom TER. In doing so, the theoretical frameworks of Foucault and Bourdieu have been used to critically reflect on the assumptions of positivist TER and rules of measurement for the control and evaluation of teaching.

The aim of this final Chapter is to clarify that the effective critique of TER consists of two components. First, the effective critique of TER must deal with validity. Secondly, an effective critique of TER must consider missing elements that positivist evaluations of teaching practice ignores. The Chapter is comprised of two specific parts. Part one begins by speaking to the specific research questions of the thesis as outlined above and in Chapter one. It does this by outlining major features connected to the fundamental view of validity – a central concern of the major research question of the thesis. Part two builds on the established argument concerning validity in TER by purposely focusing on social justice as the silent – absent – logic in positivist TER.
1. Validity

The genesis of this study was in a decision to research classroom teacher effectiveness which arose from my professional engagement at the time of its beginnings as a public secondary school classroom teacher practitioner. My major motivation was to address classroom teacher effectiveness research (TER) from a critical perspective that incorporated the concerns of practising classroom teachers. There were two quite prominent concerns. The first involved how and why policy-makers accepted and used particular forms of classroom TER to inform and direct public education policy development. The second stemmed from an interest in and desire to engage with the debate frequently expressed by some educational agencies, school principals, and sections of the media about notions of teacher quality, teacher effectiveness and the role of the classroom teacher practitioner in enhancing student achievement irrespective of context. This second concern tied in with other broader debates on schooling in Australia and around the world. These generally focus on student achievement, public education system performance, national testing, individual classroom teacher performance and evaluation, methods of classroom instruction, assessment, governance and accountability, and equity and disadvantage.

I have argued in this thesis that in order to speak to these concerns, it is necessary and imperative to address and understand in some significant detail and depth, the broader contextual influences and processes that impact on classroom teaching practice. These influences and processes need to include the individual classroom teaching perspective, as well as macro economic, political, historical and social perspectives. To do otherwise is to trivialise the inquiry process and also, more importantly, to incorrectly classify and attribute research outcomes to insignificant and inconsequential matters. This ultimately leads to a misrepresentation of classroom teaching practice. For instance, in Chapter two of the thesis, I outlined how the governance of schools and classroom teachers is symptomatic of broader globalization implications that include the influence of a corporate dynamic. In Chapter seven I discussed the policy context of public education, outlining policy determinations of ‘what works’ for the improvement of student learning outcomes. The legitimisation of specific forms of education research as a field of practice illustrates the growing interconnection between public education policy development and implementation and accounts of positivist ‘evidence-based’ research that have determined ‘what works’ for student achievement. Indeed, the theme of student learning outcomes and, in particular, the influence that teachers and schools have in making differences to student achievement is the substantial argument of Chapter eight of the thesis. To this extent then, my contribution to the field of TER is in terms of application. That is, I have developed an argument that identifies the shortcomings in discursive quantitatively derived empirical evaluations of classroom teaching practice that ignores context.

Furthermore, I have maintained an argument that complex and hard-to-follow research designs involving highly metricated systems of evaluation purportedly showing the effectiveness of a classroom teacher practitioner in enhancing student achievement, do not adequately or indeed cogently describe the phenomenon of classroom teaching practice. In addition, purely functionalist
reports and descriptions of the outcomes of schooling and the education system require a sophisticated technique of analysis with the capacity to understand the complex “transformations of the pedagogic relationship” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 90) namely, context. Indeed, Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) suggest that:

Only by constructing the system of relations between the educational system and the structure of the relations between the social classes can one genuinely escape these reifying abstractions and produce relational concepts, such as probability of enrolment, disposition towards school, distance from academic culture, or degree of selection, which integrate into the unity of an explanatory theory properties linked to class membership (such as ethos and cultural capital) and pertinent properties of school organization, such as, for example, the hierarchy of values implied by the hierarchy of establishments, sections, disciplines, diplomas or practices. (p. 102)

I have argued through my research that TER of the purely statistical type with only brief allusions to, first, the internal functions of the education system including classroom instruction and, second, the broader and perhaps more significant external social, political and economic functions of a neo-liberal performative society, fails to adequately report on teaching practice and student achievement. For example, value-added TER claims the identification of a distinctive relationship between the practices of a particular classroom teacher practitioner and student learning (see Chapter three). On the contrary, positivist accounts of classroom teaching practice are basically convoluted descriptions of highly complicated and cluttered theoretical pontifications on mathematical systems (see Chapters three and five). I have developed an argument that suggests a need to move beyond simple matter-of-fact descriptions and evaluations of classroom instructional performance, one that involves in some way the actual documented classroom and pedagogical experiences of the classroom teacher practitioner. These experiences incorporate all of the situational influences acting on the exchanges between classroom teaching and learning. This alternative way of examining these issues assists in the exploration and analysis of the unique and multifaceted processes at work in learning, including the relationship between classroom instruction and student achievement. A proximal and close-up study of this kind has a number of advantages including scrutiny of often neglected and under-examined contextual influences. The mathematical dismissal and relegation of decisive and essential situational characteristics characteristic of empirical accounts is then minimised. Retrieving and restoring core contextual influences provides an opportunity for their re-examination. A deeper, accurate and more valid and insightful version of what then may constitute effective teaching practice is given. At the very least, an operational critical dialectics of TER dispenses with the fallacious and misleading hold and solidification of social relations that multi-variate analyses of practice confer and privilege.

An additional intended aim of this study was to reframe the contribution of classroom TER and to challenge notions and perceptions derived from its often unchallenged outcomes. As a complex activity, classroom teaching practice must be described in a vivid and distinctive way by those
actually engaged in its daily delivery. Any schematised objective assessment of classroom practice ought to combine and highlight specific education system contributions including but not limited to pedagogic actions and the work of schooling more generally within a neo-liberal political and economic paradigm (see Chapters two, three, four and five). This is an important aspect of the study as the practice of education occurs and is “associated with a preference for the minimalist state, concerned to promote the instrumental values of competition, economic efficiency and choice, to deregulate and privatize state functions” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 31). Therefore, this is a study of macro structural orders of discourse and knowledge formation derived and formed by particular forms of classroom TER, legitimised by policy-makers.

It was evident from the interview transcripts discussed and analysed in Chapters seven and eight, that particular forms of research and inquiry, specifically research evidence of ‘what works’, is of most substance and worth to those policy participants directly employed by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). The Victorian Government’s DEECD Blueprint for Government Schools (2003, 2008) appears to underline and support the view that effective teaching practice established through what policy-makers consider ‘research’ is the major influence on student achievement. For this reason, according to policy-makers, reform(s) of classroom teaching practice and instruction should be based on what has been found to work as effective pedagogic action(s) for improving student learning outcomes and enhancing student achievement particularly for socio-economically disadvantaged students. Contextual influences are not as important in any consideration of what may ‘work’ to enhance achievement, nor is there a need to consider specific and distinctive school or classroom circumstances. In brief, in the current era, individual classroom teachers and schools are increasingly required to meet system imposed accountability criteria devoid of any local input and with no prominent and significant or unique unfolding history of local education community circumstances. On this account, the important and defining issue for enhancing student achievement is the quality and efficiency of classroom instruction, regardless of context, ‘like school’ or otherwise.

This presents classroom teacher practitioners with an extraordinary set of problems. A core and specific aim of education policy-makers is the assessment and evaluation of schools. Performance measures expressed as student academic achievement on high stakes testing is central to this aim. The implementation of education policy, particularly policy that guides classroom instructional practice is crucial. Policy-makers rely on straightforward processes of data collection that are then translated into outcomes of education research for system wide implementation: the ‘what works’ proclamation. I have argued (see Chapters three, four, five and six) that the complex nature of classroom teaching practice is not adequately captured by positivist cause-and-effect models of research design. Broader contextual influences that impact on teaching and learning remain unacknowledged and so are discarded, deemed irrelevant. I have examined how policy-makers rely upon particular forms of education research that skirt and pass over some of the complexities involved in classroom teaching and learning, but fails to specifically engage with the deeper complexities inherent in the work of schooling and the education system (see Chapters seven and eight). Moreover, I have
argued that the complexities inherent in school education are multi-layered, sequenced and governed by broader and dominant social, political and economic structures and practices (see Chapters two and eight). Thus, the thesis has done more than just critique particular forms of education research. It has sought to address classroom TER as a problem by considering the broader contextual influences on classroom teaching practice that are not easily identified through cause-and-effect models of education research. The thesis has achieved this by focusing on and considering TER as a specific problem within the field of education that needs to be problematised and then analysed. The effective critique of TER must eventually produce a sociology of teacher effectiveness that contains a fundamental reference to the social justice implications of first, bounded analyses of practice and second, constraining policy discourses of evaluation.

The purpose then of a critical dialectics of TER is clear: to focus, and critique positivist interpretations of effective classroom teaching practice which assert and claim noticeable and obvious – transformed – achievement and learning outcomes for disadvantaged and under-achieving secondary school students. But importantly, an operational critical dialectics of TER problematises ‘effectivity’ (see Dean, 1994). A “perpetual vigilance and skepticism” (Dean, 1994, p. 4) of TER that also includes the critical organization of its particular knowledge base has the capacity to problematize its “criteria of validity” (Dean, 1999, p. 128). Indeed, a specific and representative requirement for the effective critique of TER is to directly take up and concentrate on its particular “rationality and subjectivity” (Dean, 1994, p. 103) under definite and established neo-liberal preconditions that are inclined to “privilege economic over political and cultural processes” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 32). A critical dialectics of TER as a “potential analytical framework” (Dean, 1994, p. 116) is a comprehensive and methodical tool of analysis that has the capacity to situate and view educational phenomena as an integrated whole. All of the associated aspects of the education system in its totality and unique manifestations require consideration. The contemporary education system organised as an overarching structure of dominance and control is characterized by competing interests. An important component of a critical dialectics of TER is to understand and indeed expose the unique and distinctive operations of the education system as a system of competing interests. Furthermore, the foundation for an effective critique of TER exists in the “exposure and contestation of assumptions” (Dean, 1994, p. 119). Positivist TER is in truth, an example and product of a particular conception and belief in teaching and learning from within the field of education with specific interests in mind. A clear intent is the organised and stated empirical knowledge and analysis of teaching practice as the sole contributor to student achievement. It is a manner of analysis that “pays scant attention to the subjectivities of people” and furthermore, is deficient in “an effective theory of political agency, or any other kind of agency” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 32). A critical dialectics of TER reorganizes knowledge gained in order to fully understand the given whole through re-engagement with “global processes” that at present typically depend on the “deeper logic of economic imperatives” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 32). The comprehensive and inclusive analysis of TER initiates a new sphere of influence, namely, “critical activity, as problematisation” (Dean, 1994, p. 214). In the process, a critical dialectics of TER
accomplishes two aims. First, it penetrates deeper into matters of educational significance that positivist methods of TER treat superficially and with a “certain taken-for-grantedness” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 33). Secondly, in delving deeper in matters of educational significance towards a complete explanation of why particular phenomena occur as they do, it dispenses with shallow, artificial – vulgar – interpretations of ‘evidence’.

In framing up the study in this way, I have drawn on a constructionist epistemology of knowledge formation informed by a critical theoretical orientation to build an analysis of policy-maker narratives about the utilisation of education research for the development of public education policy. Policy-maker knowledge formation, I contend, is not stationary and fixed. Like most forms of knowledge formation, it is influenced by broader social, cultural, economic and political forces that tend to dominate (see Chapters two and eight). A particular and influential “social imaginary about how the world is becoming interconnected and interdependent” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 34) is embedded in its discursive plan. Furthermore, I propose that these broader social, cultural, economic and political influences guide the performance and evaluation process of individual classroom teaching practice and public school student academic achievement. The “dismantling of education’s critical capacity in conjunction with the emergence of a politics of authoritarianism” (Giroux, 2011, p. 3) is at the heart of these influences.

Several main arguments extend throughout the thesis. The first and over-arching argument rests on and can be understood as encompassing the quite rigid and prescriptive performativity measures that examine and scrutinize the work of schooling and the education system. The contradictions and inconsistencies intrinsic to democratic capitalism (see Streeck, 2011) informs the first argument. These include and range from, but are not limited to, the broader social, cultural, economic and political influences that operate and dominate in contemporary Anglo capitalist society, that is, “the neo-liberal discourses of globalization” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 35). Crucial and central to the performance and evaluation process of individual classroom teaching practice and student achievement is a “global dynamics of power relations” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 36) symptomatic of a technocratic and managerialist (capitalist) neo-liberal economic and political paradigm – “the neo-liberal social imaginary of globalization” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 36). The theoretical frameworks of Foucault and Bourdieu have been used to categorise and critique positivist TER, which occupies a specific space within the performative processes of contemporary schooling and also the objectifying limits of empirical and statistical models. Two major features are crucial in my critical interpretation of TER:

1. Problematising metricated characterisations and classifications of teaching practice, and,
2. Problematising impositions of a positivist logic(s) of practice on teaching and learning.
The metricated characterisation and classification of teaching practice culminates in a discourse of effective teaching. It serves as a distinct and typical system of instructional practice to be used and implemented by classroom teachers in order to enhance student achievement. The second argument that constitutes my critical interpretation of TER represents the method of observation for the evaluation of teaching and learning. In other words, classroom teaching is bounded by and the subject of rigid and stringent surveillance systems expressed in “tactics and strategies to ensure consent through policies, both symbolic and material” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 36). The structure of evaluation is a form of scientific logic of practice subsumed and outlined by a metrics of estimation and appraisal. These features of TER nish with the graded grouping of a classroom teacher’s practice through the imposition of a positivist logic(s) of teaching practice. They both necessitate a counter that has its source from within the “strictly functional analysis of the educational system” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000, p. 90). In other words, a critique that emanates from the positivist origin of analysis. The third argument of the thesis which considered the performance and evaluation processes of teaching practice adopted the theoretical frameworks of Foucault and Bourdieu to authenticate and validate a critical dialectics of TER. In short, schooling practice and the work of the schooling system – its method of reproduction – are the focus of scrutiny in the third argument by focusing on the process and logic(s) of positivist practice in all of its guises and intended uses.

The constructed Anglo capitalist ‘set-up’ of teaching and learning is at heart a formulated connection of interlocking dominances. On the one hand, contemporary educational practice is bracketed by the dominant contingencies and practices of hyper rationalist economic policy. Teaching and learning and education policy conform to the constraints of an “economy of practices” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 224). A well-established and explicitly active process of verification, embodied by procedures of surveillance, work alongside and in tandem with each other. Both of these features culminate in an investigation and examination of ‘outcomes of education’ which are the teleological descriptors and governing structures of modern schooling.

The general and specialized interests –aims – of the education system that correspond with and are geared towards the ‘economic’, serve to constrain and shape. An important and central component is a configured and one-dimensional indicator of achievement, expressed as a numerical score. The representative exchange and use value of teaching practice is encapsulated within a totalizing identity of rationality, the development of which embraces and is expressed by indicators of effectiveness. ‘Making the difference’ (see Chapter eight) to the intellectual and academic achievement of disadvantaged public secondary school students is the contemporary and specific indicator of educational efficiency and practice.

Consequently, ‘making the difference’ to the educational outcomes of disadvantaged students becomes an essential –and indeed crucial– and indispensable marker of education system productivity. First and foremost, a technical and system imposed guarantor of efficiency, predicated on the teacher and their instruction is the unstated but implied procedural identifier. The distinguishing points of expression reside in interpretative comparisons composed of restricted requirements;
that of calculability for the predictability of efficiency and academic success. In this framework, the teacher and their instruction, a fortiori pedagogic techniques, become by definition and ostensibly symbolic functionaries of an imposed economic order. Moreover, the school is the active and tangible site through which ‘making the difference’ can be enacted and legitimised. The totalizing effects of the reproductive processes and functions of the modern and contemporary school system in terms of student achievement encompass a denunciation and indifference to social class. Overall and to this extent, school and teaching can make a difference to individual students, but only in as much as specific class structures and dominant economic and education system conditions allow. Hence, the epistemological ‘set-ups’ of TER that dismiss and conceal conditions of practice, require articulation of absent social justice considerations.

Social Justice – The Absent ‘Logic of Practice’

To overcome missing – absent – elements of education system analysis requires the incorporation of a sophisticated description of practice. The typical ‘science’ of TER constituted by its own and intrinsic ‘logic’ is at variance with the practical experience of classroom teaching. Indeed, Bourdieu (1990) states:

The theoretical model that makes it possible to recreate the whole universe of recorded practices, in so far as they are sociologically determined, is separated from what the agents master in the practical state, and of which its simplicity and power give a correct idea, by the infinitesimal but infinite distance that defines awareness or (it amounts to the same thing) explicit statement. (p. 270)

The central concern then of a Foucauldian and Bourdieuan critique of TER is to isolate and expose the intricate detail and particularity of its defining singularity. Likewise, the tendency by TER to corner teacher and student agency mirrors its stultifying and constraining framework of analysis. Teachers, caught up in the stresses of the classroom, “the product of playing in the game” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 82), cannot systematically re-construct the demands and pressures of contemporary schooling. The positivist researcher who remains distant “in order to sweep away the urgency, the appeals, the threats, the steps to be taken, which make up the real, really lived-in world” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 82) conscripts the individual teacher and student into an “object of categorization” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 476). To move beyond this requires an operational critical dialectics of TER which is, in truth, integration par excellence of “the rationalization of an ethos” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 493) – pure objectivity – into and back towards the “principles which are the very basics of its existence” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 497). Only:

By means of this semi-objectification one can situate oneself simultaneously inside and outside, in the game and on the touchline, i.e., on the margin, at the frontier, in regions which, like the ‘frame’, parergon, are so many limits, the beginning of the end, the end of the beginning, points from which one can be as distant as possible
from the interior without falling into the exterior, into outer darkness, that is, into the vulgarity of the non-philosophical, the coarseness of ‘empirical’, ‘ontic’, ‘positivist’ discourse”. (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 497)

In short, one emerges into a liberated viewpoint and position of reference where the praxis of emancipation is “an understanding as well as a form of action designed to overthrow structures of domination” (Giroux, 2011, p. 40). It is only by re-positioning analysis away from a “so-called pure science, that is to say, a profoundly de-historicized and de-historicizing science” towards “the social rootedness of economic practices” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 5) that a complete erudition of student achievement is indeed possible and relevant.

The realization of a critical interpretation of TER resides in establishing the institutionalized inceptions of effective teaching practice (see Chapter seven). The central matter is an identification of legitimated practices for teacher performance that affect student learning (see Chapter seven). Specific points of focus include a search for certainty about classroom pedagogy and student achievement – ‘what works’ – presented as a form of self-evident logic. Moreover, the influence that teachers and schools have in making differences to student achievement conceals “focal points of experience” (Foucault, 2011, p. 3). The focal point of hindrance and hardship: “multiple disadvantage– poor language skills, fragmented family lives, poverty, low levels of parental education, lack of facilities, leisure that is distracting rather than supportive of school” (Teese & Polesel, 2003, p. 123) – epitomize the silences of TER (see Chapter eight). In short, the purposeful imperatives of social justice require TER to account for specific educational demands that, in large part, are cultural. Teese and Polesel (2003) make reference to them:

These cultural demands include language skills, whose precocious development fuels higher-order cognitive growth and the early mastery of formal operations; the aptitude for self-reflection and for cognitive distance or the ‘scholarly disposition’ in which the learner views an object on its own terms; an implicit sense of value and purpose in the manipulation of ideas and their symbols; self-confidence in learning; and compliance in a teaching relationship based on academic authority. (p. 109)

Complementing classroom pedagogy with non-classroom based systems of assistance; for example: “healthful nutrition, health services, psychological counselling and student guidance” (Sahlberg, 2007, pp. 167-168) should form the foundation for a fully supportive educational system that seeks excellent student learning outcomes and that is socially just. Rebalancing aspects of TER that at present ignore the “interrelationships between creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning” (Craft, 2005, p. 131) juxtaposed by the “express purpose of student achievement” (Lovat, 2010, p. 490) disconnects the superficial constraints of surface learning. Furthermore, the re-conceptualisation of effective teacher practice ought to be situated from within “enhanced forms of learning environments” with a “commitment to epistemological inclusion” (Wrigley, Lingard & Thomson, 2012, p. 99). Indeed, as Wrigley et al. (2012) state:
Deep care is central to socially just pedagogies, which understand the need to scaffold from where students are at, respecting their existing knowledges, while at the same time making available the high-status knowledges traditionally valued in educational systems. (p. 99).

Teacher care and student trust form highly significant components of student performance and achievement (see Rowe, 2004). TER in its current form functions to undermine and subvert this.

Conversations concerning effective teaching practice are “bigger than methodology” for they ought to additionally concentrate on how “connectedness” (Wrigley, Lingard & Thomson, 2012, p. 99) is maintained. An important consideration in determinations of effective teaching practice should also be focused on how classroom instruction but more significantly, how the education system works to “scaffold learners into other knowledge forms, genres and media from which disadvantaged students should never be excluded” (Wrigley, Lingard & Thomson, 2012, p. 99). If as Bourdieu (2004) states, “It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory” (p. 15), then TER needs to adequately interleave the valorization of ‘capital’ into its analyses of teaching practice. Indeed, the illusion of an “ahistorical universality” through arithmetical “formularizations” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 3) depicting achievement and on the part of classroom teachers, efforts expended for accomplishments completed, confers an illegitimacy of judgment on the part of TER (see Chapter three). This is significant for TER declares an unbiased and neutral appraisal of teacher performance regarding student achievement (see Chapters three and seven).

An operational critical dialectics of TER needs then to functionalize cultural capital. It is not enough simply to detect inequity in educational practice. A determined effort to infuse TER with a socially just aspect points towards a pedagogical storyline that is absent. Indeed, an operational critical dialectics of TER that is socially just is comprised of a pedagogical storyline that gives classroom teachers ‘voice’ and ‘agency’ by accounting for the interferences of imperfect and restricted evaluations of practice. It can point towards the displacements, irregularities, tensions, contradictions and problematical facets of teaching and learning. The pedagogical storyline can ask questions of the research process itself: why is ‘this’ teacher labeled under -performing and by whom? Why is ‘this’ teacher mapped and evaluated against external standardized testing benchmarks? Why is it that ‘this’ teacher’s classroom pedagogy is discussed in terms that imply deficits or limitations? Who gains from a misleading and manufactured representation of the teacher and by extension the student(s)? How can the teacher challenge the representational ‘set-up’ of evaluation? (see Chapters three and six). Moreover, TER cannot effectively deal with what Wrigley et al. (2012) suggest teachers need to confront and that is “the need to engage with the multiple and overlapping issues facing young people: the accelerated cultural change caused by the very rapid development of information and communication technologies, global migration, a resurgent desire to assert their citizenship and the
hybrid stylistic dynamism and diversity of youth cultures” (p. 97). Consequently, to account for all of the aspects inherent in effective teaching practice requires a fundamental equality in pedagogy, which actually can only work reciprocally in terms outlined by the education system. In other words, to call TER into question requires an operational retort which implies an elucidation of the “functioning of habitus and the logic of practice” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 101) as it unfolds and functions in an inequitable education system (see Chapter ve). Indeed, an operational critical dialectics of TER is a shift in the prominence given to unstated and automatic laws.

The reintroduction of time, “with its rhythm, its orientation and its irreversibility” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 99) also reintroduces the indefinite and the uncertain. The “uncritical positivism” (Meszaros, 1970, p. 37) of TER promises “educational utopias” (Meszaros, 1970, p. 63). Its decisive “positivity” (Meszaros, 1970, p. 48) of individual achievement implied and expressed through individual teacher performance – pedagogy – fortifies the “politics of blame” (Thrupp, 1999, p. 183). Thrupp (1999) argues that “schools and teachers in low-SES settings may only be held partly responsible for addressing poor achievement, and that educational quality in low-SES settings will not be able to be substantially improved without redistributive policies of various kinds” (p. 183). Similarly, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) state:

An educational system based on a traditional type of pedagogy can fulfill its function of inculcation only so long as it addresses itself to students equipped with the linguistic and cultural capital – and the capacity to invest it profitably – which the system presupposes and consecrates without ever expressly demanding it and without methodically transmitting it. It follows that, for such a system, the real test is not so much the number as the social quality of its public (p. 99).

For this reason, teaching practice remains merely a single aspect of the education and pedagogic connection.

To argue along these lines then is to challenge and problematize the contradictory demands of (1) a competitive education and schooling system and (2) a competitive and constrictive economic system. The significant “transformations in western capitalism” having “entailed new rules of wealth creation” (Brown & Lauder, 2004, p. 49) now stress “greater importance to education than ever before” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 131). An important and core element is “educational governance” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 133) and a corresponding augmentation of a “commensurate space of educational measurement” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 133). If, as Meszaros (1970) states “Education has two main functions in a capitalist society: (1) the production of the skills necessary to running the economy, and (2) the formation of the cadres, and the elaboration of the methods, of political control” (p. 303), it follows that now more than ever, the expropriation and valorization of classroom instruction to the exclusion of all other variables has a bearing on student achievement. Consequently, it is teachers and their teaching practice that matter as at the point of exchange – the market economy – the exploitation and so “convertibility of the types of capital” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 26) that an individual possesses are rated and confirmed.
Thus, and in summary, positivist TER fails to integrate into its description of effective teaching practice the “representation of reality against which it has had to construct its ‘objective’ representation” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 110). Effective teaching practice and student achievement are an assembly and collection of all the processes and actions intrinsic to the education system including classroom instruction. Significantly, effective teaching practice and the achievement of students in public secondary schools is also a function of the “social world” complete with its specific and identifiable “set of constraints” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 16). To move beyond decontextualized configurations of teaching practice will require a reconstitution of TER towards those aspects that are currently absent from what is presented as a faultless methodology. The relationship then between what passes for effective teaching practice based on TER and student achievement remains in question so long as separation exists between theoretical and practical matrices of analysis. Hence, valid and worthwhile TER for the development of public education policy will have its basis in social justice. It will first, account for all of the influences that impact on teaching and learning and second, feature an instructive dialogue about contemporary social and economic demands.
References


Rowan, B., Correnti, R., & Miller, R.J. (2002). What Large-Scale, Survey Research Tells Us About Teacher Effects on Student Achievement: Insight From The Prospects Study of Elementary Schools. Teachers College Record, 104(8), December.


Reports


Appendix 1 – Interview questions asked of Policy Participants

1. How do you propose to and develop education policy?

2. What research is used, in terms of ‘research document’ if you like, in your view, would the department and policy advocates in relation to professional learning, student learning, teaching practice, etc, would the type of teacher effectiveness research that is considered more worthy if you like, be of a nature that is heavily laden with quantifiable/statistical empirical analysis as opposed to say qualitative or context specific research?

3. How do you propose to and develop education policy?

4. In your view, would the department and policy advocates in relation to professional learning, student learning, teaching practice, etc, would the type of teacher effectiveness research that is considered more worthy if you like, be of a nature that is heavily laden with quantifiable/statistical empirical analysis as opposed to say qualitative or context specific research?

5. How do you propose to and develop education policy?

6. In your view, would the department and policy advocates in relation to professional learning, student learning, teaching practice, etc, would the type of teacher effectiveness research that is considered more worthy if you like, be of a nature that is heavily laden with quantifiable/statistical empirical analysis as opposed to say qualitative or context specific research?