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## **Spaces of possibility in pre-service teacher education**

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### **Introduction**

Pre-service teacher education is a spatialized enterprise. It operates across a number of spaces that may or may not be linked ideologically and/or physically. These spaces can include daily practices, locations, infrastructure, relationships and representations of power and ideology. The interrelationships between and within these (sometimes competing) spaces for pre-service teachers will influence their identities as teachers and learners across time and space.

The disjuncture between university and school spaces has long been discussed in the literature around pre-service teacher education (Bullough, Hobbs, Kauchak, Crow, & Stokes, 1997; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Zeichner, 2010). Not only is the physical space and infrastructure of schools different to that commonly found in universities, but also the pedagogies, ideologies and power dynamics are different and not necessarily compatible (Gutierrez & Vossoughi, 2010). Pre-service teachers are expected to make the connections between often-contradictory spaces with little or no guidance on how to negotiate such complex relationships. Yes, we arm them with up-to-date theories and approaches, and we provide *opportunities* for them to put these approaches into practice in schools. But do we teach them how to inhabit and negotiate the difficult inter-spaces of ideological contradictions, of homespun or media-fuelled philosophy, of teacher accountability and its spawns, of deeply entrenched practices, and of the immediacy of passing the course? These are difficult spaces, yet the slippages and gaps between these spaces offer generative possibilities. This paper explores these spaces of possibility for pre-service teacher education, and argues that the connectivity between space and time can be harnessed in transformative ways through critical reflective practice.

First, the paper introduces some of the complexities of teacher education in current times and then reviews historical and current approaches to reflective practice. Third, the spatial theories of Lefebvre (1991) and Foucault (1977, 1980) are used to understand how ‘conceived’ or normative ideological spaces of university and school influence, and are influenced by, ‘perceived’ spaces of everyday practices in the enactment of pre-service teacher education. Finally, the paper will elucidate the possibilities offered by explicitly guided critical reflection as a ‘thirdspace’ (Soja, 1996) for pre-service teachers to question, challenge and transform pedagogic knowledges, beliefs and practices.

### **Teacher Education as a political space**

The complex and often fragmented demands of teacher education to meet political expectations, bureaucratic standards and partisan claims for particular community interests (Bates, 2005), mean that pre-service teacher educators must negotiate a plethora of expectations. Widening social and cultural gaps between teachers and

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many of their students demands a knowledge of equity, diversity and global interconnectedness (Butcher, et al., 2003); a knowledge that is not considered to be evident in many university teacher graduates (Merryfield, 2000). We tend to place unreasonable expectations on such graduates: that they will be able to make changes that previous generations of educators have been unable to make (Butcher, et al., 2003). Particularly so, when teacher education is sandwiched between the system demands for the production of skills for a competitive economy; and the cultural demands of individuals in a quest for meaning (Bates, 2005). This is a climate in which faculty and students are accountable in the quest for 'standards', yet are asked to achieve these standards with: increasingly shortened teacher education programs (Ryan & Healy, 2009); over-enrolment in these oft-seen 'cash cow' programs; lack of access to enough high quality field placements (Bloomfield, 2009) and in many cases, with a lack of adequate financial support (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

In Australia, the establishment of professional accreditation bodies in most states (for example the New South Wales Institute of Teachers; the Queensland College of Teachers), along with a Federal government agenda for national teaching standards through bodies such as the newly formed *Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership*, means that what constitutes 'good teachers' or 'good teacher educators' is part of a centralised system of control and accountability (Bloomfield, 2009). Teachers and teacher educators are drawn into a neo-liberal agenda of 'client choice' and 'transparency' in which standards and (narrow) standardised assessments are used as a measure of quality to regulate professional practice. The state of Queensland is currently implementing graduate testing in literacy, numeracy and Science for all elementary and middle school graduates, the success of which will determine eligibility for teacher registration in that state. Further, fast track teacher education programs such as 'Teach for Australia' and 'Teach for America', place more emphasis on 'on-the-job' training and 'common-sense' approaches, and have been criticized for devaluing more traditional teacher education programs which value theory and deep knowledge to move beyond common sense approaches (Kumashiro, 2010).

The complexity of these political agendas, along with the already difficult tasks of understanding and applying a plethora of educational theories and approaches, catering for diverse student groups, and implementing new curricula, can create an overwhelming space for pre-service teachers to inhabit. Pre-service teacher education programs can open up new spaces between and across these competing agendas through rigorous and systematic reflective practice.

Reflective practice, however, is not an intuitive skill. Deep, critical reflection requires careful planning and pedagogic intervention. Explicit strategies need to be included at regular intervals across whole programs for such skills to develop. The value of reflective learning and reflective practice is widely accepted in educational circles as a means of improving students' lifelong learning and professional practice (Rogers, 2001). A critical issue, however, is that reflection is a 'complex, rigorous, intellectual, and emotional enterprise that takes time to do well' (Rodgers, 2002 p.845). There is

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also evidence to suggest that reflective writing by university cohorts tends to be superficial unless it is approached in a consistent and systematic way (Orland-Barak, 2005). Bain, Ballantyne, Mills & Nestor (2002) agree that deep reflective skills can and should be taught, however they require development and practice over time.

### **Reflective practice**

Reflection, or reflective practice, has a long tradition and stems from philosophy, particularly the work of Dewey (1933) on reflective thinking for personal and intellectual growth. Dewey's approach is considered to be psychological, and is concerned with the nature of reflection and how it occurs. A more critical and transformative approach to reflection, which is rooted in critical social theory, is evident in the work of Friere (1972), Habermas (1974) and others who have followed their lead (see for example Hatton & Smith, 1995; Mezirow, 1990). Schon's (1983) work on the 'reflective practitioner' has also influenced many scholars interested in the work of professionals and how 'reflection-in-action' and 'reflection-on-action' can influence their professional education. Schon's approach is steeped in practice, particularly in building theory from practice. His ideas about improving practice through reflectivity and theory-in-use have inspired much debate around the role of espoused theory and theory-in-use. Schon favours theory that is built from everyday practice, however this view has been criticized for not moving beyond the immediate situation and for potentially perpetuating hegemonic or normalising forms of practice rather than enacting change at a broader level (Gur-Ze'ev, 2001).

### **Approaches to reflection**

Most researchers and commentators agree that there are different types or hierarchical levels of reflection. Grossman (2008) suggests that there are at least four different levels of reflection along a depth continuum. These range from descriptive accounts, to different levels of mental processing, to transformative or intensive reflection. He argues that students can be scaffolded at each level to produce more productive reflections. Similarly, Bain et al. (2002) suggest different levels of reflection with their 5Rs framework of Reporting, Responding, Relating, Reasoning and Reconstructing. Their levels increase in complexity and move from description of, and personal response to, an issue or situation; to the use of theory and experience to explain, interrogate, and ultimately transform practice. They suggest that the content or level of reflection should be determined by the problems and dilemmas of the practitioner. Hatton and Smith (1995) also posit a depth model which moves from description to dialogic (stepping back to evaluate) and finally to critical reflection.

Professional reflection, as opposed to personal reflection, generally involves a conscious and stated purpose (Moon, 2006), and needs to show evidence of learning and a growing professional knowledge. This type of purposeful reflection, which is generally the aim in teacher education courses, and is the focus of this paper, must ultimately reach the critical level for deep, active learning to occur. Such reflection is underpinned by a transformative approach to learning that sees the pedagogical process as one of knowledge transformation rather than knowledge transmission (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008; Leonardo, 2004). The learner is an active participant in improving learning and professional practice. Critical social theory underpins this transformative approach to reflection. Critical social theory is concerned with

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emancipation, however it also engages in a language of transcendence, whereby critique serves to cultivate students' abilities to question, deconstruct and reconstruct their own practices and imagine an alternative reality (Giroux, 1988; Kincheloe, 2003). When pre-service teachers are provided with opportunities to examine and reflect upon their beliefs, philosophies and practices, they are more likely to see themselves as active change agents and lifelong learners within their professions (Mezirow, 2006).

This approach to learning and reflection posits the task of education as one of supporting a learning process which is both cognitive and social (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008). That is, learning involves both the cognitive process of incorporating new knowledge into existing schemas, but it also involves the cultural conditions and opportunities for learning in the social context. The way that one learns or comes to know is at the core of education, and meaningful learning involves reflection (Moon, 2004). Transformative learning (and reflective learning), as suggested by Kalantzis and Cope (2008), is a socio-cognitive process which involves interrelated ways of knowing, each of which can be developed by teachers. They suggest that we learn by experiencing new ideas, contexts or behaviours and making sense of them according to what we already know or have experienced; that we identify and theorise about these phenomena as we place them into our existing schemas; that we analyse these new concepts in terms of their underlying features and how they sit within the broader social, cultural and historical context; and that we are able to apply this new knowledge in culturally recognisable or creative new ways in different contexts. The teacher has a pivotal role in developing learning that includes reflective analysis and application of new knowledge across space and time.

### ***Theoretical framing: Spaces for reflection***

Foucault argues that knowledge and discourse function as forms of power and disseminate the effects of power through time and space. He suggests that 'the spatialising description of discursive realities gives on to the analysis of related effects of power' (Foucault, 1980, p. 70-71). So rather than focusing on temporal continuity and thus internal transformation of an individual's consciousness, he contends that analysis of discourse and discursive practice through spatial, strategic metaphors is a way of grasping the precise points at which discourses are transformed in, through, and on the basis of power relations. He sees the individual, with their identity and characteristics, as the product of power that has been exercised over the body, movements, desires and forces (Foucault, 1980). Different forms of power are not only evident at different times in history and across one's life, but also in different places or spaces.

Butler's (1993) work on the body and performativity sees discourse as producing the effect that it names, and thus our words and bodily practices have always already been sedimented with socio-historical meanings and ideologies (Butler, 1997). Her emphasis on relationality and contextuality in performing identities, can also be seen in Foucault's pre-occupation with space, power and knowledge, and how the micro-physics of power are inherent in 'the conduct of conduct' (Foucault, 1977, 1979). The subjectivities of pre-service teachers are constructed through intersections of the

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material and the discursive in their situated discourse worlds. Therefore practices and perceptions cannot be taken as 'normal' or 'natural', but rather as products of their elaborate social negotiations which are subject to notions of power, regulation, desire, dominance and exploitation. Foucault (1977) suggests that the disciplining of bodies creates complex, 'mixed' spaces that are both 'real' in how they govern the disposition of buildings, rooms, furniture; but also 'ideal' as they are projected over the characterisations, assessments and created hierarchies of individuals (p. 148).

Henri Lefebvre's 'triple dialectic' of historicity, sociality and spatiality which produce perceived, conceived and lived spaces of representation, are not dissimilar to Foucault's spatial theorisation of disciplined bodies. Foucault's (1977) 'real' and 'ideal' spaces of institutionalised bodies have parallels with Lefebvre's 'perceived' and 'conceived' spaces respectively. Foucault (1984) also posits 'other spaces' or 'heterotopias' as spaces of difference, or counter-sites where real sites are 'simultaneously represented, contested and inverted' (Foucault, 1986, p. 24). Soja (1996) regards Foucault's heterotopias as consistent with Lefebvre's 'lived space', which underpins his own theorisation of 'thirdspace' as an open, critical spatial imagination of how things can be different.

Foucault and Lefebvre are not without hope, then, that individuals can dissent from normalising categories and spaces to subvert and disrupt the 'order of things' (Foucault, 1970). Butler (1997) similarly offers generative possibilities for subjectification in time and space. Davies (2006) elaborates on Butler's understandings of the ambivalence of subjection or subjectification in her theory of performativity as she highlights the paradoxical conditions through which subjecthood is accomplished. She suggests that 'the subject might resist and agonise over those very powers that dominate and subject it, and at the same time, it also depends on them for its existence' (p.426). Understanding this very paradox offers a way for subjects to unsettle, resist or re-inscribe the powers that work upon them and that they work upon (after Butler, 1997).

I use Lefebvre's (1991) trialectic theory of spatiality to foreground the production of pre-service teacher education as a complex process. Within lived experience, through the body, there is always the other (Lefebvre, 1991), thus the three spaces operate simultaneously, each influencing and being influenced by the others, however for ease of explanation they are separated here.

### **Spatial practice (perceived; real)**

Lefebvre considers this to be the space of daily practices, routines, locations, infrastructure, and relationships that are established and reproduced. Dubbed 'firstspace' by Soja (1996), it is a space where everyday things and practices are 'perceived' as normal. Lefebvre suggests that spatial practice ensures continuity and some level of cohesion. It implies some level of competence or performance of established social practice.

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In educational institutions such as schools and universities, 'perceived' space is signified by what students, staff and community members do, where they do it, who they relate to (or not), and the nature of their established routines and practices. In pre-service teacher education, 'perceived' space includes course content and assessment, field placements, school and university pedagogies and practices, and relationships between all involved in these 'firstspace' practices. It is important to understand what constitutes 'firstspace' practices if we want to change space in a strategic way (Sheehy, 2009).

### **Representations of space (conceived; ideal)**

'Conceived' spaces are representations of power and ideology, of control and surveillance (Soja, 1996). They are the 'ideal' of how society should be, and thus they influence what happens in 'perceived' everyday space, while at the same time being influenced by such spatial practice. Foucault (1977) suggests that institutions such as prisons and schools were developed to create discipline and order and useful space to achieve the ideals of a well-structured society that protects its citizens from physical or moral harm. Thus the design of such institutions was deliberate and ordered so that the space itself could discipline docile bodies. Artifacts and architecture laid down in history are elements of this 'conceived' or 'secondspace' (Soja, 1996). So too, government policy is instigated to regulate everyday practice to achieve an 'ideal' society. Everyday practice does, however, influence such policy or the design of institutions in a continuous dialectic relationship that Soja names 'real-and-imagined'.

Pre-service teacher education works within the conceived spaces of professional standards, course accreditation and the structure of university and school procedures to produce 'ideal' future teachers. The practicum model adopted by particular states or countries, and the enactment, and financial support, of the mandated model in different ways by individual institutions, ascribes value to some spaces over others. Schools may be seen by academics and pre-service teachers as separate spaces where practical day-to-day work generates knowledge that revolves around solutions and situations (Sutherland, Howard, & Markauskaite, 2010). Pre-service teachers and classroom teachers may see university courses, on the other hand, as places of de-contextualised knowledge, abstract theory and academic discourse. These contested spaces need to be negotiated, as both of these spaces of learning are integral to the development of professional knowledge and understandings (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Sutherland, et al., 2010). Physical layout, online infrastructure and architecture of classrooms, schools and university campuses are 'conceived' spaces that say much about education and pedagogy, including how knowledge is generated and shared, by whom, and in what contexts. Media and government commissioned reports and policies also work in and around these spaces to shape what is considered a 'good' teacher. For example, policy documents over the past ten years in Australia have worked to de-professionalise teachers by 'cutting them out of the equation' in their bid to teacher-proof new educational policies around teacher quality (Thomas, 2005). Teacher and school quality is also called into question with the publishing of national test results and comparative league tables for Australian schools in a bid to provide transparency for parents. Such strategies quickly become 'name and shame' devices of so-called quality control, predictably with low socio-economic schools (and teachers) bearing much of the brunt.

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### **Lived space (thirdspace; heterotopia)**

Lived space is a space to resist, subvert and re-imagine the ‘real-and-imagined’ spaces (Soja, 1996) of everyday realities and hegemonic ideologies. It offers the potential for space to be made and remade with generative possibilities for critical transformation and civic participation. It is a space for new possibilities and imaginings of how things could be, a space of transgression and symbolism (Lefebvre, 1991). Foucault (1986) describes such counter-sites as heterotopias, which are different from the sites they reflect and speak about – a disordering of the presumed orderliness of knowledge and things.

This is the space where pre-service teachers can make choices about which ‘firstspace’ and/or ‘secondspace’ practices/ideologies they might interrupt or resist and how they might do so in their own time and space. Educational researchers have begun to use Lefebvre’s spatial theories to explain how space permits some actions, suggests others, and prohibits others (Sheehy, 2009). For example Tejeda (2005) tried hybridising college students’ local knowledge with the conceived knowledges and practices of college, and found that college space could be re-represented as ‘thirdspace’ within the ‘secondspace’ curriculum and architecture of the college. Sheehy (2004) demonstrated the stranglehold ‘secondspace’ can have on teachers and students. She showed how daily practices can become routine and accepted as ‘normal’, so that when new (thirdspace) practices are introduced into the ‘real-and-imagined’ spaces of classrooms; they may not easily be taken up. Sheehy’s (2009) more recent work reinforces the power of ‘secondspace’ in educational institutions. She argues that even if individual teachers attempt to introduce new ideas based on their ‘thirdspace’ ideologies; unless they can play along with the ideologies of the institutional space and point in history, they have little chance of take-up or success. Ryan (2010b) argues that the civic participation of young people at university is greatly influenced by the ‘secondspace’ of corporatized educational institutions. This intersection and phasing of space and time, the chronotope, is crucial in analysing the evolving identities of pre-service teachers. Spaces and spatial practices that are sedimented with historical and social understandings can be difficult to re-imagine or invert.

### ***Investigating reflection in pre-service teacher education***

This section of the paper describes data from a current project investigating and trialling reflective practice across university courses in one Australian university. The larger project involves semi-structured interviews and focus groups with 40 volunteer staff and 40 volunteer students from across university faculties, along with samples of reflective work from 60 participating students across faculties. Given the focus of this paper on pre-service teacher education, the data analysed here are drawn from reflective tasks completed by six pre-service teachers in their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a Bachelor of Education program. These data were collected early in the project, *prior to any systematic intervention around reflective practice*. These data are used to illustrate key themes across student reflections in Field Studies classes *before* such interventions, and to identify spaces of possibility for deep critical reflection.



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The analytic framework utilises the trialectic of spatial practices (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996) and seeks to identify levels of reflection (reporting, responding, relating, reasoning, reconstructing) according to Bain et al. (2002). The purpose of these reflections, outlined in assessment descriptions for students, was to make connections between university course-work, practice in the field, and demonstration of professional teacher standards related to literacy and numeracy, engaging learning experiences, classroom management and professional responsibilities.

These early data indicate three key themes emerging from the participants' attempts at professional reflection. These themes are: a focus on control and regulation; unproblematic reporting of classroom practices; and one-dimensional measures of effective practices. Each of these themes will be explained below, with analysis of sample extracts from the data. Due to space constraints here, it is impossible to include whole reflections, however the chosen extracts were identified after an initial macro analysis of the data to identify the key themes evident through all of the early reflections from these pre-service teachers.

### **Focus on control and regulation**

The data indicate a strong focus on the importance of regulating and controlling students in the classroom, with little reference to the implications of such strategies for the learning environment and relationships within the classroom. Each of these participants describe perceived (Lefebvre, 1991) or firstspace (Soja, 1996) practices related to the layout of the classroom and grouping of students, which is not unexpected, given that classroom management was one focus element of their reflective task. However, these pre-service teachers do not move beyond reporting and responding (Bain, 2002) to interrogate the secondspace (Soja, 1996) ideologies at play in the conceived space (Lefebvre, 1991) of the classroom. They don't relate 'classroom management' to other professional standards such as 'engaging learning experiences'. As Greg (all names are pseudonyms) describes, 'maximum control' is the 'classical classroom layout'. Docile bodies (Foucault, 1977) are taken for granted in these classroom spaces, yet these perceived practices offer rich thirdspace (Soja, 1996) possibilities for investigating types of learning that occur here, how other forms of learning could be facilitated, and how power is distributed to enable or disable students' contributions.

*It is a classical classroom layout with seven rows of three, and two rows of four. The reason for this layout is to obtain maximum control over the room. The teacher can see all of the students faces when at the front of the room, and maintains control once the class has been allocated a task by being able to see all of the students from her desk. (Greg)*

Anna foregrounds 'the routine' as highly significant in the classroom as she reports on this perceived space. Completion of the routine, as opposed to anything else that might be achieved, is paramount each day. Words such as 'consequences' and 'non-compliance' are used to highlight regulation of behaviour through rules, routines and consequences.

*The teacher reminds students in advance of what is going to happen next or of any changes to the routine to allow students to prepare themselves*

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*and to be organised and ready to start the new activity. The routine is flexible but the teacher tries to complete the routine on most days. The students are aware of the school and classroom rules and the consequences that follow for the non-compliance to the rules. (Anna)*

Anna doesn't move into deeper and more critical levels of reflection such as reasoning and reconstructing (Bain, 2002) to consider why the teacher places so much importance on routine and order. Conceived spaces of educational policy and accountability in this state may well be shaping the pedagogic practices of teachers who are under scrutiny to prepare students' for high stakes tests, while at the same time, delivering a new content-heavy Australian Curriculum.

Serena also describes the use of the physical space and grouping, but she unproblematically adds an extra dimension to the firstspace practices, with normative categorisation of boys as a 'problem' group of students.

*When I began the desks were in rows. This... was a less distracting format considering the number of boys in the class. Soon after the desks were moved into groups of six. Whilst this created a lot of extra space in the classroom, it proved more chaotic as the boys particularly were far more easily distracted. (Serena)*

Serena accepts that boys are 'easily distracted' yet she makes no mention of particular evidence for this claim – whether *all* boys in this class are easily distracted, whether certain personalities distract others, whether the girls are distracted or even considered in the physical grouping, whether particular kinds of activities or resources or strategies trigger certain kinds of behaviour. Conceived spaces of classroom organisation according to gendered behaviour need to be examined through evidence-based reasoning and explanation. This type of higher-level reflection can open up thirdspace ideas for reconstructing practice through action research in a classroom. Rather than operating on 'homespun philosophy', teachers collect evidence of what works and why; and of the effects of particular groupings or activities for students who are considered to be 'easily distracted'.

### **Unproblematic reporting of classroom practices**

The reflections of these participants consist mostly of long descriptions reporting on perceived practices, particularly of their supervising teacher, and less often, of their own supervised teaching. They demonstrate, at least in this assessment task, unquestioning acceptance of classroom routines and practices. When placed in schools for the practicum experience, pre-service teachers are led and assessed by their supervising teacher, creating an unequal power relationship. They abide by established rules, procedures and curricula into which they have had no input and therefore may be more willing to accept the behaviors and practices they observe rather than to question the status quo (Baldwin, Buchanan, & Rudisill, 2007; Ryan & Healy, 2009). Conceived spaces such as teaching philosophies, effects of broader educational agendas or issues, and school community considerations as influences on perceived practices were not examined by any of the participants. For example, Eve outlines what she saw as an 'effective' strategy used in the classroom.

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*One of the most effective behaviour management strategies that was used in this class was the 'fives program', which I saw being implemented well by the teacher... At the end of each week, the class would go outside for 50 minutes of games as a reward yet the students who have a strike against their name would miss out on ten minutes of the game. If a student receives five accumulated strikes against their name, they would be given a red five meaning that they would miss out on the whole game.*  
(Eve)

Eve reports and responds positively to this strategy, but doesn't move into deeper, more critical reflection to relate this strategy to government health agendas to include more physical activity in the school day. She doesn't draw upon theories or philosophies from the Health and Physical Education curriculum subject that she has already completed in the program. She doesn't reason about the effects of removing physical activity as a punishment, and how this prioritises particular curriculum areas over others. Does the teacher remove Mathematics learning or English activities? Why or why not? Do some students like missing physical games? There is no evidence of deeper levels of reflection to consider alternative possibilities.

Sara reports on firstspace literacy and numeracy development in the classroom, with no reference to secondspace theories or models that guide such development; or to the frequent media attention on what constitutes quality teaching of these 'basics', particularly in regard to the new Australian Curriculum.

*The supervising teacher focuses on the development of (literacy and numeracy) skills; using ICTs such as the computer program Lexia to explicitly develop literacy and language skills and the SmartKiddies website and daily maths mental skills in numeracy are explicitly developed.* (Sara)

Literacy is presented as a series of basic skills that can be learnt via computer software programs. No other reference is made to literacy activities, resources or philosophies in this classroom. Sara shows no higher-level reflective reasoning or reconstruction about balanced literacy programs that use evidence other than that provided by narrow high-stakes tests.

Greg attempts to explain how students' individual needs are important in the perceived and conceived practices in the classroom. Modifying work and providing human resources are perceived practices that are guided by the conceived ideology that students are individuals whose needs should drive the work of the classroom and school.

*...it was important to modify each students' work to cater for their needs. The teacher did this by having several different worksheets that assessed students on different levels. (The school) has a great support system for the children, and it could be seen through the three different teacher aids (sic) that came around to assist the students that struggled at their work.*  
(Greg)

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The unquestioned assumption that worksheets at different levels will cater for different needs shows that Greg is not moving beyond lower levels of reflection. He reports on, and responds positively to the conceived value placed on individual needs at this school, yet he doesn't reason about how different learning styles may require different forms of learning, not just levelled versions of the same activity. He doesn't elaborate on what the teacher aides actually do with students; question whether it has any effect; and consider what schools might do if they don't have the resources for extra human resources. Implications for his own practice are not introduced, even at a speculative level, using informal observation. For example, watching particular students to see how best they learn or noticing certain strategies that seem to be effective for some students and not others, can form new ideas about thirdspace practices in the future.

### **One-dimensional measures of effective practices**

These participants readily praised firstspace practices that they observed in the classroom. There was little use of evidence or theory, however, to explain why the perceived space is effective or not, and how the conceived and perceived spaces influence one another in the theory-practice nexus.

*This was a wonderful experience... During a phonics lesson, students sit on the carpet and receive the instruction of the sounds and how the letters appear in words. Then the class moves into their year groups and (students) complete their books with instruction from the teacher on the requirements. (Arun)*

Arun enthuses about a phonics lesson he observed, which was very teacher-directed and highly structured. This would be a perfect opportunity for Arun to reflect upon the perceived/conceived space of the pedagogic choices made by the teacher. Reasoning how effective strategies are chosen for different purposes and why they are appropriate is important pedagogic work. Phonics is an area that requires direct intervention by the teacher, yet other literacy activities require quite different approaches. 'Literacy Wars' (Snyder, 2008) that have dominated curriculum debates, particularly in the Australian press, for over a decade create a binary between direct phonics instruction and child-centred language experience. This debate needs to be interrogated by pre-service teachers, as key literacy research (Healy & Honan, 2004; Luke & Freebody, 1999) suggests that effective literacy programs include a balance of approaches.

Eve uncritically explains a behaviour management system that 'worked well'. The use of extrinsic reward as a firstspace practice is not discussed with reference to secondspace ideologies that inform such an approach. No reference is made to effects on learning, as the measure of effectiveness seems to be behaviour modification and student self-regulation, rather than cause and effect of this regulation on the core work of the classroom. These pre-service teachers represent behaviour management as a separate aim in classrooms, rather than as a means to an end for optimum learning.

*There were a number of different coloured stamp charts for different levels and once students have completed the highest level, they will*

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*receive and (sic) hour on the Playstation as a reward. This system also worked well with the students as they were eager to gain more stamps and monitor their progress. (Eve)*

Sara shows some evidence of interrogating her firstspace practices and reasoning how and why her pedagogic approach could change, but she doesn't elaborate or back up her ideas with theory or evidence from her Mathematics curriculum subjects at university. Why might some activities work better if students use their bodies? Why is it important to have boundaries that are enforced in the classroom? Were the directions clear in the first place? Why didn't students follow these directions? What else was happening?

*On reflection of my teaching episodes, I feel I should have been more confident in following through with the students understood consequence for not following directions, namely separating the students. Also, moving the desks to create a more open area would have helped make some active activities work better, such as using of their bodies to help understand the mathematics terms flip, slide and turn. (Sara)*

These pre-service teachers show little evidence of really *noticing* the complex happenings in the real-and-imagined space (Soja, 1996) of the classroom, and use little evidence upon which to base their pedagogic choices or assessment of 'effective' practice. When given little scaffolding or specific pedagogic intervention around reflective practice, these pre-service teacher participants do not move beyond the lowest levels of reflection, such as *reporting* and *responding*; and they only occasionally engage in *relating* to developing professional knowledge or university coursework. Deeper and more critical higher-order reflection such as *reasoning* and *reconstructing* are not demonstrated in these data, and are the most difficult to develop.

## **Discussion**

Pre-service teacher education needs to take a systematic approach to the development of higher-level critical reflection that is evidence-based and underpinned by theory, so pre-service teachers can move into thirdspace and re-imagine their future practice. These pre-service teachers have not been provided with the resources they require for thirdspace practices, and indeed, some teacher preparation programs may lack the underpinning frameworks (or even the energy) for transformative pedagogy. Political manoeuvres in Australia, Britain and the US increasingly promote 'common sense' and on-the-job approaches to teacher preparation (Kumashiro, 2010). Further strategies for deskilling or devaluing teachers and teacher educators; include tick-box accountability measures, prescribed curricula and 'discourses of derision' for teachers and programs (Ball, 2003). These political conditions raise important issues about the tenability of wide-scale implementation of reflective and transformative strategies across teacher education programs. Teacher educators who are committed to such transformative approaches need to find the slippages between the spaces of university, school, community and political agendas. For example, accountability measures in Australia include reference to lifelong learning and professional reflection. These aspects of a mandated system of control can be harnessed as a way to promote broad scale reflection strategies to both faculty staff and students in a bid to satisfy accreditation and professional registration requirements. A key consideration is the collection of evidence that reflective practice has actually improved professional

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ideas, classroom practices, relationships or pedagogies. If reflection is simply given lip service, with little regard for evidence of transformation in ideas or practices, it is a difficult argument to make to faculty staff. Students may also be unconvinced of the value of theory or reflection until they are taught to use evidence for real improvement in their pedagogy, classroom practices and more immediate assessment results.

Most teacher educators would agree that there is a need to move beyond descriptions of firstspace practices, and uncritical acceptance of what their supervising teacher demonstrates in the classroom. Teaching is a political enterprise, which cannot be ignored in the perceived space of the classroom. Careful consideration is needed to plan deliberate and demonstrable strategies for improving students' reflective learning across pre-service teacher education programs. The pedagogic field of pre-service teacher education is influenced by a number of socio-cognitive factors in time and space. First, there is the developmental stage of the learner in this particular learning context (time dimension). That is, whether the learner is a novice in this field (for example a first year undergraduate) or about to embark on their new profession as a final year student, or somewhere in between. Secondly, there is the disciplinary context in which the learning is occurring (space dimension). The subject matter, or discipline knowledge, along with key ways of knowing within different curriculum areas, (Freebody, Maton, & Martin, 2008) and professional standards from the field, will influence the kind of evidence, language and technologies that learners will use to demonstrate their reflective learning. In pre-service teacher programs, a combination of socio-cognitive learning and development theories, curriculum theories and frameworks, and clinical practice provides the knowledge and evidence that students can use as the basis for professional reflections. Subsequent actions, based as they are on rigorous evidence and reflexive practice, can withstand the scrutiny of the managerial, bureaucratic, political, and community stakeholders in education.

### **Key considerations in implementing reflective practice in pre-service teacher education**

Reflection is commonly embedded into assessment requirements in pre-service teacher education courses (Carrington & Selva, 2010; Janssen, 2008; Nolan, 2008), however there is scant literature on any systematic, developmental approach to teaching evidence-based professional reflection to pre-service teachers. Given that professional reflection is not intuitive, and requires specific pedagogic intervention to do well (Ryan, 2010a), a program-wide approach is essential. Pedagogic decisions about reflective activities should be cognizant of the stage of the program, and should recognise where pre-service teachers have been introduced to reflective practice; how and where it is further developed; and what links can be made between and across the years of the program. Early in the program, pre-service teachers won't generally demonstrate authoritative knowledge of the professional field. Reflective activities at this stage need to focus on self, and own learning and experience in relation to education and broader social issues. Mid-way into the program, reflection can begin to focus on peers' contributions, and use of relevant theory and curriculum frameworks to reason and reconstruct their burgeoning ideas and practices. Towards the end of the program reflection can be situated squarely in the theory-practice

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nexus, using theory, curriculum knowledge, professional standards and pedagogic experiences to relate, reason and reconstruct interrelated facets of professional practice. Choosing reflective tasks with due consideration to levels of professional knowledge and prior experiences with reflection, can enable pre-service teachers to develop these higher order skills across time and space. Ovens and Tinning (2009) suggest that reflection can not be taught as a discrete skill, but rather that it must relate to the discursive context, and strategies must therefore be chosen carefully for their applicability to that space.

## **Conclusion**

In the current climate of accountability, political manoeuvring, changing curriculum, increasingly diverse student cohorts, and community expectations, pre-service teachers, more than ever, need to develop the skills and abilities to be reflective and reflexive practitioners. Developing such abilities will enable them to negotiate the complex interspaces of educational demands and create spaces of possibility for future practice. Critical reflective practice is not intuitive and, as these reported data illustrate, with limited structure and support, or little pedagogic intervention, pre-service teachers do not demonstrate higher-order levels of professional reflection. Teacher educators must find the spaces to lift or maintain the intellectual rigour of pre-service teacher education, so that common sense and homespun philosophy is not the basis for classroom pedagogy and practice. Deep and transformative reflective practice must be systematically addressed through developmental pedagogic intervention, which attends to the chronotope of time and space across pre-service teacher education programs.

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