Rethinking Higher Education

Kathryn Coleman
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Sophie Arkoudis *Editors*

The Educational Turn

Rethinking the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

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Rethinking Higher Education

The current state of higher education perpetuates fatalism, where choice and decision-making towards equity and change has been replaced with bottom-lines and return on investment. This series disrupts this present state of higher education by sharing the stories, actions, and research of students, academics, and administrators in higher education that begin with humanity, equity, and change. It highlights the work of scholars at all stages of career (emerging, mid-career, senior) as well as students beginning their experiences in higher education. Edited, single-authored, and co-authored texts all contribute to new discussions around what is possible in higher education when students, academics, and administrators push their capacity to create possibilities grounded in the ethical and political. This series offers a variety of provocations to rethink teaching, research, policies, and procedures in higher education and working towards local and global change and engagement.

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Editors

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Foreword

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) invites higher education teachers to inquire about their impact, their teaching methods, their students' experiences of our teaching, and invites a robust, healthy, and respectful debate about what constitutes 'evidence' in these inquiries. Post-COVID the most critical investment of universities will be in SoTL as we all grapple with the place and power of distance learning, how to use the new ideas to engage student-to-student learning, how to gradually release the teacher's responsibility, and teach students the skills of becoming their own teachers (e.g. the importance of self-regulation, working with others, knowing how to value the multiple claims about evidence, flexible learning schedules).

We have a simple choice—use the COVID disruptions to higher education as an opportunity to Bring Back Better, or rush back to the old normal. The evidence from many similar disruptions (earthquakes, hurricanes, strikes, wars) is that we love to rush back to the old normal—it is safe, we know it, the old hierarchies are more protected, and it is comforting (but for whom?). The claim is that there is nothing wrong with the old normal, as many students experienced success under this model. But too many do not.

So much is known about the grammar of teaching under the old normal of tertiary teaching that has evolved over the past 150 years. Classrooms are dominated by instructors talking, asking questions requiring limited responses, facts and content aplenty, students sitting in groups working alone, lessons dominated by the act of 'doing' the work, and students believing that success is knowing lots and repeating back in assignments what content they heard. Indeed, students above average prefer instructors to talk more, desire teachers to ask more questions about the facts—as that is the game in which they are winners. Keep to the facts, please. To protect this old normal, there are many more non-academics who run the universities, valuing assets of buildings and computer fibre, see academics as potential problems, and students (especially international students) as walking wallets (Connell, 2021). There are massive imperatives to continue this old normal. This book opens the door to alternatives and digs deep into many of the issues that COVID has escalated, amplified, and exposed. It asks about reimagining research and teaching collaborations.

One of the major benefits of higher education is students interacting with their peers, and so much learning occurs outside the tertiary classroom. Employers are now asking for graduates who can collaborate, translate, work in teams, and have high social skills and empathy (standing in others' shoes), as well as showing caring, listening, and respect. This can be hard in Zoom sessions, as students and teachers cannot "easily look around the room for expressions and gestures typically assist us in negotiating conversation, speaking outcomes with the risk of talking over another speaker" ("Designing Education for Wellbeing and Connection in a COVID Impacted World" chapter). Like browsing in a book shop or library, it is that which you were not looking for that can excite, move you in new directions, and disrupt your equilibrium. This is the power of working in teams. This will demand different modes of teaching and learning. As Waller and Prosser ("The Rapidly Changing Teaching and Research Landscape: The Future of SoTL and the Teaching-Research Nexus" chapter) note, it is indeed the time for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning to skyrocket in importance. We need SoTL about current teaching methods (lectures, tutorials, laboratories) that includes more focus on developing student collective efficacy, teaching the skills and confidence of working in groups, understanding the optimal teaching moments to engage students in teamwork, understanding how to assess the individual, group, and individual's contribution to assessment/assignment tasks ("Reconceptualising Assessment in Initial Teacher Education from a Relational Lens" chapter).

Technology during COVID became more commonplace, but it is more than different ways to interact with each other, using different teaching methods, and noting the efficiencies of technology (not just eliminating commute and parking, but many could do the learning in a fraction of the time it takes sitting through lectures in person). The disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have led to quite a profound questioning of the nature of higher education teaching and learning. The questions raised throughout this book are not likely to be easily answered, and only a massive investment and an upsurge in SoTL are likely to lead to advances. For example, COVID amplified what we have always known but often relegated to the sidelines—the power of the social-emotional in learning. We have long known a sense of belonging is critical to success at university, and it can be difficult to engender this sense 'from a distance'. Colla et al. ("Designing Education for Wellbeing and Connection in a COVID Impacted World" chapter) invite us to reimagine how well-being and connection are experienced and note that if online experiences are not structured and seen as worthwhile to engage in learning, then online students may end up feeling unknown, unseen, and unvalued.

Kleive et al. ("The Teaching Profession: Where to From Here?" chapter) noted that during the COVID-19 crisis in Victoria, teachers were positioned as essential workers in the media and by government. Teachers were seen to play a critical role in minimising the impacts of the health and economic crisis. But education research was stopped by government as they encountered new conundrums, problems, ideas, and where many of those most in need of understanding were relegated even more to the sidelines (e.g. students with disabilities, English as an additional language,

and vocational education and training (VET) experiences). They ask whether post-COVID, will these students remain at the margins, or will we learn from teaching them that every student needs a learning progression plan, needs to be listened to, and needs the most appropriate challenging next tasks based on their prior learnings. That we all need acknowledgement of the culture and backgrounds we bring to classes, and these can be rich, sustaining, entail funds of knowledge, and value to others.

Universities do not stand alone from their societies. Australian universities have for some time seen themselves separate 'businesses' and the government's response during the pandemic should be a wake-up call. Croucher ("Government Responses to the Pandemic and Their Effects on Universities" chapter) outlines the response, and Uzhegova and Arkoudis ("Refocusing the Narrative on the International Higher Education Policy" chapter) ask for a refocusing of the current narrative. The costs of higher education are among the most accelerating of all consumer investments, and Watterson and Yong ("Global Distribution of Students in Higher Education" chapter) ask whether new collaboration models across universities might "stimulate intense global competition among higher education institutions as costs are potentially reduced and high-quality education becomes accessible to more students". As more Ph.Ds. are graduated, then the over-supply of academics is such that their salaries will unlikely match these exponential increases in student fees. The 'super teaching academics' will become most sought after although researchers with the largest grants will still be seen as the heroes to other aspiring academics. Something will give. Watterson and Yong ("Global Distribution of Students in Higher Education" chapter) consider that the global campus will be the new norm. A global campus with rich experiential and humanistic programmes, student gatherings, and faculty members with global mindsets brings together diverse communities that can effectively work and learn together. They do note, however, that competition between universities is unavoidable, but then so too is collaboration unavoidable. Now there is a collision worth watching.

Arndt et al. ("Speculating on Higher Education in 2041—Earthworms and Liminalities" chapter) provide a surreal example of what a student might experience in the future. There are already moves to warehouse large data sets (making meta-analysis redundant), using technologies to automatically analyse and interpret data (we are close to a breakthrough on automatically analysing classroom observations which will open a new world in how we teach and how students learn, and a myriad of new ethical issues), we can compose articles in major teams around the world (now), use analytics to personally tailor articles, and for many decades we have more conversations with colleagues overseas than down the corridor. At a minimum, the large capital investment (buildings, lecture rooms, laboratories) will be questioned (there go many central high-paying jobs), but I hope that students will still mix, wander, browse, and enjoy the vibrancy of being students together. It is the learning of learning, researching, and critiquing together that is the essence of the university experience that will remain a focus and a highlight for most students.

This is a book that will raise many questions and prompt us to move forward and not back to the old normal. The future will be based on our exploration of these ideas, our critique of the old normal, and the imagining and delivery of the better. If we do not imagine and build back better, then it is most likely that our students will—and this is an exciting possibility.

Melbourne, Australia Laureate Professor John Hattie

Preface

In this book, the educational turn refers to placing Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) at the heart of the shift to reimagine the changing contexts and landscape of higher education. It places SoTL at the centre of informing theories and practices in changing and evolving contexts. As the world locked down due to the spread of COVID-19, the World Health Organization declared a pandemic on the 11 March 2020, the beginning of the global pandemic just as we were commencing the teaching year at the University of Melbourne. Australia's stay-at-home measures began in March and in Victoria were due to expire later that May 2020. However, we began a longer, second lockdown in Melbourne, Victoria, that was 112 days (about three and a half months) in length. It was amidst this extended period of remote teaching and research during a health crisis that the educational turn emerged with our speculative inquiry project at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. The lockdown in Melbourne continued, off and on, for two years. This context is important and necessary to locate. The editors' and authors' lived experience is found within what they taught; how they were teaching and researching; and what new methodologies and theories emerged because of new partnerships, relationships, and collaborations co-designed within SoTL in action.

The co-designed and co-created project began early in the pivot in 2020, as Sophie, Kate, and Bella saw many of their colleagues disconnected from their communities of practice while working from home. They appeared exhausted as they redesigned and created new learning experiences in digital spaces at a fast pace, while lacking the funds and funding opportunities during the initial stages of the pandemic. Sophie (then Associate Dean, Research at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education), Bella (Manager, Research and Industry), and Kate (then Senior Lecturer), who has experience developing and designing co-design and co-creation research, developed the project to explore this moment in time that none of us as teachers had known before. This was a time as researchers where many of us had to rethink what research we did, how to do educational research, and what the possibilities for researching the current to understand the future might be. We knew that COVID-19, or the pandemic as we refer to in this book, was disrupting the status quo in education. The think tanks were underpinned by a co-design speculative methodology to reimagine educational

opportunities in and for these precarious times. To do so, we invited our colleagues to come together to provoke new ways of thinking and imagining futures through SoTL and the teaching-research nexus. Our project hoped to collectively explore the shifts and turns in practice and pedagogies within different educational contexts to create novel resources for new practices during the pandemic. We did not know it would continue into another year and then another. But, due to Australia's early and sharp lockdown in 2020, the impact on this institution has allowed us a particular viewpoint on education as we finalised this edited volume as we began the new school year in 2022. This viewpoint from Melbourne was different from the rest of the Global South, and quite different to the experience of the Global North as we began the school year in 2020, quickly shifting the teaching sites from practice-based face-to-face pedagogies in purpose-built teaching spaces to placemaking in a new Learning Management Systems (LMS) in Canvas™ in a matter of days. And then, remaining online or doing blended synchronous learning for two university calendar years.

Sophie, Kate, and Bella designed the speculative SoTL think tank series to connect colleagues, facilitate the design of a global professional learning community, and co-create a digital community while we worked long hours at home away from the university. To do this, we sought to engage with SoTL to help to redefine new ways of knowing about learning for what we initially thought would be the post-pandemic world. We saw a need across our faculty to provide additional perspectives and entry points for educators and educational researchers to collaborate and rethink, but also render it increasingly important for education to collectively wonder, where to next? We quickly learned that these were not new practices and pedagogies, but 'next' practices, pedagogies, and policies learned about through the lived experiences of our colleagues in conversation. The design and conceptual framing of the project was developed to support risk-taking, play, and creative ideation through curiosity and speculative 'what if' practices performed in interdisciplinary teams. This, in turn, relied on contributions of all members of the community who we hoped would work together towards a common learning goal with a view to improving student learning outcomes. Through an iterative speculative inquiry with academics at the precipice of change working as collaborators and partners, the project not only explored but has successfully reimagined the impact on education across sectors, witnessed as we speculated on the educational turn, and located in the implications for education practices, pedagogies, and policies co-created from within this two-year project.

During the years of the project, changes in the sector continued to rise as questions were raised about the purpose of the university for preparing graduates and the role of the university in society. We had begun 2020 in Melbourne as layers of smoke rested on the roads as the reality of the climate crisis and global warming was felt close to home. It was a significant year as we were impacted by the realities of racism and violence as we witnessed 'Black Lives Matter' given the necessary prominence after the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breanna Taylor, and others in the USA. These injustices-initiated protests across Australia in May 2020 as racism, discrimination, and inequity highlighted the similarly tragic realities of our First Nations People in the judicial system and horrific deaths in custody. We felt a socially

just shift within the educational turn, as protests and activist movements contributed to our experiences of the pandemic. During these massive shifts, social unrest, and DIY activism, we began to see that the discourse, creative works, and reflective writing developed within our project could contribute to a broader conversation from our unique position in Melbourne. We could see that collectively we could contribute to a broader discussion about the changing needs of teaching and learning, emerging and wicked problems, facilitation and mentoring of synchronous and asynchronous learning, as well as teaching in higher education as we experienced this time of crisis.

Working with the constraints of what Rittle and Webber (1973) located as 'wicked problems', we set about collecting and collecting these unbound and untamed dilemmas (See Chapter 14) that were emerging in our remote emergency teaching and learning ecosystem. As Rittle and Webber (1973) troubled in 'Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning', wicked problems:

1. cannot be clearly defined;
2. are problematic as they present fuzzy and might lack coherence;
3. are non-binary;
4. are speculative;
5. are testbeds for speculation;
6. are interrelated and entangled;
7. have potential solutions ripple across discipline boundaries;
8. take time to evaluate potential solutions;
9. are never 'solved'; and
10. are multiplicitous.

The idea for the collection of chapters presented in this book, to further our collaborative work and trouble these wicked problems emerging across our work, was empowered by colleague and series editor, Assoc. Prof. Jeanne Marie Iorio who prompted us to develop the speculative practices and wicked problems emerging from the project and identify next practices for higher education. From our perspective, the educational turn was a shift to a relational paradigm of practice as we traversed the ecological possibilities of learning and leading collaboration in turbulent times into a collection of chapters for others. For us, the educational turn represented a way of thinking about the direction and framing of possibilities when the familiar had been replaced with uncertainty, disruption, and possibilities of next practices. Sophie, Kate, and Bella welcomed Dina to the team in early 2021 to support the next stage of the project and develop the writing teams and chapter development to contribute to a broader understanding of the implications of the 'educational turn' and to trouble what the rethinking of educational practice post-pandemic might mean for education as a book in the Rethinking Higher Education series.

This book developed into four thematic parts that extended theoretical and practical aspects of the educational turn across multiple contexts as SoTL and curated into four broad themes:

1. Educational Practices;
2. Educational Pedagogies;

3. Educational Policies; and
4. Educational Possibilities.

For the editors, the educational turn has reified the need for interdisciplinary SoTL to emerge as a relational, theoretical, and methodological form of inquiry. In other words, SoTL can be reimagined *as* research that can be applied across disciplinary contexts and strengthen the teaching-research nexus. Within the educational turn, SoTL is relational, for it reaches and weaves across and through disciplines, methods, and perspectives rather than being siloed in one discipline or methodology.

The Educational Turn: Rethinking the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education captures the experiences of scholars and educators teaching and researching during the first two years of the pandemic in Melbourne during a lockdown. It is a not 'how to do SoTL' book rather a possibility thinking provocation for how to do speculative SoTL in higher education. It is a snapshot of a moment in time—providing feedback loops through SoTL in action that fed this professional learning community at the University of Melbourne and will provide something to consider as other educational communities explore this time. It offers a unique contribution to SoTL, exploring how educational researchers working at the edges of innovations in languages and literacies, leadership, assessment, social and cultural transformation, and pedagogies rethink the educational turn in new sites as interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological sites. This edited collection will benefit the field of higher education, not only by improving communication and understanding across disciplines outside of education seen to sit outside of SoTL, but also because it reimagines SoTL as an emergent speculative next practice for researchers in the academy seeking to make an impact across higher education and make new contributions to knowledge about teaching and learning beyond evaluation.

Melbourne, Australia

Kathryn Coleman
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We are incredibly grateful to The Melbourne Education Research Institute (MERI) and Veronica Loew and Lachie Dunn for the support and leadership as they supported the project in 2020 and brought us together to design and develop the project into this book. They helped us to establish a sustainable model of practice for enabling complex issues and wicked problems to be discussed, problematised, and troubled together and to learn from and with each other through research.

The editors would like to thank Data Scientists, Amanda Belton, Dr. Kristal Spreadborough, and Kenna MacTavish from MDAP (Melbourne Data Analytics Platform) whose creative ideation provided new ways of thinking and working with data co-created in each speculative workshop. They supported us as we facilitated the digital think tanks to be highly interactive creative spaces to share views and ideas for pandemic teaching, learning and assessment via data visualisation, real-time data, big data, design artefacts, and curated digital ethnography collections.

We thank the Melbourne Graduate School of Education and Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education for their support to facilitate this speculative SoTL project, to generate ideas for the future of education, and to further these new ways of practising. We especially thank the series editors, Assoc. Prof. Jeanne Marie Iorio and Prof. Clinton S. Tanabe, our generative reviewers, and team at Springer for their support to see this book disseminated within the international scholarly community across education sectors and for teachers.

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Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

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Dina Uzhegova is an early career researcher at the Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education. She completed her Ph.D. in 2019 investigating factors influencing internationalisation in Russian regional universities in Siberia and the Far East. With her research interests focusing on different aspects of the student experience, she is a member of the Student Experience in Higher Education and International Higher Education research groups at the Centre. In 2019, she was a part of a University of Melbourne research team working on a national project, Pathways to Success in International Education, and assisted in writing a report for the Australian Government Department of Education presenting the project findings and providing a list of recommendations on institutional supports and services that effectively contribute to the success of international students in Australian tertiary institutions.

Bella Blaher, Ph.D., is the manager, Research and Industry at the Melbourne Education Research Institute in the Melbourne Graduate. First with Monash University and currently with the University of Melbourne, she has been immersed in the university environment, in research and then administration for over 25 years. Working in various departments, she has coordinated efforts in achieving relevant research goals and outcomes that are in alignment with the funding bodies around the world. She was the project manager for a multimillion dollar interdisciplinary project involving universities from around the world. She has been involved in the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) since 2015 and was elected as the

NCURA chair of Region VIII in 2019. In 2018, she was awarded the Conference Delegate's Prize for her poster at the Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) conference in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Sophie Arkoudis is a professor in Higher Education and the director of the Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education. She was the associate dean (Research) in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education from 2020 to 2021. She is a national and international researcher in higher education. Her research programme spans English language teaching and assessment in higher education, student employability, quality of teaching and learning, academic workforce, and internationalising the curriculum. She has led major national studies in recent years, including projects commissioned by Australian Education International, Federal Government, and Universities Australia. She has published widely in the area of English language education. She has presented keynotes both nationally and internationally on her research into language and disciplinary teaching, English language standards, international students in higher education, and English language development.

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Chapter 1
The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in a Pandemic

Kathryn Coleman

Abstract This chapter introduces the underpinning of the speculative think tank and this edited collection that emerged from within a faculty-wide pandemic project at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education in 2020/21. It proposes how through a relational and speculative turn to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) to create community and new opportunities for doing educational research while at home, a (re)turn to SoTL as an emergent next practice created possibilities for new thinking, knowing and being emerged. The chapter considers how new connections among colleagues teaching and researching across education that had not previously worked together offered new ways possibilities for new thinking, knowing and being an academic. Our school wide project sought to capture the paradigmatic shift the editors refer to as, the educational turn and was designed and developed to create space to reimagine the futures of education. This was strengthened by collaborative dialogues, innovation, and agility. This chapter poses how and why we developed the innovative think tank project while in lockdown, that captured the educational turn.

Keywords Pandemic · Wicked problems · Higher education · SoTL · Practice · Pedagogy · Policy · Speculative

1.1 Setting the Scene

Melbourne (in the state of Victoria), Australia had six lockdowns (seven if you count the worldwide shutdown in March 2020) and more than 250+ days under restrictions during the early stage COVID-19 pandemic. Many called us the world's most locked-down city, and the last two years were like no other in higher education. For the university sector here in Victoria, the impact of remote work was felt in diverse ways, with different effects' dependent on the roles and responsibilities held (Croucher & Locke, 2020). Many faculty felt the desire of students to connect and

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collaborate in ways to sustain and enrich them within what is a traditional face-to-face university (Lederman, 2020). Many students lacked social connectedness and learnt through lurking (Mabrito, 2011) in Zoom, hiding their visibility by turning videos off and muting audio, and hanging on until the call was ended.

The extent of the educational turn differed globally across different higher education contexts as faculty and administrators worked hard to develop new practices, new pedagogies, and shift policies to meet the changing demands of pandemic cohorts. It was evident that a shift was occurring, and it was winding its way through digital connections and Zoom boxes as we faced more days at home as the pandemic became more of a disruptor to the academy. While some students and faculty thrived, many just survived as they juggled family and home or loneliness and isolation (Phillips et al., 2021). Students and faculty had to learn how to learn and teach online while at home, some without the literacies and accessibilities needed (see *Designing Education for Well-being and Connection in a COVID Impacted World* chapter), and many while they juggled multiple demands. Some graduate students in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education for two years had little social contact outside of Zoom classes and learning management systems (LMS) discussion forums. Faculty were impacted by stress, exhaustion, and burnout (Phillips & Cain, 2020) as their professional lives and teaching and learning practices shifted, often intertwining, and entangling with needed care for colleagues, students, and family. The "major concern and challenge for teachers was to ensure that students were actually "learning," despite the pedagogical shift to the online circumstances" (Phillips et al., 2021, p. 6).

One of the biggest challenges outside of remote home-based work was the impact on staffing across Australian higher education. As the effect of the financial crisis hit, created by continued reductions in Federal Government education financial packages, closed international and state borders, and few international students in the country (see Chap. 10), we began reeling from rolling redundancies and early retirements (Thatcher et al., 2020). The impact is still reverberating across Australia with the National Tertiary Education Union proposing that more than 35,000 jobs were lost during the initial stages of the pandemic in 2020–21 (MacGregor, 2021). The need to imagine, re-imagine, rethink, and speculate on different futures about higher education as Bass (2020) posited "as if our human future depended on it" (p. 28) was being activated daily.

To create the conditions for knowing, doing, and being differently, while working remotely at home, this book is just one by-product created within a two-year speculative scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) project at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne. Our project sought to capture the paradigmatic shift the editors refer to as, *the educational turn.* The project was designed and developed to create space to reimagine the futures of education, strengthened by collaborative dialogues, innovation, and agility to conceive innovative approaches to inform policy and practice in the "new COVID-normal" world of education. This emerged out of the team's desire to create opportunities for faculty to co-design their speculative futures for the academy while supporting their professional, personal, and organizational growth and transformation during a health and

economic crisis. It also emerged from a need for academics to connect with each other, while they adapted to the new realities of working remotely from home.

While remote home-based work continued, several wicked questions in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education emerged:

- What might we reimagine if given the chance?
- Could we be of service more broadly beyond our Zoom classes to create space for discourse about humanity, equity, and change in education?
- Could we disrupt the present state of higher education by sharing the stories, actions, and research of students, faculty, and administrators in higher education?
- How could a turn to the scholarship of teaching and learning support this work?

The "turn" refers to the gradual transformation and reimagining of the scientific domains of knowledge in education. The educational turn created space for discomfort, but also for important conversations that revealed serious asymmetries of power and privilege that have permeated all aspects of higher education. The social sciences' turn to practice assumes that "the meaning of a concept is to be understood through its use" (Collins, 2001, p. 107) and can be understood as an epistemic rupture. The educational turn and its affect felt during the remote emergency pivot online have allowed for a shift in the SoTL imaginary. The turn shone light on knowledge in the academy and was a catalyst for looking inward, outward, and backward while speculating on new futures collaboratively *as* SoTL.

In 2020, Bass posited some of the challenges facing higher education teaching and learning globally. He stated that:

> We must deepen our knowledge, integrate our perspectives, and apply and reflect on our findings in ways that do not just deepen our tools, methods and principles of good practice but also restlessly and authentically open up the questions of learning and higher education as if our human future depended on it. However daunting and intractable the problem of education was before this century; it is far more wicked now. We should respond accordingly. (p. 28)

The problems that Bass posed for higher education were complex and difficult. The editors were also aware that many of the problems in Australian higher education before the pandemic had largely been ill-defined and under theorized (Krause, 2012). Through our speculative think tank seminars and discussions with colleagues we sought to define the problems that we were facing in our context. For us the educational turn allowed opportunities to reconceive, rethink, and reimagine a relational higher education in order to address some of the wicked problems that we needed to respond to.

1.2 The Educational Turn

The educational turn in the title of the book refers to placing SoTL at the heart of our research to reimagine the emerging wicked problems found within educational

practices in a pandemic. As described by Prosser and Waller (The Rapidly Changing Teaching and Research Landscape: The Future of SoTL and the Teaching-Research Nexus), "SoTL is a research-informed, evidence-based, critical yet collegial reflection on teaching and learning practice with the aim of improving practice within the aligned disciplines and professions." The editors imagine the educational turn as a new educational paradigm through different modes of educational forms and structures, alternative pedagogies, and methodologies and programs that developed as shifts in teaching, learning, and assessment practices.

This shift in thinking caused by the catalyst for change that was coming (foreseen as needed) has not only seen practice and power shift but epistemic challenges play out (that acknowledge the experience of all students and staff, not just a few who have access). These include the financial challenges due to decreasing international students in Australian universities (Refocussing the Narrative on the International Higher Education Policy), increasing competition from alternative tertiary providers, the role of digital sites and educational technologies in education (*Traversing Learning and Leading Collaborations: Stepping Toward New Power Values During Turbulent and In-between Times* chapter), issues of academic integrity, and the changing nature of academic work (*The Teaching Profession: Where to From Here?* chapter). Our educational turn places SoTL at the center of informing theory and practice in changing and evolving contexts, and speculating how a (re)turn to SoTL can be a site of activism and agent of change. In higher education, the educational turn is not a new concept. Many theorists (Kaiser, 2012; Luke, 1995; Mason, 2005; Plotkin Amrami, 2021) have troubled educational paradigm shifts and turns over the last twenty or so years. Exploring the effects of the shifting knowledge economy (Marginson, 2010), increasing demands on innovations, educational technologies, industry partnerships, graduate employability, and government intervention to produce more human capital (Valero & Van Reenen, 2019). As Larrosa (2010) noted a decade before the pandemic, "[w]hat we have is an attempt to make the logics of the internal performance of the university strictly function in accord with the economic logics of capital and the governmental logics of the state" (p. 693).

Through a co-designed, speculative SoTL project, we (re)turned to SoTL as an emergent *next* practice for researchers in the academy seeking to make an impact across higher education. We sought to make new contributions to knowledge about teaching and learning that moved beyond single classrooms and broadened to explore SoTL futures. We were able to do this because SoTL is relational; it reaches and weaves across and through disciplines, methods, and perspectives rather than being siloed in one discipline or methodology. This project achieved this through the design of opportunities to trouble and consider speculating *on* education futures, not as narratives but as thought experiments; provoking, and constructing conversations and inquiry (Huber & Morreale, 2002) on ideas. All while crafting new concepts that were expressed in new collaborations to trouble wicked problems. In this volume, we have scholars of teaching and learning who:

> …are prepared to confront the ethical as well as the intellectual and pedagogical challenges of their work. They are not prepared to be drive-by educators. They insist on stopping at the scene to see what more they can do. (Shulman, 2002, p. viii)

In discussing the educational turn, the focus became SoTL in action through the frames of educational practice, pedagogy, policy, and possibilities. What we encountered during the pandemic is a change of direction within SoTL, and this has important consequences for higher education research. We developed new ways of working together as collaborative educators as we collectively considered the ecologies of higher education within the turn. As one of the book's reviewers noted, "typically a turn is cultural or linguistic and indicates a shift overtime". Drawing on research, research communities, collaborations, and partnerships at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education we collectively imagine the impact on higher education and implications for educational practices, pedagogies, policies, and possibilities found within the pandemic as a relational turn.

1.3 Wicked Times

Our knowledge of what was and is still to come in higher education is unknown in this pandemic. It is incomplete and often contradictory as the changing needs of quality teaching and learning, facilitation and mentoring of synchronous and asynchronous learning, as well as teaching at home, in hybrid mode continues to change. The large economic burden of the pandemic has impacted differently within the education ecology as the effects of the budgetary impact of border closures, ruptures to research funding and closure of research sites continues to be felt. The interconnected nature of these wicked problems with other problems that had long since been avoided or neglected has been reified in and across higher education. For these reasons, this project did not seek to "solve" the emerging wicked problems, rather, to intervene in the problems by taking an iterative, creative response that utilized a speculative SoTL inquiry process. This was done to consider the steps needed to address the educational turn and consider *what next* as a professional learning community of practice.

Working within a SoTL inquiry the editorial team created the conditions for faculty to learn with and from each other, in each of their various locations, as they speculated on futures in education through the sharing of stories and scholarship. This iterative process provided a space for reflecting on teaching and leadership practices, pedagogies, policies, and possibilities. Speculative inquiry addresses challenges and opportunities through the co-design of products, services, and scenarios of and for known and yet to be known futures. In a changing environment where it became clear that there would be no return to "normal" post-pandemic practices, the educational turn involved reimagining how we might do better.

The scholars of teaching and learning in this book are working at the edges of innovations in languages and literacies, leadership, assessment, social and cultural transformation, and pedagogies to rethink the educational turn in new sites. As a collaborative, we speculate on educational futures through practice and theory as method within the field of education, within the context of higher education. This

context is important and necessary to locate. The editors and authors lived experience is found within what they taught, how they were teaching and researching, and what new methodologies and theories emerged because of new partnerships, relationships, and collaborations co-designed within the SoTL in action faculty-wide project. This volume is a snapshot of a moment in time-providing feedback loops through SoTL that fed the professional learning community and provide something to consider as other educational communities explore this wicked time. To do this the editors have framed, captured, and curated the experience of scholars and educators teaching and researching during the pandemic to provide a framework for faculty to make connections between their own experiences and ours, and to develop their own transformation as they rethink higher education in the post-pandemic recovery.

As a collective, these chapters demonstrate that new ways of knowing can be created through inspirational, infectious, reflective practice as we make room for collaboration. The chapters surface next practices and critical discourse that has developed through new collaborations found within the precarity of the lockdown, emerging wicked problems, and educational turn. As Tsing (2015) proposed,

> precarity is the condition of being vulnerable to others. Unpredictable encounters transform us; we are not in control, even of ourselves. Unable to rely on a stable structure of community, we are thrown into shifting assemblages, which remake us as well as our others. (p. 20)

To support, capture and further the lived experience of these encounters this volume theorizes the educational turn through emergent next practices, pedagogies, policies, and possibilities.

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Chapter 2
Trends and Implications for the Educational Turn

Kathryn Coleman

Abstract The speculative idea that created this edited volume was a figuring exercise to build on connections, create new opportunities and generate new Scholarship of Learning and Teaching imaginaries for the future during the initial stages of the global pandemic. The project began by inviting interested colleagues at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education to participate in a think tank series as a thought experiment. Underpinned by a co-design process to reimagine educational opportunities in and for these precarious times through iterative ideation and prototyping to create connection and collaboration through co-creation. A speculative inquiry approach was chosen to direct the project because it is a relational and emergent "figuring" practice that builds from the shared propositions and ideas that seek to provoke and spark wonderings, concepts, and ideas that will be followed in each collaborative session that follows. This chapter will discuss how the research collaborations were fostered to result in the chapters presented and conclude with implications for the *educational turn.* The educational turn represents a shift of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning from the peripheries of higher education to legitimate scholarly work within the academy that can inform and strengthen evidence-based approaches for impact on student learning in the future.

Keywords SoTL · Teaching · Learning · Research · Scholarship · Speculative inquiry

2.1 Introduction

We now know that the pandemic disrupted the status quo in education (OECD, 2021), society (Lupton, 2021) and educational research (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021) in Australia. Many of us are still feeling the resonations of international and state border closures that limited access to new student cohorts and necessary funding; an increasing casualized workforce and institutional professional and academic divide

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ruptures; and sector wide financial devastation. During the pivot to remote teaching and learning and working and researching from home educators and educational researchers had a multitude of demands placed on them. For some, these demands initiated an opportunity to innovate and create new ways of practicing as teachers and researchers. For others, it widened gaping disparities and inequities in and across faculties and institutions, communities, and societies.

Before the pandemic, the university sector had been shifting. Many in the academy were doing the hard work to decolonize curriculum, rupture structures, and turn toward a relational production of knowing and knowledge. There were questions about the purpose and role of higher education in our communities as teaching, learning, assessment, and graduate preparedness continued to change. "In an age of supercomplexity, a new epistemology for the university awaits—one that is open, bold, engaging, accessible, and conscious of its own insecurity. It is an epistemology for living amid uncertainty" (Barnett, 2000, p. 420). Barnett twenty years ago was in a different time and space, but this reference to bold change demonstrates that this is slow work, as our ways of knowing and being evolve and respond to policy. As Freire and Ramos (1970) argued last century, "knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (p. 72).

During the initial stages of the global pandemic, the pandemic turned our focus sharply toward a care for students and their well-being in more diverse ways. Our relational encounters (Crownover & Jones, 2018) between physical and digital spaces, and for some post-digital sites (Knox, 2019) changed how we taught and thought about teaching. With financial difficulties, access and equity issues, and political agendas playing out in and around the university sector, the catalyst for the educational turn in higher education was not the pandemic on its own, but several increasing demands that contributed over many years. Educators reached the tipping point in lockdown.

2.2 A Speculative Project in Action

In the early days of the pandemic, the editorial team felt a need to archive and capture what was occurring in the learning, teaching, and scholarly work at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. Not long after the University of Melbourne closed its physical doors early in Semester 1, 2020, and opened new digital doors that allowed the pivot from face-to-face into remote emergency teaching, learning, and assessment; the imperative was clear. We began by asking, *what might the futures of education look like?*

This seeded an ongoing co-design project that the editorial team facilitated during 2020–2021. We drew on the conceptual resources of practice theory as informed by the work of Lave (1996) and Wenger (1998), and further developed these within speculative inquiry (Dunne & Raby, 2014) and co-design (Sanders & Stappers, 2008).

The initial project involved a series of think tank workshops to facilitate new connections and discourse while we worked at home. What emerged was foretold by Barnett and Hallam (1999) pre-pandemic:

> … higher education is faced with the challenges of preparing graduates not just to cope with this world but to prosper in it and to go on adding to its supercomplex character. This will require considerable thought and collective effort if our pedagogical processes are to be adequate to the task. (p. 140)

Initially designed for early- and mid-career academics interested in researching curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment practices through a rapidly growing field of research known internationally as the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). The aim was to collectively engage in scholarly collaboration to reimagine what the futures of education *might be.* Provoked by Bass (2020), the inquiry was furthered by this question: "What could it mean to turn the current crises and challenges of higher education into a set of problems to be investigated? And if we did, what kind of a problem should we consider it to be?" (n.p.).

With a commitment to co-design, we focused on process and outcomes over outputs to figure out pre-pandemic pedagogical problems as a collaborative, while providing space for ideas to emerge as the crisis unfolded. The speculative design was underpinned by a desire to explore supercomplexity (Barnett, 2000), through the shifts and turns in practice, pedagogy, and policy within different educational contexts and to create novel resources for publication *as* SoTL. The invitation to participate in the project in 2020 began: *Early- and mid-career academics willing to be creative, explore new ideas, are comfortable with unconventional approaches, collaboration and seek a broader perspective on the scholarship of teaching and learning in the graduate school are invited to participate.*

Stage 1: Creating a library of wicked problems, issues, and questions at MGSE

Dear Colleagues,

This current COVID-19 must be the most intrusive natural experiment we have experienced. As academic researchers, we have a major role to play at this time, and we know we all have many tasks in front of us in our on-going research programs, and there has been a sudden upsurge in teaching particularly moving to online, but it would be a missed opportunity to not think about the research and public service/engagement role we can play at this time.

Jim, Sophie, and John invite you to participate in various activities relating to these times. The first stage will involve completing this short survey to collate your ideas for studies, for research, for exciting and wicked questions that these COVID-19 times invite.

Let's create a compendium of wicked problems to start our MGSE discussion about how we can be involved to help work through this crisis. At this stage, we do not want answers, but to build a library of issues and questions. This stage is open until April, 17, 2020. We will then be contacting collaborators who have shown interest through their participation in this stage.

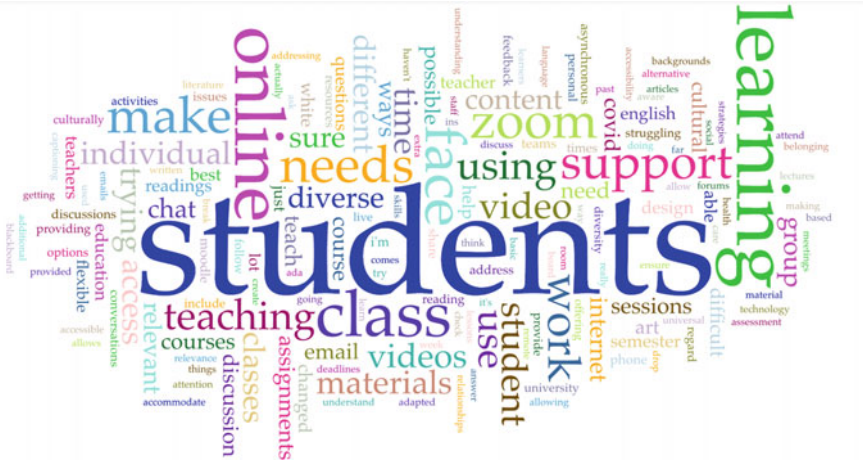

Fig. 2.1 Voyant visualizations were drawing the wicked questions together and highlighting connections through corpus analysis

What are the research questions that need to be asked?

Fifty-seven colleagues across the Melbourne Graduate School of Education responded with a plethora of questions that they felt a need to be explored and archived. The library includes eight broad themes and were visualized for analysis and shared back to participants in an early workshop as Word Cloud visualizations (Fig. 2.1).

To move from this fuzzy stage of the research collaboration we asked more open-ended questions of participants to develop the series:

- What if we imagined and re-imagined together across our roles and responsibilities what our research could look like during the pandemic?
- What might we wonder about together as we developed our questioning from individual to collective further?

A co-design and co-creation method (Sanders & Stappers, 2008) was chosen to generate innovative ideas through active participation and collaboration. This practice of research communicates the "work" being produced as prototypes and emergent ideas that act as feedback loops throughout the process, developing and building connections through active participation in each session (Fig. 2.2). As each new idea or concept emerges, it is developed into a prototype for discussion to lead the next stage.

A co-design and co-creation method of speculative inquiry can often be uncomfortable for participants. There was no designed object or product in mind. However, this early phase is critical to develop the project as a collaboratory that all participants could see themselves practicing within. While we worked at home, this was an important design consideration to support and connect colleagues who may have

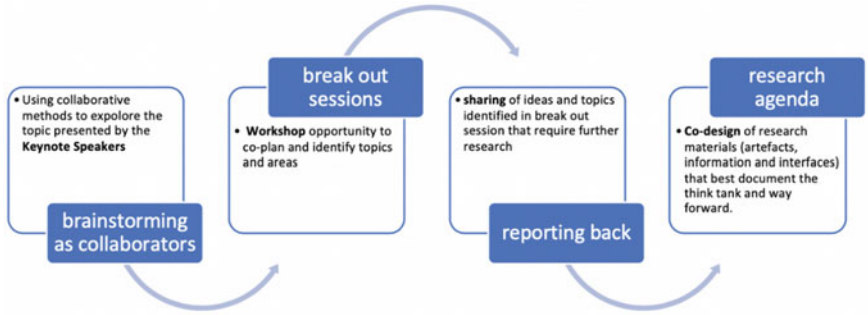

Fig. 2.2 Sketch of an early project design to generate an iterative process of speculation

felt disconnected or may have lost their research sites due to the continued lockdown. We understood knowing in this SoTL project as "an ongoing social accomplishment, constituted and reconstituted in everyday practice" (Orlikowski, 2002, p. 252). Knowledgeability is therefore continually enacted and re-enacted in ongoing actions (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1243) that we facilitated through speculative querying as a professional learning community. In 2020, we did not know what might emerge, and with each discussion, more ideas were refined or rejected that lead to this edited collection. To do this, we asked our colleagues to commit to four key principles:

1. Immerse oneself in the process of connection and trust, and to share power in research, discussion and decision making.
2. Be open to speculative inquiry, curiosity, and creativity through forming new social, cultural, and professional relationships.
3. Active participation to discover, design, collaborate, and refine ideas through as SoTL in action.
4. Adopt new ways of being and doing research in an iterative collaborative process, to learn from others, and build agency as a community of scholars.

2.3 The Power of Collective Collaboration

During what felt like a bleak and worrying time at home, with colleagues quickly re-designing remote emergency learning and teaching while preparing our homes for winter and the precarity of the pandemic, the project began to take shape. Many of our conferences had been canceled, and our usual academic discourse conducted over coffee, conference dinners, and chance meetings in the hallway were missed. The project provided time and dedicated space for new ways to connect. As many academic and administrative staff channeled their energies into teaching; the teaching research nexus became sharpened through the curated wicked questions we had collected.

Dear colleagues,

Thank you to the people who engaged with the survey and contributed their research questions. We have clustered the main questions into the list below, and they provide opportunities for new and existing groups within MGSE to work collaboratively and across disciplinary contexts.

- *Student wellbeing and belonging*
- *Student engagement*
- *Equity and access*
- *Indigenous knowledges*
- *Assessment*
- *Higher education*
- *The academic profession*
- *Local/global communities*
- *Teaching.*

We would like to invite you to participate in the next stage of this collaborative research approach.

Stage 2 involves you providing comments and further suggestions to the questions below by using the add new comment option in the review tab above. We would also invite you to indicate your preference to the cluster of research questions that you would like to be involved in.

This will allow us as a group to further refine the questions that will guide the development of research teams for Stage 3.

Stage 2 will close Tuesday 5 May, 2020.

In Stage 3 we will invite you to participate in research teams to work through the questions and outline what the team plans to achieve. More details on Stage 3 will follow, including ways that MERI staff will be able to support this work and opportunities to highlight the research undertaken via *media, website and possible publications.*

With a commitment to speculative thinking and focusing on future possibilities, we designed creative ways to make connections between the wicked problems and new questions emerging. This method of participatory thinking was developed to connect colleagues to new ideas and give "voice to people who were previously not even a part of the conversations" (Sanders & Stappers, 2008, p. 9).

Stage 2: An invitation to think tank 1 and 2 participants:

As a professional learning community of educators, we have much to contribute to COVID-19-related research. Together we can contribute to new understandings from this time of crisis and great change in our part of the world. Our individual practices and research are already focused on the needs of education today; the rationale behind this project is to co-design how we might bring these sites of research together to pose bigger questions and provoke new ways of thinking as a team of educational

researchers with a shared interest in reimagining educational opportunities during and post-COVID-19.

The process

As potential collaborative authors and co-researchers, having posed and proposed to be a part of the process in phase 1 and 2, we now invite you to consider a collaborative and cooperatively written 300-word abstract (max). This should include keywords, potential audiences for your work with an idea that stems from the sections below, and a reference list that includes work you have previously published in this field/area with other key authors you will cite.

This research is designed as a collaboration with all the authors, online, using methods that each team devise in this Microsoft Teams space or beyond. Each big idea that was collected in phase 1 has been curated into a concept with identified contributors in phase 2.

You will find a folder in Files with each concept, and here we ask you to begin planning what your collaboration might look like. Again, we ask to think big. For instance, what could an MGSE podcast series contribute to discussing the widening gaps of educational disadvantage caused by this health crisis? There is no one direction to take here, but as editors of our project, we can support you as you develop a co-working strategy and potential place to do your work.

We can help you in these initial team meetings, and we are keen to see you develop writing/method processes that suit the team such as sprints, mini-workshops, or co-lab writing sessions. Together your team could think about writing around your proposal for a Pursuit article, op-eds in The Conversation, and AARE EduResearch Matters. You may see a place for co-authored journal articles, book chapters, or even developing a proposal in an edited series.

Proposal

The proposal should include the following:

1. *name(s) and corresponding email for team lead;*
2. *300-word abstract outlining the focus, form, and content of the proposal;*
3. *Proposed audiences, publication, and dissemination;*
4. *4–5 keywords for the proposal;*
5. *Selected references, please include work of your own that contributes to the proposal;*

Timeline

300 word submission Friday 22 May, 2020.

Please ensure you make time between now and the 22 May to meet, discuss, and make a plan for a team approach to your idea. This 300-word submission needs to

be uploaded into the Teams folder. Go to Files and open Phase 3, within that folder each Phase 2 proposed idea has a folder.

The project editorial team will then workshop the ideas and possibilities to provide feedback and potential supports for the research proposals that ask the BIG questions for education - What will the future of education look like? MGSE May, 2020.

Using the questions and revised refinement of ideas into topics and professional learning communities, we developed the following ideas for a series of collaborative writing and discussion points:

1. *Student wellbeing and belonging*
2. *Student engagement*
3. *Equity and access*
4. *Indigenous knowledges*
5. *Assessment*
6. *Higher education*
7. *The academic profession*
8. *Local/global communities*
9. *Teaching.*

As a team, we felt the turn within our ecologies in the responses we were receiving by email and continued active participation in each session. Between the collaborative research workshops, we were collecting and curating our own aspirations for higher education post-pandemic. As an editorial team, we were also building internal networks, while challenging ideas for co-designing and co-researching big ideas together as SoTL. We were facilitating a reciprocitious, self-organizing SoTL professional learning community that was also sustaining us as educators. We know that "well-implemented professional learning communities are a powerful means of seamlessly blending teaching and professional learning in ways that produce complex, intelligent behavior in all teachers" (Sparks, 2005, p. 156). To build this SoTL professional learning community we developed a calendar of one-hour Zoom sessions, designed to be tight, provocative, and generative as we collectively reimagined research collaborations for next practice thinking.

Using a prototyping method, supported by Amanda Belton, Data Scientist from the Melbourne Data Analytics and Platform (MDAP) to visualize the individual and collaborative dialogues, we co-designed each stage by exploring what had come out of the previous session. The next stage was an intervention lead by four sparks:

Think tank 1: What can the futures of education look like?

Keynote 1 (7 min spark): Professor Gregor Kennedy.

Keynote 2 (7 min spark): Professor Chi Baik.

Workshop facilitators: Dr Kathryn Coleman & Dr Bella Blaher.

Think tank 2: The teaching research nexus post-Covid.

Keynote 1 (7 min spark): Associate Professor Mike Prosser.

Keynote 2 (7 min spark): Professor Sophie Arkoudis.

Workshop facilitators: Dr Kathryn Coleman & Dr Bella Blaher.

2.4 Collaborative Research Teams

Following these spark provocations was an invitation to join four collaborative research workshops. The aim was to develop the ideas and connect the sparks as we reimagined and speculated. As lockdown continued through winter and into spring of 2020 in Melbourne, Zoom had become a stable in our digital classrooms, and with ease colleagues began to share more as collaborators. The contribution of the lived experience began to drive the process of connection as the workshops became an important connection point for academics across early, mid and interested later career colleagues to discuss their teaching, student learning and lives during lockdowns as SoTL. We knew that a "professional community amounts to more than just support; it also includes shared values, a common focus on student learning, collaboration in the development of curriculum and instruction, and the purposeful sharing of practice" (Louis, et al, 2010, p. 42). To do this, the editorial team met iteratively to re-design the next stage while considering the needs of colleagues and sharing all co-creation prototypes as outputs generated in the MS Teams' site and Padlet (Fig. 2.3) to ensure that we were responsive and relational.

It was important that we practiced a cultural intelligence and widening inclusion through use of the data we were iteratively creating, collating, and curating to provide professional learning experiences to support the collective creativity of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. As Timperley (2008) suggested pre-pandemic, "findings from many studies suggest that participation in a professional community with one's colleagues is an integral part of professional learning that impacts positively on students" (p. 19). We found that the think tanks provided space to reflect and respond to different demands on our teaching, learning, and assessment and created a connection between us as facilitators to follow the lead set by Barnett (2000), "The university can be reborn" (p. 421).

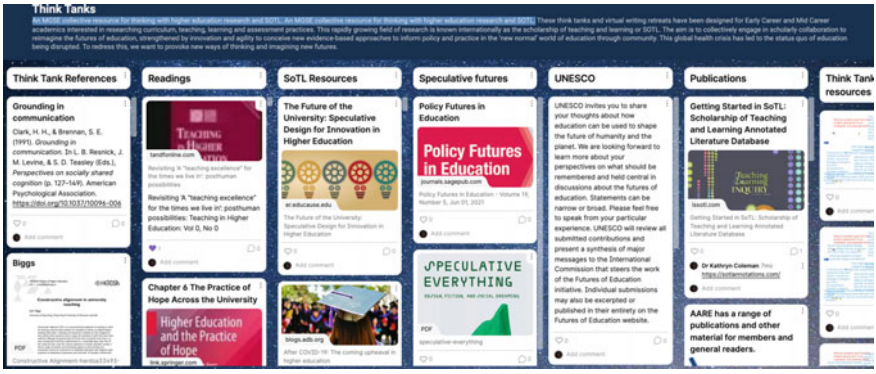

Fig. 2.3 Padlet screenshot developed for the SoTL think tanks

The collaborative research workshops facilitated as Zoom sessions followed each fortnight using the Pomodoro method with each 1-h session divided into 25-min writing chunks. Using individual writing sprints and collaborative discussion and review in Zoom break out rooms, we continued to sharpen the questions we were asking using playful and creative writing methods. The writing sprints were refined and developed into new questions that emerged from each co-design process. Each writing sprint was emailed and collated in the project MS Teams site and Padlet (see Fig. 2.3). We collated and curated photographs from our work from home remote stations. Working with Data creative Kenna McTavish, these were images drawn as single works and created into "Postcards from the Pandemic" (see Fig. 2.4) to capture our collective data in new ways through a postcard sent to the self (past, present, or future) to archive this moment in our careers.

The last meeting of the collaboratory in 2020 was to discuss the potential for a book to further the generative, speculative, and innovative pandemic research collaboration into an edited collection. We discussed timelines for the potential chapters in 2021, voted on the suggested titles, talked about who our intended audiences were and discussed plans for what we thought 2021 might look like. It was decided unanimously that this book would be developed for faculty and administrators, educators, and educational leaders from a variety of contexts and their communities of practice.

Fig. 2.4 Illustrated Home Office[s] is a digital painting developed out of a series of photographs of home office/workspaces colleagues from home set ups. It illustrates the cohesive nature of a home/office, as well as highlighting patterns in the types of objects and domestic spaces that everyone has been working collectively within (Kenna McTavish, 2020)

In 2021 the editorial team and participants met again, facilitating writing workshops and peer feedback in and across the practices, pedagogies, and policies through active professional relationships. As a collaborative process, this volume enabled further collaborations as section authors were invited to read and provide feedback to each other to connect, link and transform the scholarship of teaching and learning across the year as work from home and teaching remotely continued. As Melbourne was in longer lookdowns as the pandemic seemed to worsen each day, the teams worked across the chapters providing feedback, discussing the themes and ideas arising and developed their chapters for publication. As a result, this edited volume captures and curates the turn as it was felt through our project of "speculation-led reflection" (Grocott, 2012, p.11). This collaboration between new colleagues while working apart and at home in uncertain times created an opportunity for a range of disciplinary methods to intertwine, bringing a range of onto-epistemic beliefs and practices that stem from disciplinary cultures they were practicing within into new places and spaces.

To connect our colleagues and transform the collaborations we facilitated, we worked to create the conditions for caring and trusting critical friendships to develop across the collaboratory. MacPhail et al. (2021) found that critical friends have three defining characteristics:

(i) a reciprocal, collaborative relationship,
(ii) a willingness to be challenged, and
(iii) an intrinsically motivated willingness to engage in the relationship. (n.p.)

As critical friends, this equalizer was transformative in its power to provide agency to early-, mid-, and late-career academics who would not normally read, discuss, review, provide feedback or have time and space and listen to each other's scholarship because circumstances of hierarchy would keep them apart. In this 2nd phase of the project in 2021 as the chapters created new connections, we watched and listened to our colleagues develop new and necessary professional and personal friendships. We have heard from colleagues that this was transformational as they were able to engage in invaluable, open, and honest critique in these new professional learning communities.

2.5 Lessons for Next Practice Thinking

Within the educational turn, we have created new ways of knowing, being, and doing that emerged from practice, pedagogy, and policy shifts as colleagues looked to learn from each other. The educational turn represents a shift of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning from the peripheries of higher education to legitimate scholarly work within the academy that can inform and strengthen evidence-based approaches for impact on student learning in the future. The chapters reference an understanding of the implications of the "educational turn" which are timely and will continue to be

of significance through the next waves of the pandemic and include a range of work that have implications for the futures of higher education.

The lessons we have learned make important contributions to collaborative inquiry as SoTL in the future. The central thematic that emerges from the project and through the book renders the educational turn; the shift to a relational paradigm of practice as we traversed the ecological possibilities of learning and leading collaboration in turbulent times. We found that SoTL must be facilitated, supported, co-designed, and co-created to be meaningful, futures oriented and transformative for all involved. We believe that this edited collection provides some clarity around the purpose of SoTL in the academy to support professional learning going forward. However, there is a need to move away from the evaluation of our teaching toward a SoTL methodology of educational research to continue to develop next practices, pedagogies, and policies and we rethink SoTL to strengthen the evidence around impact on student learning. The editorial team facilitated this project as a professional learning community within one faculty; however, we can see opportunities to develop this across the intuition to coordinate interdisciplinary networking and connection to further SoTL. This can be achieved through reconceptualizing and retheorizing SoTL in action *with* academics at the precipice of change as our students are now more globally dispersed and able to study anywhere. We suggest a shift away from the individualistic nature of teaching and learning, toward a breaking down of disciplinary silos to foster and grow communities of inquiry. This will prepare graduates to thrive in a world that is constantly changing. To do this, we will need to create opportunities for faculty connections across disciplines and practices as our campuses expand beyond the local to the global and higher education becomes much more competitive.

2.6 Concluding Thoughts

When we set out in the early fuzzy days of this inquiry, we did not know what might emerge from this co-creation. But this book frames, captures, and curates the lived experience of the scholars and educators who participated during the pandemic in 2020/21 and our productive co-creation. As the UNESCO Futures report (2021) suggests, "extending educational experiences and innovations to new settings through sharing of practices and policies will be crucial" (p. 129) in the future. What we have encountered during the pandemic is a change of direction within SoTL, and this has important consequences for higher education research. Together, we have reimagined SoTL as an emergent next practice for researchers in the academy seeking to make an impact across higher education and make new contributions to knowledge about teaching and learning as a collective. SoTL in action must be facilitated, supported, co-designed, and co-created to be meaningful, future-oriented, and transformative for all involved.

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Part I
Educational Practices (Interlude)

Due to Australia's early and sharp lockdown and Victoria's high case numbers and extended restrictions, the impact of the remote teaching and learning on this institution, largely an on-campus teaching university, allowed us a particular viewpoint on the educational turn and shift in teaching and research practice/s. This viewpoint provided a place to speculate and (re)consider the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) *as* encounters *of* practice. Here in this space of interconnecting practices educators felt the radical impact of the pandemic on all aspects of teaching, learning design, and social–cultural lives. Our distinct position in Victoria, within a Graduate School of Education offered an opportunity to rethink our practice/s as SoTL. The editors refer to this rethinking as the educational turn.

The educational turn forced us to reconsider the ways that educators teach and learn as a community of scholars. In our reimagining of higher education, during the pandemic, educators and educational researchers were faced with questioning what university knowledge is in the age of supercomplexity, who it is for, and what is needed to support it. Next practices reified shifts in ways of doing teaching and research. This critical moment in time needs new evidence from scholars of teaching and learning to consider this moment as a necessary one for SoTL. Teaching and learning are critically important scholarly activities in contemporary universities. This turn provides a collective opportunity to focus on the teaching-research nexus to strengthen our practices.

The educational turn also created the conditions for educators who may not have previously worked together as scholars of teaching and learning to develop new knowledge and skills as practitioners, as they adapted to a continuously changing profession during the pandemic. The collaborative practice of SoTL created the conditions for individual practices to come together as a teaching-research nexus. This collaboration between new colleagues, while working apart and at home in uncertain times, created possibilities for a range of disciplinary methods to intertwine. It brought together a range of epistemological beliefs and practices that stem from disciplinary cultures they were practising within.

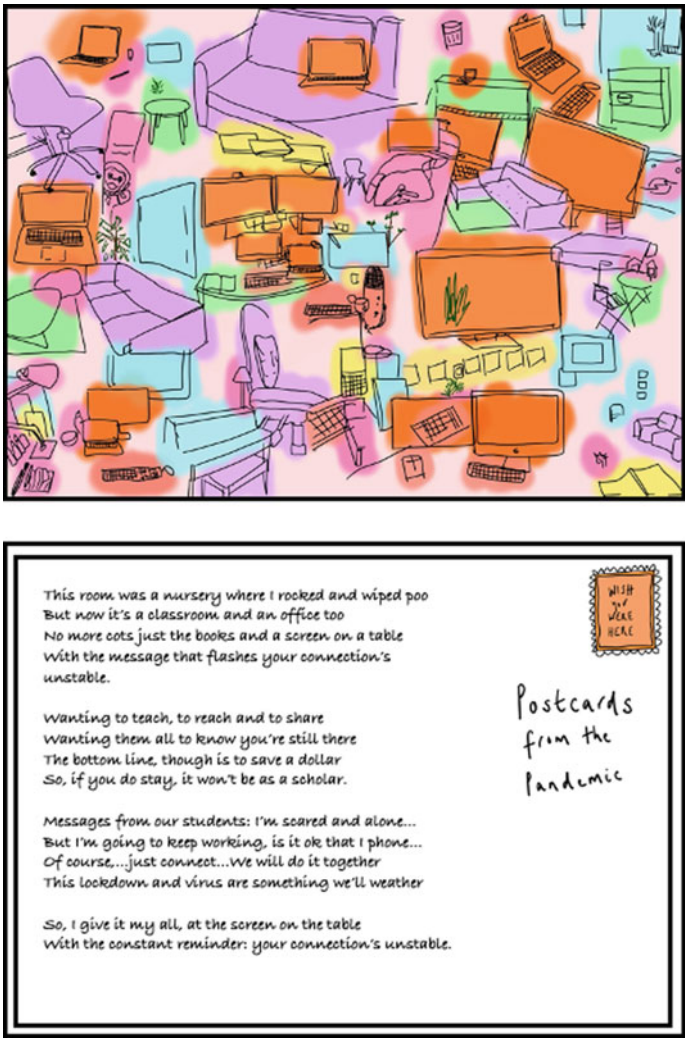

Fig. 1 Postcard from the Pandemic, 2020. 'Postcards from the Pandemic' were co-created to capture our collective data in new ways through a postcard sent to the self (past, present, or future) to archive this moment in our careers

This postcard from the pandemic explores a practice narrative where the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education shifted from a focus on the individual educator and their cohort towards a collaborative, interdisciplinary nexus. In this nexus, teaching and research is focused on the connections and networks between students, colleagues, classrooms, and learning while at home. Within this educational turn, educators and educational researchers created new pedagogies that emerged from practice shifts as colleagues looked to learn from each other to inform

new pedagogies of wellbeing and compassion. As the pandemic postcard documents, pedagogies of care and kindness were necessary to support student learning during a time of uncertainty. The rapid shifts and changes that occurred during the educational turn demonstrate an activism and do-it-yourself culture that emerged to realign teaching and learning in the academy.

As a community of practice, our interconnective threads of practice were woven together for almost two years, first connecting in April 2020 as this project began. Our practice is recurring, situated actions informed by shared meanings and adheres to the premise that next practices are entangled within the educational turn. These collaborations provided creative opportunities to see other practices, resist solutions to individual problems and speculate on what might be across disciplinary boundaries.

Part I demonstrates how these professional collaborations cut across disciplinary boundaries foreground the existence of different epistemic beliefs and bring into view how these impact teaching and learning for the future. The chapters have a focus on the problems and inquiries that we as educators might follow in the future and communicate the implications of practice shifts. The accelerated change educators and educational researchers experienced affected student learning. Can we speculate on the new bodies of evidence that need to be identified and documented about what has worked and what can work through new methods of storying as SoTL? Can our stories of practice shifts capture the complex ecologies in higher education and contribute to a reimagining of higher education through an exploration of old and new agendas.

Our project was focused on speculating on cross cutting capabilities that allow for disciplinary knowledge to be transformative across disciplinary boundaries. As the chapters in Part I demonstrate, effective interdisciplinary collaborations require the negotiation of these epistemic differences and, while this process can be challenging, it creates the conditions for new epistemic cultures to emerge. Bringing a critical awareness of epistemic norms and epistemic possibilities to teaching practice is important because it creates the conditions for both stability and change in practices to occur.

The focus on practice emphasises the relational and enacted nature of epistemic beliefs. That is, epistemologies are understood in terms of how they are done rather than something an individual has—making them dynamic, contingent, and relational. At the local level, this SoTL project made a significant contribution through the creation of remote practice narratives that attend to local needs of the profession by focusing on the agency and value of meaningful collaboration in interdisciplinary learning during remote at home teaching and learning. It was within the precarity of the lockdown and educational turn that the considerations for how educators might rethink higher education from within were felt as an encounter with practice.

In a pandemic impacted world, care is a source of pedagogical capital that these shifts in practices explore within this section. The changing and evolving nature of SoTL is further developed through the rethinking of higher education, inviting us to think about educational practices that go beyond the pandemic. Through storying a vulnerability of unknowingness and a pedagogy of hope we invite readers into the peripheral nature of care in higher education in Part I. We consider how the

educational turn invites us to (re)consider how globally distributed students become agents in self-determined learning spaces and the possibilities for co-creators of learning environments in the future.

Chapter 3
The Rapidly Changing Teaching and Research Landscape: The Future of SoTL and the Teaching-Research Nexus

Karena L. Waller and Michael Prosser

Abstract The scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) as a scholarly field of study has been rapidly developing since Ernest Boyer published *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate* in 1990. In that Boyer drew the distinction between four scholarships—Discovery, Integration, Application, and Teaching & Learning (Boyer in Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990). In this chapter, we aim to introduce readers to SoTL by:

- briefly reviewing these four scholarships;
- illustrating how SoTL may be differentiated from the other forms of scholarship, and its relationship with the teaching-research nexus;
- commenting on the sorts of inquiry problems, questions and issues common to SoTL; and finally,
- commenting on the range of methodologies adopted in such inquiries.

Fundamental to the discussion will be the idea that SoTL is a research informed, evidence based, critical yet collegial reflection on teaching and learning practice with the aim of improving practice within the aligned disciplines and professions. Most often SoTL-based research projects are conducted by discipline-based staff inquiring into and reflecting on their own practice to improve their teaching and students' learning.

Since Boyer's publication, numerous scholarly societies, conferences, journals, and other forms of scholarly communication have evolved. A recent thematic review of the SoTL literature will be used as the basis for highlighting how the communication of SoTL inquiries, and their findings are being, and can be, fostered.

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Keywords SoTL · Teaching · Learning · Research · Scholarship · Critical reflection

3.1 Introduction

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic and the disruptive forces it has unleashed on teaching and learning in higher education, it is opportune to review and critically analyze the present state of scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) activities and to explore their possible future directions. In this chapter, we will first outline the origins of SoTL activities in the writings of Boyer and others and analyze the present state of those activities before finally outlining our views on how those activities may need to be developed to address some of the current issues facing teaching and learning.

The rapid whole-of-institution transition to online approaches to teaching and learning brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic has afforded teachers in higher education a collective opportunity for reflecting on and reconsidering their priorities in teaching and learning. These considerations include the need to adopt and master innovative approaches to teaching and learning while simultaneously fostering and maintaining the quality of student and teacher experiences and relational connections in a rapidly changing context. This has proven overwhelmingly challenging for many students and teachers. We recognize that although this opportunity for reflection, reconsidering, and scholarly inquiry has commenced, it is far from complete, and consequently, the full ramifications of these on post-COVID-19 higher education are yet to be realized. We would argue that the pursuit of SoTL over coming years provides one way in which teachers can address and overcome these issues and considerations.

This chapter aims to provide an introduction for teachers wishing to reflect on and improve their teaching and students' learning by outlining the fundamental ideas underpinning SoTL and the current issues needing to be addressed through SoTL.

3.2 Where Has SoTL Come from?

3.2.1 Early Ideas

The quality of teaching and learning in higher education has received a great deal of attention over the last 25 years or so. But, in 1990, Boyer brought a somewhat different focus to discussions of teaching and learning. He argued that the focus on teaching should not be just on teaching but on teaching as scholarship. In regard to Boyer (1990), Trigwell et al., (2000, p. 155) noted that,

Boyer's main thesis does not focus on teaching in isolation, but on teaching as part of the larger whole of academic work. Boyer argued that we should let go of the tired old research vs. teaching argument and focus on the idea that scholarship exists in all aspects of academic work.

It was in this seminal work that Boyer drew the distinction between four overlapping avenues of scholarship:

- Discovery—more traditional theory-driven research, aimed at developing theory and understanding;
- Integration—making connections across the disciplines and placing things in larger context—major reviews, systematic reviews, etc.;
- Application (or now often termed engagement)—goes beyond application and develops an interaction that each informs the other (research and application);
- Teaching and Learning—research informed, critical, evidence based, collegial reflection on practice to improve practice.

The aim of drawing this distinction was to enhance the status, practice, and quality of teaching and learning in higher education through the development and use of scholarly practices in understanding, informing, and improving the quality of teaching and learning. While these four scholarships may seem to be individually constituted, in practice that is unlikely. For example, a study that aimed to test some theoretical model or proposition in teaching and learning in higher education (i.e., scholarship of discovery) may well make an important contribution to the practice of teaching and learning (i.e., scholarship of teaching and learning). Similarly, a study aimed at developing the practice of teaching and learning may well contribute to theory development. In this manner, the four scholarships are integrally related and connected rather than mutually exclusive.

3.2.2 Teaching-Research Nexus

At about the same time, the relationship, or nexus, between discovery research and teaching was being hotly debated. On the one hand, higher education academics had often asserted that there was a positive relation between teaching and research (Brew & Boud, 1995). However, Marsh and others argued that there was little or no relation between performance indicators of teaching and research, such as number of publications on one hand and student evaluations on the other (Marsh & Hattie, 2002). It was this lack of a demonstrated empirical relationship between the performance indicators of teaching and (discovery) research which was being used to underlie the argument for the separation of the two. But, such an argument is a misunderstanding of the implication of a zero correlation between the two variables. If, assuming there is a zero correlation between teaching and research, we separate teaching from research and turn our best researchers into research only academics, then we would lose half of our better performing teachers. Conversely, if we turn our best teachers into teaching only, we would lose half of our better performing

researchers. But, in a series of articles, Prosser et al. (2008) instead showed positive relationships between university teachers' experiences of both their research and teaching mediated by their understanding of their subject matter (e.g., Prosser et al., 2008). These authors further concluded that it was not the quantity of research (for example, the numbers of publications) that was related to high-quality teaching, but rather how teachers continued to contribute to the development of scholarship in their discipline, including the development of teaching and learning in their discipline. They concluded that all teachers in higher education need to remain active in the scholarship of their discipline. As Boyer (1990) has argued, this scholarship can take several forms, including the scholarship of teaching and learning within their discipline. We wish to assert that for teaching-focused/teaching-only academic staff, continued engagement in SoTL is vital for the continued development and improvement of scholarly teaching in universities.

3.3 Where Is SoTL Now

If, as we argue, SoTL is central to the academic role, then how is this manifesting in practice? In this section, we outline where we understand SoTL is at present by drawing on the international literature, and then, in the final section of this chapter, how we see this change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3.1 Conceptualization (Our Own Classroom Practice)

So, how is SoTL presently conceptualized? What is the focus of SoTL? How might it be differentiated from discovery scholarship described in Boyer's model? These issues have been discussed in detail over the years since Boyer outlined his model.

An early inquiry of the meaning of SoTL by Trigwell et al. (2000) used an interview-based phenomenographic approach to explore university teachers' conceptions or understanding of the meaning of scholarship of teaching. It is important to note that at the time the study was performed the term SoTL (inclusive of learning) was not commonly used; however, learning was explicitly captured and represented in the five hierarchically inclusive categories of description arising from the study. They were as follows:

(a) The scholarship of teaching is about knowing the literature on teaching by collecting and reading that literature.
(b) Scholarship of teaching is about improving teaching by collecting and reading the literature on teaching.
(c) Scholarship of teaching is about improving student learning by investigating the learning of one's own students and one's own teaching.

(d) Scholarship of teaching is about improving one's own students' learning by knowing and relating the literature on teaching and learning to discipline-specific literature and knowledge.
(e) The scholarship of teaching is about improving student learning within the discipline generally, by collecting and communicating results of one's own work on teaching and learning within the discipline (Trigwell et al., 2000, p. 159).

At the time, their conclusion was that the last category was the most sophisticated and inclusive description of SoTL. As a result, the authors developed a four-dimensional model of teacher engagement in SoTL. The dimensions were as follows:

(a) the extent to which they engage with the scholarly contributions of others, including the literature of teaching and learning of a general nature and particularly that in their discipline.
(b) the focus of their reflection on their own teaching practice and the learning of students within the context of their own discipline: whether it is unfocused, or whether it is asking "*what do I need to know and how do I find out?*."
(c) the quality of the communication and dissemination of aspects of practice and theoretical ideas about teaching and learning in general, and teaching and learning within their discipline, and
(d) their conceptions of teaching and learning: whether the focus of their activities is on student learning and teaching or mainly on teaching (Trigwell et al., 2000, p. 163).

These dimensions highlight what they considered to be the key aspects of SoTL including engagement with discipline-based teaching and learning literature, continued reflection and critical analysis of teaching and learning within their discipline, importance of communication and dissemination of the results of analyses, and a focus on students and their learning.

In another of the earlier papers on SoTL, Prosser concluded:

> For me, the main point of engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education is to work toward improving our students' learning. To do this, we need to systematically reflect upon evidence of our own students' learning within our own classes and disciplines. We need to draw upon the more generic research, but carefully situate that within our disciplines. We then need to monitor the success or otherwise of our efforts to improve our students' learning and then communicate the outcomes of those efforts to our colleagues. The scholarship of teaching and learning from this perspective is not research in the traditional sense. It is a practically oriented activity, conducted collegially, and increasingly being conducted alongside traditional research within the disciplines. (Prosser, 2008, p. 4)

Here, the focus of SoTL was on improving student learning within a practical and collegial atmosphere. It was not educational discovery research focused solely on theory and conceptualization, but rather discovery inquiry focused on teaching practice with the aim of improving student learning, which is the overarching aim of SoTL.

Furthering this, Poole and Simmons (2013) argue that SoTL focuses on teachers investigating teaching and learning processes in their own classroom. They quote McKinney (2006) observing "the scholarship of teaching and learning … involves systematic study of teaching and/or learning and the public sharing and review of such work through presentations, performance, or publications" (p. 39). They also cite two early and continuing leaders in the field, Hutchings and Shulman (1999), that "faculty frame and systematically investigate questions related to student learning" (p. 13) with the intention of improving student learning and enhancing educational quality. The key points here are that SoTL involves systematic study of teaching and learning with that aim of improving student learning.

In a more recent article, after reviewing several conceptualizations of SoTL in the literature, Tight (2018, p. 64) concluded:

> While there are undeniably differences in emphasis on display in these characterizations of the scholarship of teaching and learning, they are recognizably describing the same phenomena, and several key components are evident throughout. Thus, the scholarship of teaching and learning was conceived as involving being an informed, questioning, reflecting, critical and inquiring teacher, whose focus is on the improvement of their teaching so as to improve their students' learning and on sharing their practices widely with others so as to advance the status and practice of teaching and learning in their discipline and in higher education in general.

In concluding this section, our own heuristic definition of SoTL as it is presently practiced is as follows: SoTL is a research informed, evidence based, critical yet collegial reflection on teaching and learning practice with the aim of improving practice within the aligned disciplines and professions. Most often SoTL-based research projects are conducted by discipline-based teachers inquiring into and reflecting on their own practice to improve their teaching and students' learning.

3.3.2 SoTL Inquiries and Problems

Having arrived at our definition of the present understanding of SoTL, the discussion will turn to the nature of SoTL inquiries and problems represented in the present literature. In one of the earlier discussions of SoTL, Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997, p. 36) listed the areas they considered common to any scholarly activity, including SoTL activities: Clear Goals; Adequate Preparation; Appropriate Methods; Significant Results; Effective Presentation; and Reflective Critique. In 2013, Felton similarly listed aspects of what he considered to be good practices in SoTL: Inquiry focused on student learning, grounded in context, methodologically sound, conducted in partnership with students, and appropriately public (Felton, 2013, p. 122). Interestingly, here, Felton added the practice of partnering with students, a practice that will be discussed later.

Often the most difficult yet important stage in a SoTL project is the initial phase, that of choosing a problem to investigate, and then developing the inquiry question(s) and method. First and foremost is selection of a problem that:

- is meaningful and significant in the sense that it addresses real problems in the practice of teaching and learning;
- is possible to research with the time, resources, and students available, given that most investigations are conducted by teachers whose primary focus and allocation of time is to the practice of teaching and learning; and
- is deliberate, narrow, and focused, so that the project will adequately answer the inquiry question(s).

While these aspects of problem selection may seem obvious, they are often not adequately addressed in SoTL inquiries. Inquiry questions are often vague and unfocussed, leading to the collection of large amounts of unused and unanalyzed data. But, having successfully identified the nature of an inquiry problem, the next issue is to identify an appropriate method to address the problem.

3.3.3 SoTL Inquiry Methods

Given that SoTL inquiries and inquirers are based within the disciplines in higher education, a broad range of inquiry methods may be applied. A systematic review of SoTL by How (2020) provides a useful summary of the diversity of SoTL methodologies and cites several very useful references. These range over issues of methodologies from the social and natural sciences to the humanities, including both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. How (2020) cites Bloch-Schulman et al. (2016), arguing that:

> …debates within SoTL about appropriate methodology distract researchers from more significant questions and even lead them to reject SoTL altogether, thus calling on researchers to embrace diversifying methodologies, including the exploratory, representational, and interpretive tools used in the arts and humanities, as well as the observational, experimental, and quantitative approaches adopted in the social sciences. (How, 2020, p. 18)

How (2020) additionally cites others, such as Gurung (2014), as arguing for mixed methods research including the collection of qualitative and quantitative research data. But, these arguments raise more difficult questions about how teachers, with their training and education founded within their disciplinary methodologies, can adjust to and adapt their own research methods to the investigation of teaching and learning. In response, How (2020) refers to a heuristic guide developed by Rowland and Myatt (2014), which was designed to assist natural science faculty who possessed no prior training in SoTL, in the selection of methodologies to plan, implement, and evaluate SoTL research projects. Some contemporary issues of methodology are later discussed in this chapter.

Given this diversity in methodologies, which is central to the idea of disciplinary-based inquiry into teaching and learning, Bernstein (2018) raised the issues of internal and external validity of SoTL inquiries. Key questions include: How do educators know if their innovation worked within our discipline, and how generalizable is what works in our discipline to other disciplines? Further, can educators communicate the

implications of SoTL work in the humanities using a humanities-based methodology to those working in the sciences, and if so, how? Are there such fundamental differences in teaching and learning between the humanities and sciences that mean communication is not possible? Are there such fundamental differences methodologically that communication is not possible? In effect, can SoTL researchers bridge C. P. Snow's *Two Cultures* (Snow, 1959), with these being the sciences and humanities? Such methodological disputes and differences exist in other fields; however, Bernstein asks that educators focus our communications and discussion on how well they are advancing students' learning and what others can learn from our work, rather than on continued arguments about methodology. These methodological issues are considered in the final section of this chapter.

And finally, in this chapter, we wish to refer to a recent publication by Keith Trigwell (2021), which describes a number of vignettes or small case studies of SoTL investigations. Through these case studies, Trigwell describes the key steps in a SoTL investigation and makes some comments on publishing SoTL investigations.

Having tried to summarize where SoTL is at present, the final section discusses issues and concerns about the future of SoTL.

3.4 Where Is SoTL Going?

Having outlined how we see the present state of SoTL activities, we now turn to some of the criticisms raised in the literature about the present state and where we might see it go in the future.

3.4.1 Some Issues for Consideration in Present State of SoTL Activities

In 2021, an article was published in *Teaching & Learning Inquiring* by Cruz and Grodziak titled "SoTL Under Stress: Rethinking Teaching and Learning Scholarship During a Global Pandemic." In that essay, they discussed several key concerns they have for the future of SoTL inquiries. The first of these was a direct consequence of the disruptive nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to an "accelerated change" in teaching and learning.

> Normally, we have the ability to learn from those who came before us, but the current experience is not staggered but simultaneous, which means we need to develop an almost entirely new body of evidence-based practice, and we need to do so all at once—very quickly (DeSantis & Dammann, 2020). (Cruz & Grodziack, 2021, p. 5)

But, change and development had to occur immediately, over whole-of-institution and whole-of-study program, during the rapid transition to online teaching and learning—there was no time to develop an evidence base. Educators had to act

and convert without significant precedence or evidence. It is now vital that they start to develop this new body of evidence, by reflecting on the changes that occurred, at the levels of whole-of-institution and program and individual teachers, resulting in the transition to online teaching and learning during the pandemic, and carefully describing and analyzing the outcomes of those changes and innovations. It is important to identify and document, in Pat Hutchings (2000) terms, "what works."

Another issue identified by Cruz and Grodziack has grown out of the use of social media in amplifying "the power of connecting individual voices to others as a vehicle for social change" (Cruz & Grodziack, 2021, p. 6). They cite several authors in higher education literature as identifying "deep biases" in higher education that have been amplified by the pandemic. They go on to say, "Implicit in this wave of narrative crowd-sourcing is recognition of the value of lived experience, not just as anecdote, but as catalysts and, perhaps most importantly, as evidence" (Cruz & Grodziack, 2021, p. 6).

This leads us as authors to argue for a greater use of auto-ethnography, personal narratives, and ethnographic methods to systematically capture the lived experience of teachers and students during the disruptive period of the pandemic. Such methods have been used in SoTL investigations, but they have been in a minority, and we would argue they are urgently needed to capture experiences and to facilitate careful reflection on the outcomes.

Finally, in this section, Cruz and Grodziack identify the need for larger teams of SoTL investigators given the rapid inclusion of instructional designers, educational developers, and students as partners (discussed later). In contrast, much of the previous SoTL studies have been conducted by individual or small groups of teachers. Given the changing nature of teaching and learning resulting from the pandemic, SoTL investigation teams need to be expanded to include these new players.

We have quoted at length from the paper of Cruz and Grodziack (2021) because it succinctly identified several issues that will face SoTL scholars in the post-pandemic period. Finally, we would like to quote the final paragraph of their article, highlighting a change in emphasis in the needs of SoTL studies:

> The way forward involves not just technological innovation, but also attention to our shared humanity and, by extension, the study of the previously beleaguered humanities. The need for cross-disciplinary collaboration has never been more evident than it is right now. The sharing of our individual experiences, our stories, will provide SoTL, as a field, the collective opportunity to look inward, check our own biases (McKinney and Chick 2010), and navigate our own marginalities, in preparation for taking on more public roles within a greatly expanded teaching commons. In terms of making sense of the world, the SoTL movement had already proven itself to be quite resilient, largely because of the deep idealism at its heart, an idealism that was, admittedly, challenged by the previous shift toward institutionalization, but never extinguished. Rather than despair of our current situation, we should perhaps be proud of the fact that, through the darkest hours of modern academic history, we have sustained, and been sustained by, a love of teaching, care for our students, and the belief that higher education matters. (Cruz & Grodziack, 2021, p. 9)

3.4.2 Disciplinary, Multidisciplinary, and Interdisciplinary

The SoTL literature has been by its nature multidisciplinary. The call by Boyer (1990), supported by Shulman (2005) and others, that scholars within the disciplines should approach teaching within their disciplines as scholarly activities means that SoTL studies have been conducted with a range of disciplines and professions. To exemplify this, Malcolm Tight's (2018) article *Tracking the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* cites papers from an array of disciplines, including accounting, communication, dentistry, economics, education, engineering, geography, history, hospitality, law, librarianship, management, mathematics, nursing, occupational therapy, pharmacy, philosophy, political science, psychology, science, social work, sociology, textiles, and theology. We note, this is in no way an exhaustive listing of disciplines and professions that have published SoTL articles.

While these are some of the disciplines and professions in which studies have been published, the literature does include a range of methodologies—often related to the discipline or profession most concerned. In other words, the methodologies adopted are multidisciplinary. This multidisciplinary nature of SoTL methodologies is confirmed in How's (2020) systematic review:

> … within the literature that focuses on SoTL methodologies and approaches, articles are evenly distributed between those that discuss particular SoTL methodologies and those that synthesize diverse SoTL methodologies. This indicates that present SoTL research is not dominated by any singular methodological approach; it is an inclusive field that embraces different methodologies and research methods. (How, 2020, p. 28)

While this might be so, the majority of studies have drawn on methodologies from "observational, experimental and quantitative approaches adopted in the social sciences" rather than "the exploratory, representational, and interpretive tools used in the arts and humanities" (How, 2020, p. 18).

This brief review of disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary highlights the multidisciplinary aspect of SoTL activities and the predominance of social science research methodologies. But, in some ways, the multidisciplinary aspects of SoTL are not strictly multidisciplinary. They are not single studies incorporating a range of disciplines. That is, they are not a single issue focused on from several disciplines. Neither are they, in the main, interdisciplinary—holistic studies across several disciplines synthesizing the issues and methodologies across those of disciplines. Given the growth in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary studies in higher education on the one hand and the need identified in the previous section to adopt more humanistic approaches to address the post-COVID-19 pandemic problems and issues, the development of more multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary studies is clearly warranted.

3.4.3 Students as Partners

The idea of "Students as Partners" (SaP) in higher education teaching and learning has been growing for a number of years. The idea grew out of earlier work which focused on the teaching-research nexus in higher education and students engaged as co-researchers. Engaging SaP in the teaching and learning process is seen to have benefits such as "increased engagement in learning and enhancement activities, transformed thinking about teaching and learning and development of awareness of one's role and agency in the wider academic community" (Cook-Sather, Bovill & Felton, 2014, quoted from Healey, Flint, and Harrington, 2014).

The SaP movement is broad and incorporates a number of areas of the student–teacher relationship. These areas are described in a model developed by Healey, Flint, and Harrington (2014) and are as follows:

- Learning, teaching, and assessment;
- Subject-based research and inquiry;
- Scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL);
- Curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy.

In this chapter, it is the area of student engagement in SoTL which is of interest. Healey, Flint and Harrington (2014) describe a number of examples of students acting as partners in SoTL activities. For example, students may undertake a final year SoTL project as an alternative to a subject content-based project. Another example may be a final year physics honors project in which students research the misconceptions of first-year students in relation to key concepts. In the process, final year students review their understanding of key first-year concepts which were initially only partially understood. Other project examples cited by Healey et al. (2014) have included undergraduate teaching and learning internships and students researching the teaching and learning environment across the university.

Given the issues identified in the article by Cruz and Godziack (2021), including students in the SoTL investigation research team would seem appropriate. Students have undergone as much, or perhaps even more rapid change in their learning experiences than their teachers have in their teaching experiences. Documenting the change in students' experiences, drawing on some of the methods from the humanities identified earlier, is of extreme importance. Use of student diaries, auto-ethnographies, students interviewing other students may be ways in which educators could identify and document authentic student experiences. With the increasing use of online learning, zooming, breakout rooms, etc., it is difficult for teaching staff to remain aware of individual student activity and experiences. Engaging students themselves to report on their and other students' experiences in a systematic and research rich environment would seem appropriate.

3.4.4 Development of Future Scholars of Teaching and Learning

Given that much SoTL research needs to be conducted rapidly in light of the rapid transition to online teaching and learning, our final consideration is that of the development of SoTL researchers, and particularly those that are new to SoTL inquiry. With many SoTL researchers beginning their SoTL research careers solely with disciplinary-based research experience and little or no experience in SoTL research methodologies (Rowland & Myatt, 2014), there is arguably a need to support and develop those individuals new to SoTL, to ensure successful inquiry outcomes, including the production of appropriate, valid, and informative research findings and their communication. Indeed, the work of Rowland and Myatt (2014) directly addresses this need with the development of a guide to assist natural science-disciplinary researchers, who possess no prior training in SoTL inquiry methods, to identify, design, conduct, evaluate, and communicate the findings of SoTL research projects. They additionally acknowledge the challenges faced by newcomers to SoTL inquiry, particularly in relation to conducting SoTL in isolation or small groups, and outline that participation in formal training in SoTL inquiry, perhaps via completion of higher education teaching and learning qualifications (which may be inclusive of SoTL training), participation in SoTL mentoring programs (offered by some professional societies and institutions), and collaborative research teams can be beneficial (Rowland & Myatt, 2014). Two recent publications (Friberg et al., 2021; Cruz & Grodziack, 2021) have explored these latter two aspects of mentoring and participation in collaborations in more detail. While traditional mentoring, where experienced SoTL researchers' mentor newer researchers, has long been used to support the development of SoTL researchers and SoTL communities, particularly in regard to SoTL practice and methodologies (Hubball et al., 2010), in more recent times, broader mentoring relationships have been described, including students as partners (SaP) and co-researchers (Healey, Flint & Harrington, 2014), participation in collaborative writing groups and working in collaborative teams with educational developers (Friberg et al., 2021) or other more experienced individuals (Cruz & Grodziack, 2021). These broader mentoring relationships offer many more and varied opportunities to support and develop new researchers in their engagement with SoTL research.

3.5 Conclusion

In summary, we have outlined the origins of SoTL in terms of Boyers concerns about the status of teaching in higher education, arguing for teaching to be seen as a scholarly activity in itself—indeed one of the four scholarships in higher education. The present state of SoTL activity in terms of the focus of SoTL inquiries was summarized and inquiry methods. A number of areas of concern in SoTL work have

been summarized, and several ways ahead have been presented. We conclude this chapter by again emphasizing that teaching and learning is, and needs to be, seen as a critically important scholarly activity in a modern university. The disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have led to quite profound questioning of the future of higher education. The questions raised are not likely to be easily answered. Educators need to be actively engaged in discussion about the future, through their active involvement in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Such scholarship has come a long way in the last 30 years. Major national and international professional associations have been established, bringing together scholars from around the world, building a community of practice and communication, while many disciplinary and SoTL-based peer-reviewed journals publish the scholarly work of university teachers. The culture and practice of SoTL is now well established and continuing to develop within university teaching and learning environments, and therefore, it is now time for SoTL scholars, through their inquiries, to play a leading role in forging the future of teaching and learning in higher education.

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Chapter 4
Designing Education for Wellbeing and Connection in a COVID Impacted World

Rachel Colla, Annie Gowing, Angela Molloy Murphy, and Tracii Ryan

Abstract Sustainable and systemic approaches to addressing mental health are critical in higher education, as studies consistently show that university students and academic staff have higher rates of psychological distress than the general population. These issues have undoubtedly been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, where social distancing, mandated online learning, fear, and uncertainty around public health have increased feelings of stress, anxiety, and isolation. Therefore, in a COVID impacted world, cultivating wellbeing and connection in both physical and virtual learning spaces has become a social and educational imperative. Recent experiences of the challenges of supporting wellbeing and connection in the online classroom highlight a range of known and emergent risks. However, these experiences also provide opportunities for reimagining how wellbeing and connection are experienced and promoted in that space and for articulating understandings of student care. Thinking beyond highly individualized western conceptualizations, this chapter aims to position wellbeing as a collective concept, where the wellness of the self is inextricably linked to the wellness of the world. In doing so, we interrogate the presumed universality and neutrality of commonly used online learning technologies and work toward developing learning designs with a pedagogical intention of care, inclusivity, relationality, and student voice.

Keywords Learning design · Wellbeing · Care · Connection · Online learning environments

4.1 Introduction

Pandemic times have brought entwined social, economic, and planetary crises to light, reconfiguring the understanding of what it means to be 'well' in a hurting world. In higher education, understanding and supporting wellbeing and connection has always been a significant issue. However, as the world grapples with mental

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health as a growing health concern, it has become clear that more sustainable and systemic approaches are needed to fundamentally address this critical problem. This is because global rates of mental health concerns have been steadily rising over time (James et al., 2018) and because challenges to individual wellbeing and connection have been exacerbated by the consequences of the global COVID-19 crisis. For example, emerging research in the general population indicates that the pandemic and associated lockdowns have increased the prevalence of psychological distress (i.e., anxiety, stress, depression) and experiences of loneliness and social isolation (Abbott, 2021).

Psychological distress is known to negatively impact individuals' daily life and interpersonal relationships, as well as their physical and mental health (Cuijpers & Smit, 2002; Essau et al., 2014; Yaroslavsky et al., 2013). In a higher education context, acute psychological distress is reported to have a range of detrimental effects on students' learning and productivity, including interfering with cognitive functioning and attention (Marin et al., 2011), reducing academic achievement (Stallman, 2010), and contributing to attrition (Dyrbye et al., 2006). In extreme cases, an inability to cope with psychological distress may result in students experiencing suicidal ideation and self-harming behavior (Brownson et al., 2016; Drum et al., 2009).

However, it is imperative to note that remediating psychological distress does not automatically lead to wellbeing. In other words, obtaining good functioning, or thriving, involves more than just the absence of mental illness (see *Examining Mental Health and Wellbeing Policies in Universities* chapter for various conceptualizations of wellbeing). Moreover, as we prepare our students to face a post-COVID world, they must have the necessary grounding and resources to address the fundamental challenges ahead. The Okanagan Charter of Healthy Promoting Universities (2015) highlights the value of creating campus cultures of wellbeing to not only improve the health of individuals but also strengthen the ecological, social, and economic sustainability of our communities and wider society. While developed in a pre-pandemic climate, this charter posed an action-oriented framework for weaving both an inward and outward focus on wellbeing into the fabric of higher education (see *Traversing learning and Leading Collaboration: Stepping Toward New Power Values During Turbulent and In-between* chapter for an overview of the framework and how it has been utilized to create large scale change). We take up this call to action in this chapter, outlining ways we can intentionally design to create communities that are 'response-able' for both individual and collective wellbeing. In doing so, we hope to facilitate an educational re/turn to grounding Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) practices in a pedagogy of care and connection.

Our motivation to write this chapter stems from our own experiences traversing the complexities of teaching and completing academic work remotely, including attempts to prioritize the wellbeing of our students and ourselves. In writing this chapter, we draw on examples from the online learning and wellbeing education literature and examples from our own practice. We also reflect on the feelings of connection and belonging that emerged as we collaboratively worked on this chapter while living through extended lockdowns and increasing rates of community infection, while simultaneously managing the emotional labor of teaching and performing the

academic role online. This chapter will argue for the benefits inherent in an approach that builds wellbeing capabilities through explicit and implicit learning design and pedagogy and positions care as a source of pedagogical capital in teaching well for wellbeing.

4.2 What Do Wellbeing and Connection Look like in the Future of Higher Education?

In recent years, wellbeing has become a policy priority across many industries and sectors. Indeed, multiple governments worldwide are now including wellbeing as part of their national accounts in addition to Gross Domestic Product. For example, the United Arab Emirates have a Minister for Happiness and Wellbeing (UAE Government, 2021); the New Zealand government has a 'Wellbeing Budget' (New Zealand Government, 2021), and Wales have legislation on the wellbeing of future generations (Welsh Government, 2015). Wellbeing graduate capabilities are also becoming increasingly necessary and expected for new graduates, both nationally and internationally. As a result, universities are beginning to implement policies and strategies to promote and support wellbeing among staff and students (for more on this topic, see Examining Mental Health and Wellbeing Policies in Australian Universities).

Given the importance of fostering connection and wellbeing among university students, it is crucial for educators to consider how they may achieve this through learning design and pedagogy. This is arguably even more important in online learning contexts, where students may be socially isolated and dispersed across many locations and where teaching and learning activities are often delivered asynchronously. In the online space, pre-pandemic Sung & Mayer (2012), located reduced opportunities to create 'social presence' through the types of formal and informal in-class interactivity, which is often easier or more comfortable in face-to-face contexts. Unfortunately, without this sense of social presence, online students may end up feeling unknown, unseen, and unvalued (Plante & Asselin, 2014). As such, educators need to mediate opportunities to build connectedness and belonging; for example, by planning for frequent peer-to-peer and peer-to-teacher social interactions in the early stages of the semester and scaffolding these activities throughout the entire learning design.

As we now look to rethinking our educational practices beyond COVID-19, universities and educators have both an opportunity and responsibility to reimagine how to best support wellbeing and connection through learning design and pedagogy. Educators may also find themselves well placed to consider the impact of pedagogy and learning design on wellbeing and connection through SoTL evaluations (for more on this, see *The Rapidly Changing Teaching and Research Landscape: The Future of SoTL and the Teaching-Research Nexus* chapter). As such, we have reached a critical point where additional research—and, indeed, speculative thinking—is required to

examine alternative ideas for how teaching and learning activities, including assessment tasks, can be designed to support and promote social connectedness and well-being and how these outcomes can be built up over time. Ideally, this needs to be consistently supported throughout the curricula and assessment design of entire university programs. Nevertheless, there is evidence that embedding these even in single-subject designs or through extra-curricular programs can significantly impact student wellbeing (Chilver & Gatt, 2021; Young et al., 2020).

Investing in approaches where all members of the university community learn the multidisciplinary capabilities of wellbeing can facilitate a new paradigm that shifts the narrative from solely focusing on approaches steeped in traditional medical and disease models (i.e., those focusing on reducing ill-being, psychological distress, and mental health disorders). While explicitly teaching future-focused or 21st-century capabilities goes some way to address this, a strategic focus on building wellbeing capabilities is necessary to lead a paradigm shift in higher education. This approach has gained traction over the last decade in both the primary and secondary education sectors, where the application of wellbeing science has been used to build a primary prevention approach, complimenting the necessary investment in treatment and support services (Green et al., 2011; White & Waters, 2015). In addition to the explicit teaching of wellbeing concepts (declarative learning), the weaving of evidence-based practices into the learning design, for example, the use of mindfulness or emotional-regulation practices, has been used to develop core wellbeing capabilities (procedural learning). Such applications of wellbeing science are an effective method of illness prevention (Bolier et al., 2013; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009), as well as developing the capabilities that lead to optimal performance, including educational outcomes in higher education (Kaya & Erdem, 2021; Oades et al., 2011; Young et al., 2020). However, these approaches typically focus on building wellbeing at an individual level and fail to address the interconnectedness between students and their learning environment and between the learning environment and the state of the world.

4.3 The Interconnectedness of Individual and Collective Wellbeing

Staff and student wellbeing has always been central to the work of educators; however, they have been further elevated as areas of focus during the COVID-19 pandemic. Worldwide, students were suddenly studying remotely, and feelings of displacement, social isolation, disengagement, and loss of motivation followed for many (Hall & Batty, 2020; Yamin, 2020). Some students may also have been living with pre-existing mental health issues, while many others experienced increased psychological distress associated with the impacts of the pandemic on their lives.

During this time, the international demand for social and racial justice also reached a fever pitch following the murder of George Floyd, a black man, by police on May

25, 2020, in Minnesota, USA. In addition, natural disasters from hurricanes and cyclones to wildfires occurred across continents, further disrupting communities and ravaging the environment. As with the global health pandemic, racism and the impacts of climate change have been recognized as global forces, impacting humanity and beyond (Common Worlds Research Collective, 2020). In higher education, these disruptions prevalent in the world have paradoxically foregrounded the importance of the wellbeing of students and staff, yet simultaneously brought additional challenges to promoting and attending to their wellbeing and connection.

In early 2020, as communities around the world began to lockdown in response to the pandemic, individuals were caught in a crisis that, while shared by many, was experienced in a hyper-individualized way. For many, the limits of the world were suddenly contained within the boundaries of their home, which simultaneously became workplace, school, childcare facility, and leisure center, along with the host of other daily functions of domestic life. Ironically, while international borders were closing and state and local boundaries were being imposed, the partitions between many aspects of individuals' lives became increasingly porous.

In the higher education sector, the intertwining of domestic and professional lives also reshaped the nature of work as subjects and courses were hastily shifted to online delivery. This change for many educators was accompanied by elevated anxiety, particularly for those whose familiarity with the technology required in this form of pedagogy was limited. In addition, the increase in workload for all educators, regardless of their technical capacities, was substantial and has been accompanied by an increase in the emotional labor involved in online learning environments (Nyanjom & Naylor, 2021).

4.3.1 The Reciprocity of Care: Annie's Story

As a less-than-tech-savvy educator, my experience in the virtual classroom has been revealing, as my wish to appear competent and capable has frequently conflicted with my desire to be honest and authentic with my students, embracing my unknowingness. For me, the script that accompanies the 'excellent teacher' in the neoliberal playbook has been repeatedly rewritten as my clumsy, uncertain, and publicly demonstrated failures have ushered my 'vulnerable teacher' self onto center stage. Pleasingly, Mangione and Norton (2020) suggest that pedagogic vulnerability provides an opportunity to reconsider prevailing notions of teaching excellence within higher education.

The learnings that have emerged from my repeated loss of self-regard as competent in the virtual classroom have centered on how care, expressed through deep listening, humor, encouragement, reassurance, and a steady, compassionate presence, has been multi-directional; just as I have worked hard to extend care to my students, they demonstrated their care for me and each other. Care has become a resource in my virtual classrooms from which my students and I draw and which we all contribute to and replenish. The care work of teaching was eased by the care work of my students

in a way that I have not experienced in such an immediate and sustained manner when teaching face-to-face.

Care in education has long been acknowledged as central to the work of teachers (Walker & Gleaves, 2016); however, care in higher education has been acknowledged as more peripheral than in school education policy and practice. For the academic who privileges care in their pedagogy, the risk can be that their scholarly heft is undermined among some colleagues, and consequently, critical discussion around educational care can slip into a conversational lacuna in higher education debates (Baice et al., 2021).

These challenges, together with the prospect of a continued landscape of globally distributed students, require close consideration of what wellbeing, care, and connection will look like in a reimagined higher education environment. The post-pandemic academy provides opportunities for a re/turn to the relational core of all teaching and learning, regardless of the mode of delivery or subject matter.

4.4 Wellbeing as a Shared Responsibility

Wellbeing and mental health are often conflated, creating a range of problematic issues, not the least of which is the potential risk of abdication of responsibility to a single service within higher education. It is becoming more apparent that higher education institutions have a shared responsibility to promote and support the wellbeing of their community (staff and students alike) and provide adequate resources and support services for those experiencing psychological distress (Duffy et al., 2019). It is also vital to recognize the increasing and problematic gap between emerging industry needs and graduate capabilities. Many of these capabilities include what are often referred to as 'social skills', such as collaboration, emotional intelligence, and creative problem solving that draw on divergent perspectives, all of which can be developed through the application of wellbeing science. Therefore, it is unsurprising that there is a call for wellbeing to be central to the core business of higher education (Orygen, 2017) and thus the responsibility of all (see *Examining Mental Health and Wellbeing Policies in Australian Universities* chapter for more on this).

While macro-level university initiatives are one lever to achieving this outcome, these are often complex and time-intensive to implement. However, we can also work in tandem from a meso-level, building capacity for academic staff to design pedagogy and course experiences in such a way that they foster social connection and help prevent or mitigate adverse psychological outcomes for students (Brownson et al., 2016). Feelings of social connection are essential for supporting psychological wellbeing (Mauss et al., 2011), and having a solid network of supportive connections at university helps obtain emotional and instrumental support (Bye et al., 2020). When students feel connected with their peers, they may also feel more motivated to learn (Sung & Mayer, 2012). Engaged and connected students are also more likely to willingly participate in interactive learning activities with their peers, enriching their

understanding of the learning content (Kent et al., 2016), and helping develop important employability skills, like teamwork and communication (Boud et al., 1999). Therefore, there is a strong impetus to attend to connection and wellbeing in the classroom, rather than only focusing on the cognitive and metacognitive aspects of learning.

It is also relevant to consider how we can elevate student voice in a shared responsibility model for wellbeing. There is a growing call to incorporate students' views on these matters, as their voice is often missing from the models we draw upon to support and increase their wellbeing (Colla et al., 2022). How might we move beyond their voice being predominantly present through assessments of teaching and learning in student experience surveys to also include their perspective on how their university experience enables wellbeing and core graduate capabilities; the life skills that will enable them to address a post-COVID world? This may challenge our existing teaching practices, with Wehmeyer et al. (2021) calling for an approach that is more reflective of heutagogy, or self-determined learning. In this approach, the educator plays more of a design role, enabling the autonomy of the student to be prioritized, "with the goal of producing learners who are well-prepared for the complexities of today's workplace" (Blaschke, 2012, p. 56).

4.4.1 Co-creating Hope for the Future: Rachel's Story

In the *Before Times*, we developed an interdisciplinary subject to support students' transition from their undergraduate study to postgraduate and job-ready graduate attributes. The curriculum was grounded in the nexus of wellbeing and learning science, leveraging critical insights from the literature to ignite high-quality motivation for students. However, as the pandemic unfolded, uncertainty escalated for students, particularly regarding the impact on their further studies and job prospects. It was clear we needed to revisit the narrative of the subject and curate more intentional practices to develop graduate capabilities to thrive and contribute in a post-COVID world.

We recognized a need to incorporate more student agency in co-creating the learning environment. More importantly, we wanted to elevate their voice and agency to address some of the significant challenges facing the planet. To achieve this, we expanded our curriculum design to build a Community of Inquiry (CoI), where students collaboratively engaged in purposeful critical analysis and inquiry into the subject content (Vaughan et al., 2013). We also grounded our pedagogy in hope. Hope has been identified as a crucial psychological resource that is interactively derived from two distinct cognitive tools, pathways, and agency thinking that support goal achievement (Snyder, 2002). The reciprocal relationship between these factors provides the dynamic motivation to *act*—a key differentiator of hope from other related constructs such as optimism and self-efficacy (Snyder, 2002). Our goal was to build students' agency and divergent thinking, developing collaborative partnerships with each other and our teaching team to explore the content and its application to

their education and career development. What resulted was an ePortfolio that curated their capabilities to create change in their world.

The impact of keeping our scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) alive in a challenging and changing environment was a powerful experience for both staff and students. As one of our students noted,

> (this) was honestly one the most beneficial and definitely the most life-changing uni subjects I have ever done … I learnt so much about myself in the process and genuinely found the whole experience profound and really awakening! …We gained so much, from a developmental aspect, working through the content and connecting with one another.

The shared responsibility for co-creating the learning experience also had a profound impact on the wellbeing of staff, highlighting the interconnected nature of this relationship. This was evidenced by the reflections of one of our educators:

> This was a deeply rewarding experience for me personally—to know that I played a small part in supporting the wellbeing and development of our young people as they take their place in the world.

4.5 Risks to Wellbeing and Connection in Higher Education

Developing this chapter provided a unique opportunity for us to reflect on the embodied experience of engaging in a collaborative process of SoTL in action. Our team hailed not only different disciplinary backgrounds but were also located across the globe. As we reflected on bringing this scholarship to life in our own practice, we identified several inherent risks that emerged, both for the wellbeing of students and our experience in connecting as colleagues.

Reduced teacher presence. In the online classroom, educators need to convey a strong sense of 'teacher presence' (Stone & Springer, 2019). Being present in the online space demonstrates to students that their teacher is invested in their learning and available to assist them where required. This is even more important when the constraints of temporality and physicality are loosened (e.g., when the learning design relies heavily on asynchronous teaching and learning activities). There are many ways to create teacher presence in online learning, including posting welcome videos in the learning management system and engaging in asynchronous communication via discussion boards. Another strategy is to create assessment feedback using short video recordings (featuring the teacher's face and voice) as a substitute for text-based comments. This approach can have a significant impact as assessment feedback moments are one of the few occasions where online students receive individualized information about their learning progress (Henderson et al., 2019).

Considerable research has shown that online students feel more supported, valued, and encouraged by their teachers when they receive video instead of text feedback comments (Borup et al., 2015). This is because the medium of video can convey rich conversational cues, including tone and pace of voice, facial expressions, hand gestures, and body language (Daft & Lengel, 1996). Therefore, when

teachers create video recordings that convey messages of care, support, and encouragement (Ryan, 2021), students can see and hear that their teacher values them as individuals (Mahoney et al., 2019).

Online learning platforms are political and pedagogical. As educators moved to online learning platforms out of necessity during the pandemic, it is essential to acknowledge that these virtual gathering spaces are not neutral; rather, like physical classrooms, they are deeply political and pedagogical sites (Smith & Hornsby, 2020). Contemporary education suffers from delusions of universality, informed by the notion that knowledge is global and 'best practices' are generalizable, somehow existing outside of the individual student experience (Osberg & Biesta, 2010). When we temporarily lost access to physical classrooms that provide a pretense of neutrality, it became increasingly clear that student and staff contexts have profound material implications for wellbeing and connection. Contexts are a vital force in the connections we make in online spaces of learning. For example, these contexts included feelings of isolation in students who were separated from their family by oceans, while others felt overwhelmed with the constant presence of multiple family members under the same roof. From students and staff working across time zones, unable to participate in small talk about the weather and local happenings, to students experiencing food or housing insecurities, perhaps wondering if university attendance is still a possibility for them.

Still, even while acknowledging the diverse contexts and cultures present in an online classroom, educators may feel unable to attend to these complexities with sensitivity and grace. Some students may choose to make their challenges with online learning visible, while others may regard their socio-material conditions as a private matter. So, how can educators avoid falling back on the comfort of universalizing pedagogical approaches, thereby disregarding differences and 'making other into same' (Cliffe & Solvason, 2016. p. 2). One way might be to invite land acknowledgements from each member of the class. This simple move allows students to locate themselves in the world, sharing a brief statement about how they relate to their place, perhaps remarking on what they are noticing or feeling connected to seasonally in the place they live.

While research attends to the importance of designing curriculum for student wellbeing and connection, there has been minimal discussion regarding the implicit pedagogies of the platforms themselves, which engender affective capacities and cultivate ways of doing, being, and relating. For instance, consider Zoom. This ubiquitous platform has found its way into the everyday lives of students and educators worldwide, providing a democratizing opportunity for education rife with pedagogical complexities. When in a Zoom 'classroom', opportunities for open dialogue and exchange can be stifled by the platform's affordances. As users cannot easily look around the room for expressions and gestures typically assist us in negotiating conversation, speaking out comes with the risk of talking over another speaker. Alternately, one can raise a virtual hand to indicate they have something to contribute. This creates pressure for every word and sentence spoken. This new way of performing

participation is difficult for some, who may choose to opt out of classroom discussions or share their thinking in the chatbox, in the literal margins of the screen. While these spatial, temporal, and affective forces hold material implications for students that cannot be disregarded, they do not solely or even collectively dictate student experience. They should be acknowledged, however, as vital participants in assemblages of student belonging and wellbeing.

4.5.1 A Break in Lines of Relation: Angela's Story

The period during the Trump presidency marked a sharp rise in Asian hate crimes in the United States, and in 2021, eight Asian women were shot and killed in spas in Atlanta, Georgia. This violent event sparked mass protests against anti-Asian violence in major cities across the world. During this tumultuous time, I assigned my predominantly Asian students, many of whom were studying offshore, to watch a segment of a documentary about babies for a class in Educational Foundations. The segment included footage of a toddler in Mongolia sharing his yurt with a rooster and a cat. In our Zoom seminars, several students reacted angrily to the scene, saying that the film was racist because it wrongfully portrayed Asians as living archaic lifestyles.

I defended the documentary, arguing it did not claim to represent the race of the children it featured but rather was intended to provoke conversation about the differences in children's everyday living and learning contexts. Naturally, the subtext of this conversation was steeped in the news of the day and the knowledge that anti-Asian sentiment is not only real but largely overlooked. I sensed this was the actual conversation needed at that moment, an acknowledgment of the attack, and an expression of care and concern for Asian students, particularly females. Unsure of how to do this appropriately in an International Zoom call with 185 students, I 'looked away' from the responsibility that the moment entailed, damaging the lines of relations between myself, my students, the attacks, and the content of the film. What if instead, I had acted courageously, with an ethos of care? What might have been possible?

4.6 What If?

We note that in educational spaces there has been a rush to return to 'business as usual'. The grand neoliberal narrative proclaims that this is the path to economic and national wellness. We hope that this chapter can serve to keep the way open to rethink higher education through the lens of what might be if we integrate wellbeing and connection into the fabric of our institutions. In the spirit of speculative futures, we invite you into our collective reimagining of what might be if we…

- *What if* we made a collective commitment to rethinking education founded on an ethos of care, with care defined as "everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair 'our world' so that we can live in it as well as possible" (Tronto, 1993, p. 103).
- *What if* we acknowledged, developed, and resourced educator competencies around wellbeing in the same way that we bolstered technical competencies in online delivery?
- *What if* we considered that rather than being a distraction from meeting learning outcomes, wellbeing and connection are a crucial part of our pedagogy that brings them to life?
- *What if* we didn't wait for pandemics (or other disasters) to catalyze a deep embrace of SoTL in our teaching practice?
- *What if* we committed to using class resources/platforms to discuss collective matters of care and concern, to think what matters, and who and how it matters?
- *What if* we allowed these discussions to call out our differences and relatedness rather than play at false universalisms? What might this make possible?
- *What if* care was a core academic capability that infused teaching and learning practices and the ways of being together as educators, researchers, colleagues within the academy (as has been the experience of this group in writing this chapter)?

As we have illustrated, wellbeing and connection are urgently needed in an aching world and therefore crucial to integrate in higher education. What if we embraced the opportunity to make this change in our world?

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Chapter 5
Traversing Learning and Leading Collaboration: Stepping Towards New Power Values During Turbulent and In-Between Times

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Abstract In this chapter, we consider how perspectives about leadership, debates related to higher education, health promotion principles, and frameworks of new and old power informed our work as a group of disparate academic and professional staff who were identified to establish a'Digital Taskforce' (DT) during the global pandemic. The role of the DT was to support teaching staff in Melbourne Graduate School of Education as it moved rapidly to remote and online teaching. By exploring aspects of our work together within the ecologies of policy, systems, groups, and individuals, we identify key elements of responding and bringing about change as a group of leaders during that turbulent time. Through our collaborative narrative, we also ponder how facets of our work may inform emergent ideas about the scholarship of teaching and learning and the possibilities for rethinking higher education.

Keywords Leadership · Power · Teaching · Learning · Work · Digital

5.1 Introduction

As the landscapes within higher education continue to move, it is apparent that the ways leadership is conceived and demonstrated inside these institutions are changing. Over the last three decades, there has been a continual shift to managerialism and new public management across public servicing institutions and services;

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however, scholars have also mounted a significant pushback against the managerialist perspective that has come to permeate universities (Barcan, 2013; Connell, 2019; Davis, 2017; Selkrig et al., 2021). For example, Barnett (2018) maintains several ecological zones exist in higher education beyond narrow economic agendas: knowledge, economy, learning, culture, natural environment, social institutions, and human subjectivity. He asserts that we need to imagine the feasible possibilities of how those zones intersect to reconceive higher education and assist in returning to and advancing the public realm. Our chapter is entangled in this space of how we might reconceive higher education and the work we do.

To contextualise our narrative, the authors of this chapter were identified by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE), in which we work as a core group of faculty and administrators to form a short-term 'Digital Taskforce' (DT) to support the Graduate School in progressing rapidly to remote and online teaching. The DT members[1] initiated a series of deliverables approved by MGSE Executive[2] in April 2020, one of which was to develop a Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for MGSE. This strategy, which captured the momentum and legacy of the changes in direction and practises of teaching and learning as new digital spaces emerged, was approved in 2021. Over the remainder of 2020, the DT worked swiftly and effectively to organise a multi-tiered approach to supporting MGSE's teaching staff technically and pedagogically as they developed and delivered their subjects through emergency remote teaching. The DT also explored and adjusted existing protocols for the Learning Management System (LMS). In this chapter, we reflect on the ways in which we operated as a leadership team and what assisted us in laying the solid foundations in a brief time for a significant shift by Graduate School in approaches to and understandings of teaching online, as well as acting a catalyst for staff to consider the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). We draw on literature related to leadership, higher education, health promotion, and frameworks of new and old power to analyse and reflect on our work with Graduate School colleagues and the outcomes we achieved during that liminal time that will guide the Graduate School to other ways of working.

5.2 Leaderships for Turbulent Times

Within discussions that neoliberal agendas have gone too far, there is a view that universities may have lost sight of their purpose and issues of social value. In providing a standpoint not too dissimilar from Barnett's (2018) perspectives, while

[1] MGSE Taskforce Members: Nicky Dulfer (Lead), Matt Harrison, Amy McKernan, Thomas Cochrane, Kathryn Coleman, Catherine Smith, Jeni Rasche, Olivia Stocks, Mark Selkrig, John Quay and Jo Blannin & Vikki Pollard (both of whom left MGSE for other employment during 2020).

[2] The MGSE Executive works to ensure the Graduate School maintains its commitments to academic excellence and sustainability, and provides a safe, collegial working environment for staff. https://education.unimelb.edu.au/about/structure-and-leadership.

also drawing on the work of Saul (2005), Grant (2021) maintains that universities and those who work in these institutions are in a liminal period and at a crucial point in recognising "that the current system is broken, and we need to use the 'in-between times' to develop a new model" (p. 115). As part of this model, Grant (2021) argues that we need to consider how universities can engage with 'new power' values and practices rather than 'old power' ways of operating. The concept of 'new power' as introduced by Timms and Heimans (2018), brings together the strategies of social movements, community organising, and citizen participation, examining these strategies through the network affordances of social media and other internet connective spaces. Disruptions to different sectors: movements (#BlackLivesMatter), companies (Airbnb, Uber), and news (Guardian UK crowd sourcing politicians' expenses) are all examples of new power. Building on Timms and Heimans' (2018) ideas, Grant (2021) mounts a manifesto for universities to return to their original values of strong social purpose along with applying new power values and skills such as open-source collaboration, crowd wisdom, and sharing. In considering these values and notions of power, we connect our experiences of leadership as social process where interaction between groups and individuals is much more than the actions and thoughts of an anointed individual leader (Spillane et al., 2001). Leadership is therefore the practices and processes that emerge in social sites through interaction, communications, and relationships between those involved and local structures (following Uhl-Bien, 2006). As such, leadership takes a distributed form.

Distributed leadership is distinguished from similar conceptions of leadership, such as shared leadership, because it emerges from the interactions of a network of individuals; conjoint as opposed to individual agency (Ho et al., 2016). Further, leadership in action is integrated across multiple activities, roles, relationships, and systems (Bolden et al., 2009). In frameworks that consider these approaches to leadership, Gronn (2002) suggests that distributed leadership becomes greater than the combined sum of individuals leading action. With such a form of leadership, the collective agency to bring about change can be usefully directed simultaneously to points of need (Outram & Parkin, 2020). It is becoming increasingly clear that leadership has a lesser focus or interest about those who occupy formal positions of power, instead, the perspective is that leadership occurs at all levels within an organisation and more broadly across systems (Dickinson & Smith, 2021).

Lingard (2003) discusses less hierarchical approaches to educational leadership such as productive leadership that highlights a collective responsibility and ethos. In these circumstances, dispersed leadership can focus on domains such as pedagogy; management structures and strategies; culture of care; professional development and supporting professional learning communities; commitment to change; currency of knowledge both in terms of political climate and pedagogy; dispersal of leadership; and relationships with the teaching and learning community (Hayes et al., 2001). These domains could also be seen as ecological zones as described by Barnett (2018) where the interplay between these domains is also crucial. Similarly, the notion of generative leadership described by Edwards-Groves and Rönnerman (2013) entwines leading and professional learning that is focused on student learning as well as educators' own learning. When these situations are created an ecological

and relational dimension between professional learning practises and leading practises can emerge. These situations seem to be ideal for engaging in SoTL. While there can be different interpretations of SoTL, in this chapter we draw on some of the characteristics described by Waller and Prosser in The Rapidly Changing Teaching and Research Landscape: The Future of SoTL and the Teaching-Research Nexus, Ling (2020), and Selkrig and Keamy (2015), where SoTL involves identifying an inquiry, engaging with literature, research, theory, and evidence while also being critical and collegial to reflect on teaching practices.

As a dialogic endeavour, leadership is also moulded by the qualities and values of the individuals who are involved and how these are conveyed (Kraemer, 2011). The mission of the university has traditionally espoused a service to public good, and in arguing for bringing new power into the university, Grant (2021) identifies the call for aligning the values of collaboration as a way of meeting the values of the generation of students that are currently being served. Grant (2021) draws on University of Pennsylvania president, Amy Gupman, quoting "a university is first and foremost a social undertaking to create social good" (Grant, 2021, p. 75).

Formation of the Digital Taskforce (DT) did not follow the traditional old power structure of leadership residing with top levels of faculty and administrator ladders. Often, leaders responsible for making decisions and implementing change are less directly involved in the day-to-day teaching work. The DT members had a wide range of teaching or teaching-related responsibilities distributed across the Graduate School which resulted in a new power structure with a robust understanding of the experiences across MGSE. Members of the DT included faculty and administrators as well as 'third space workers'. Whitchurch (2015) uses the term 'third space worker' to describe those who blur the binary divide of academic and non-academic in the work they do by operating in a "discursive space that is neither 'managerially' nor 'ideologically' constrained" (Whitchurch, 2012, p. 143). Grant (2021) argues that third-space professionals provide a crucial spine within a university and are acting out and applying several of the "values that are critical to the success of the new power university" (p. 119). The shift to blended and then online learning presented such a discursive space and resulted in this new power structure informed by and collaborating with different level and groups across the Graduate School. Recently, and as a reflection on the global pandemic, Fernandez and Shaw (2020) contend that there are three areas of leadership best practise for navigating challenges that emerge from unpredictable circumstances. These practises involve connecting with people, distributed leadership, and communicating clearly. Circumstances core to the challenges facing universities before and during the pandemic which contextualise the call for leadership that we discuss in this chapter include recognising some of the issues of anxiety and the threat of comparatively poor mental health (Grant, 2021) where the changes in practise are rapidly required. Along with aspects of leadership, we have also indicated that the ecologies that interact within higher education are also complex (even without the uncertainty of the pandemic). In the following section, we outline how a framework from the health sector offered us a way to work within this time of uncertainty.

5.3 Health Promotion Principles to Consider Living Through Change and Uncertainty

To frame the actions that were required by us in leading the shift to fully online teaching and learning during the pandemic, we draw on health promotion literature and theory, particularly on the legacy of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (WHO, 1986). Facing the global health emergencies and disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic added layers of complexity to understandings of health promotion, not the least of which was the need for rapidly building capacity, confidence, and connection (Levin-Zamir et al., 2021) in unfamiliar digital spaces. The original Ottawa Charter (WHO, 1986) introduced the three strategies of *enable, mediate,* and *advocate*, which were considered quite radical at the time due to the agency it ascribed for the ordinary citizen in determining their well-being (Scriven & Speller, 2007). Awareness of the need to embed initiatives for connectivity and care for staff and students within the work of the DT, the Ottawa Charter provides a way of considering our actions within such health-promoting initiatives.

Informed by an "active and interactive" comprehension of health and wellbeing (Kickbusch, 2007, p. 9), the Ottawa Charter provides a vision for wellbeing that focusses on partnership across sectors. The Ottawa Charter seeks to address injustices (Bharmal et al., 2015) with an agential approach to individual and community skill development and engagement in health. Essential actions include consideration of public policies, supportive environments, personal skills, community action, and a reorientation of services (WHO, 1986).

In the 30 years since the establishment of the Ottawa Charter, there has been a revisiting of the enable, mediate, and advocate strategies. For example, there is some suggestion that advocacy should be replaced as a term in the use of the Ottawa Charter and the work of health promotion. Advocacy is sometimes conceptualised as inappropriate, even unprofessional, because of concerns about upsetting leadership (Stoneham & Symons, 2019). Shifts in approaches to activism have seen universal (McGuire et al., 2006; Seale, 2017) and co-design (Ellis et al., 2015) approaches to advocacy that enacts and create social and physical spaces conducive and accessible for all. This highlights how enactment of the charter has tracked in the same timeline as the emerging new managerialism. We argue that this reflects a struggle between old power and new power agendas.

'Enable' has also been critiqued as perhaps the most controversial of the three 'verbs' of the Ottawa Charter, the argument being that 'enable' suggests a hegemony might now be surpassed as agents gain direct political voice to influence social decisions. This requires revision of structures and processes of leadership where groups are more demanding and insistent, making it much less comfortable for traditional power holders (Saan & Wise, 2011) and we argue this process exemplifies an emergence and need for structures of enabling new power. Enabling a secure foundation in a supportive environment, access to information, and opportunities for making healthy choices is a key to achieving well-being. Technology and changes in communication have enhanced citizen control of information, affected the time and

pace of work, and flattened models of authority (Woodall & Freeman, 2020), which suggests modes of reciprocal and discursive partnerships toward sharing skills and knowledge.

Therefore, in this chapter, we reconnect to the radical elements of the health promotion strategies (advocate, enable, and mediate) in the face of a crisis where human capital and care were directly challenged by threats to budget lines in the institution. We analyse the work of the DT through the lens of the three strategies to demonstrate how leadership in this crisis was mindful of the need to support change at points of need, and to influence key administration outcomes such as strategy and protocols. We also see this work as providing some clearer foundations and opportunities for discussions and practices about the possibilities of SoTL to emerge.

This chapter is as much an 'outcome' of a distributed leadership style that draws from the Ottawa Charter (WHO, 1986) as is the protocol we developed. The co-produced set of reflections we provide in this chapter also acts as an opportunity to share insights of the individual experiences of leadership within the shared endeavour as we worked across a range of ecological zones at both a Graduate School and university level. As a collective and critical reflective narrative, this chapter draws on many of the characteristics of SoTL mentioned earlier and aligns with the genre of writing known as Scholarly Personal Narratives (SPN), which Nash (2004) argues is a legitimate and valuable form of scholarship of teaching and learning. We also draw on Grant's (2021) representations of old and new power (see Table 5.1) as a conceptual device to assist our analysis of the work of the DT during this time of flux in the institution.

What follows are three vignettes that have been crafted from reflections on our actions and experiences supporting staff in their pivot to emergency remote teaching. We then turn to examining these within the conception of new power and distributed leadership that emerged during the turbulence of change. We posit that this could serve to conceptualise and imagine leadership structures that may best service future higher education.

Table 5.1 Contrasting old and new power (adapted from Grant, 2021, p. 12)

Old power	New power
Formal (representative) governance, managerialism, institutionalism	Informal (networked) governance, opt-in decision-making, self-organisation
Competition, exclusivity, resource consolidation	Collaboration, crowd wisdom, sharing, open-sourcing, co-design
Confidentiality, discretion, separation between private and public spheres	Radical transparency
Expertise, professionalism, specialisation	Maker culture, do it ourselves ethic
Long term affiliation and loyalty, less overall participation	Short term conditional affiliation, more overall participation

5.3.1 Advocate: Leading for Access and Inclusion

Embracing the challenges mounted against advocacy in health promotion (see Stoneham & Symons, 2019), we reclaim the word 'advocate' in the spirit of working to be informed about and in consultation with community to forward an inclusive change agenda. In the rapid pivot to online learning and teaching, we advocated simultaneously for the interconnected needs of staff to swiftly develop skills and knowledge to use new online tools and digital spaces while also being mindful of ensuring these new skills and digital spaces were supporting the needs of the students. Our activities to support this work spanned from designing and facilitating online learning showcases for staff, regular newsletters, curating living examples of digital practices taking place in the Graduate School that were highlighted via the LMS, and developing digital support materials informed by principles of access and inclusion to enable teaching staff to ensure all students were able to study online.

While desired and beneficial to many in the learning community, affording high-quality learning experiences for students with disabilities and neurological differences has not always been easy. Accommodations have often been reactionary and retrospectively planned. Despite the advocacy of the teaching staff and the student support services, they have often been subject to the limitations of the established instruments and artifacts of teaching and learning. For example, students who are deaf report often arriving at classes to discover that a particular learning space was not equipped with a functioning hearing loop, or that activities had been designed in a way that precluded or minimised their capacity to access these experiences on an equal basis to their classmates.

Emergency remote teaching presented opportunities to reignite and advocate an agenda for inclusive education which we hope underpins all educators' approaches to SoTL work. Technologically enabled universal design of our online spaces was a key component of this re-imagining of business of usual, with the push for a rebalancing the relationship between agency, access, and the mediation of teaching and learning. Members of the DT who had to traverse various ecological zones within the university and took responsibility for supporting staff in creating inclusive online spaces saw automatic captioning as challenging the exclusionary norms of the existing tools and practices. If every Zoom meeting or Kaltura recording was automatically subtitled, then we meet needs and create additional access points to learning. Additionally, all learners benefit from simultaneous processing of complementary auditory and visual stimuli (Cuevas & Dawson, 2018). In other words, universal captioning provides effective and inclusive digital pedagogy.

5.3.2 Enable: Leading to Remain Connected

Building on our advocacy work to support staff and students with digital learning and teaching, we undertook a range of initiatives designed to 'enable' all concerned to achieve their fullest potential. The affordances of digital technologies were shared

in more instructional, workshop-style activities that supported the development of general and specific technical knowledge and skills for teaching. We scheduled more regular opportunities for professional learning in the form of weekly drop-in sessions called MGSE Staff Virtual Lounge to support all staff (particularly sessional staff) needing assistance, feedback, and advice. In some instances, these activities took the form of working closely with individuals and groups within the Graduate School; collectively, we provided technical and/or pedagogical and learning design advice and support for more than 100 staff. We hosted a range of other events, including workshops and webinars to target specific online needs, for example on hybrid mode teaching. We also created and supported communities of practise and mentoring partnerships focused on digital transformation or peer feedback processes. In addition, we established shared weekly feedback, collaboration, and professional learning among digital leaders within the DT; providing a space for strategic, policy, and praxis discourse as a professional community of scholars to meet the developing needs of Graduate School. This work also demonstrates how fundamentals of SoTL underpinned the ways in which we worked with colleagues.

As 2020 progressed and all the members of MGSE community became accustomed to remote working, we were often reminded of the need to remain 'socially connected' whilst 'physically distanced'. We and most of our colleagues found the sudden upending of the order of things destabilising, and it was easy to feel as though we had been cast adrift from the support previously found in the physical spaces of our offices and classrooms. These had been social spaces of 'reciprocal maintenance' (van Dyne, 1996, p. 162) of Graduate School life and work; alongside the loss of on-campus classes and work there were also the lost opportunities for hallway collegiality.

Recognising the loss of these valuable interactions, we tried to re-establish some informal opportunities for connecting with colleagues through a small community of practice. In this approach to enabling colleagues, we intentionally leveraged the flattened hierarchies, recognising that part of enabling the whole community was continuing the practises of incidental knowledge and skill sharing. We invited six colleagues, mostly in the early stage of their academic careers, to be part of the group. Four accepted the invitation, and two members of the DT became the fifth and sixth members of the group. We met several times in the final six months of the 2020, each time with a loose agenda based on opportunities for seeking and sharing expertise. Leadership emerged from the interactions of the network of individuals, from conjoint as opposed to individual agency (following Grant, 2021). In this activity, participants brought the kinds of questions and challenges they might otherwise have raised with the people they passed in the hallway or shared an elevator with. As a group, we worked to find solutions and share resources. Members of the community expressed gratitude for the space to raise issues and find support, and the group became a way for us to understand the experiences of staff who were at risk of being dragged along by rapid change, rather than being supported to engage thoughtfully in diverse ways of teaching and connecting. More importantly, it became a model of sharing that enabled and distributed leadership in other systems within the larger community.

5.3.3 *Mediate: Leading to Embed/Maintain Integrity*

Mediation was a defining role of the taskforce across all DT activity. Mediation was instrumental to tailor supports for academic colleagues with a range of needs (from both digital support and well-being perspectives), to manage competing priority points of need through such significant and sudden change, and, not least, to create authentic and enduring reform that would best serve the Graduate School beyond the life of the DT and meet executive approval.

Two of the key legacy documents the DT developed were the LMS Standards and, most significantly, the culminating work that became the MGSE Digital Strategy. Both documents were the products of the multi-faceted perspectives of our membership-perspectives that were further developed through the open and robust collaboration of the group-that we guided through the hoops of executive approval as a team committed to their integrity. In this way, the DT team of academic, professional, and third-space workers (Whitchurch, 2015) acted as a mediating agent in representing the interests of those most impacted by the change through negotiation with the hierarchic structures of traditional leadership to which we were nevertheless beholden.

The LMS standards were formed as much as a professional learning framework for staff as a means of quality assurance and equity in access for students. Through the development process, the DT acted as a conduit between management and teaching academics. The draft standards were socialised through connection lines with academic teams, committees, and discipline groups by DT members. When presented to executive leaders, we were able to provide an informed rationale for any points of contention and make minor revisions as required to see the standards to endorsement. Therefore, rather than a top-down measure imposed on staff, the standards were adopted in the spirit of their (co-)development-as a genuine tool conceived by colleagues (practitioners and support staff themselves) invested in promoting digital capacity in the Graduate School.

The standards then worked as the foundation upon which we built a program of pedagogical and technical supports to staff, mediated through various projects undertaken by teams within the distributed taskforce membership. These included the development of an LMS support community for staff (providing for regular communications, repositories of guides/supports and weekly tips addressing points of common need), the development of Commons templates to meet specific standards, a suite of professional learning activities and the establishment of a virtual drop-in lounge for those teaching during this time.

Investment of key stakeholders across Graduate School organisational structures or ecological zones in the development of the Standards, in addition to other enduring work of the DT, has helped establish lasting integrity and contributed to/elevated ways in which staff engage with SoTL. The membership of the DT representation of various strata of academic and professional contexts, with diverse collegial reach, shared understanding of the purpose and merit of these initiatives. Shared ideology and shared ownership established a more unified commitment to the work of MGSE's digital cause.

5.4 The Emergence of a Plan: Leading to Support Change During the 'In-Between Times' and Beyond

The remit to develop a Digital Teaching and Learning Strategy (DTLS) for MGSE which would align with other policies and strategies that guide the Graduate School was not a high priority in the early days of the DT. More pressing actions were required to support staff with shifts in practice and to provide some clarity about remote teaching. As the pandemic continued throughout 2020 (and still does as we write this chapter in September 2021) a series of practices and actions emerged, some of which we have described above. These practices and actions were based on seeing, hearing, and listening to a range of ecological zones within the Graduate School, then developing strategies through our shared collective agency, symbiotically and mutually influenced by each other (Gronn, 2002). We began shifting this practice into policy by enacting or 'living' a policy that had not yet been formalised or articulated.

Drawing these three vignettes together, we identify an open, dispersed leadership model which is quite different from the binary (sometimes adversarial) leader/follower model of old power. Sharing expertise through communities of practice aligns with the concepts of new power and the ethics of do-it-yourself culture rather than leaving it to those with specialisations. It is a process by which the actions and establishment of practices co-designed for wellbeing and equity, inclusive of different expertise and voices, inform and establish the direction and form of policy. These are conditions that provide opportunities to consider through SoTL how we interrogate our teaching work and the practices with which we engage.

Through effective mediation and the opportunity afforded by the unprecedented nature of the change 'emergency', the tension between the new power structure and the old in which it was embedded did not impact the DT's effectiveness. Distinct from traditional top-down reform processes, these documents were informed by practitioners within and surrounding the teaching and learning space and developed through genuine consultation with and respect to key stakeholders and the digital agenda. While the DT operated as a new power model of dispersed leadership-leveraging the experience and collaborative output of its diverse membership and connections-the development of more formal documents of strategy and policy nonetheless and fittingly required approval from the executive level of the old power structure within which we were established and situated.

Drafting the digital strategy involved re-framing some of the original Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion actions such as building healthy public policies, creating supportive environments, strengthening community action, developing personal skills, and reorienting services health (WHO, 1986). Our rationale for doing so recognised the need to adjust the nomenclature for an education context, and we were also conscious that the strategy would circulate and be interpreted within the 'old power' regime. However, in these 'in-between times' (following Grant, 2021), by framing the strategy across these areas of action and identifying a range of people to be involved in implementing the strategy, we hoped to embed distributed leadership ideas that would progress the work that needed to occur in a spirit similar to the ways we had worked as a team.

5.5 Looking Back and Imagining Forward

The initiatives and work of the DT demonstrate a nexus of old and new power emerging in higher education and the challenges that lie ahead as we imagine the future for universities following the pandemic. As Grant (2021) identifies, we are 'in-between times', and there is much that can be learned from initiatives that straddle a theoretical spectrum between old and new power. Many of the initiatives of the digital taskforce that aimed to support the shift to digital teaching and learning required imagining the future. Social space created when the group came together was augmented by these imaginings. The initiative and frameworks; advocate, enable, and mediate, and where we have positioned these in Table 5.2 along a continuum to bridge the old power/new power divide offers a way to consider how we navigated these liminal, in-between times.

From this perspective of being in the in-between, teaching, learning, and leadership practices take form in and are formed by living the practice in 'the site of the social' and are often enacted at 'points of need'. In our view, this mutual accomplishment is necessary for generating learning and leading capacities and working with change. Developing an understanding of leadership within higher education that endorse non-hierarchical, collective leadership provides a range of affordances. Bringing together people across different ecological zones, from various career stages, and in a range of various academic, professional, or third space roles can be powerful and effective. As Ling (2020) articulates 'nobody owns the definition of SoTL' (p. 67). As such, providing a space for crowd wisdom and collaboration (new power values) to nurture different skills and draw on different knowledges has great potential to generate new ideas about how we approach and think about SoTL.

New power values, or at least the attributes we have discussed, are not the status quo in universities. In this instance, opportunities and actions we have discussed here emerged during that liminal period in a time of crisis and instability. The work of the DT, which is now disbanded, led to a digital strategy; a formal policy document which fits into the governance of the Graduate School, a transfer of new power actions into an old power mechanism. To have an ongoing impact in universities in the in-between times, it is necessary to be able to work within the old power structures. However, what we demonstrate in this chapter is that by embracing new power, co-design, co-production, and other aspects of SoTL with actions informed in health promotion and social connection, change can also be achieved quickly, and aligned with agendas of equity and inclusion. In drawing on our experiences and framing collaborative scholarly personal narrative we also concur with Brookfield (2017) who argues

> Narratives that are theorised and generalised as they are shared offer a powerful avenue for the scholarship of teaching and learning to have a dramatic impact on educators' practice. (p. 184)

By reflecting on our actions and sharing these insights we hope that it may prompt others, individually and/or collectively to also consider new power perspectives, and ways to lead and engage with SoTL. Our narrative shows how our practices

Table 5.2 Digital taskforce actions on the spectrum between old and new power (adapted from Grant, 2021, p. 12)

Old power	In -between times ⟷ Spectrum			New power
Identifying action				
Formal (representative) governance, managerialism, institutionalism	Advocate: Promote existing inclusion agendas			Informal (networked) governance, opt-in decision-making, self-organisation
Competition, exclusivity, resource consolidation			Enable: Care oriented, supportive, reciprocal approach, shared resources, approachable, facilitating	Collaboration, crowd-wisdom, sharing, open sourcing
Expertise, professionalism, specialisation			Enable: Informal, experimental, digital pedagogy	Maker culture, do it ourselves ethic
Managing change				
Confidentiality, discretion, separation between private and public spheres		Mediate: Co-designing and meeting agendas-managing across levels		Radical transparency
Long term affiliation and loyalty, less overall participation	Mediate: Speaking back to the older system by turning actions into policy: DTLS			Short term conditional affiliation, more overall participation

had impact as we navigated the in-between time in higher education. Similarly, by reconnecting with the radical elements of health promotion through advocating, enabling, and mediating across multiple hierarchical structures and ecological zones we were able to see how important and long strived for changes can be possible.

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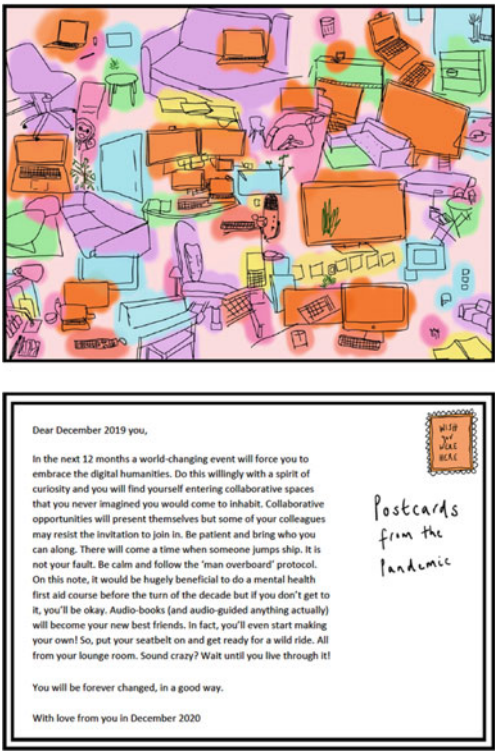
Part II
Educational Pedagogies (Interlude)



Postcard from the Pandemic, 2020. 'Postcards from the Pandemic' were co-created to capture our collective data in new ways through a postcard sent to the self (past, present, or future) to archive this moment in our careers

The postcard above highlights the uncertainties and possibilities in the journey we had undertaken as a group of educators. As this practice narrative suggests, while we

were not clear about the path ahead, we were buoyed by the possibilities presented by rethinking our pedagogies considering the shifts that had occurred in our educational practices. At the start of the pandemic, the transition to online teaching was viewed as necessary but a temporary solution, as we would soon return to 'normal'. At the University of Melbourne, 'normal' has yet to return. When we do return to campus, there will be a different version of what was 'normal' because much has been learnt during the pandemic that has reshaped our pedagogical practices. Our collaborations have expanded SoTL practices that existed largely in disciplinary silos, to interdisciplinary and collaborative focus of SoTL within a community of inquiry. A key aspect of the educational turn that we experienced during the pandemic was academics working together to rethink and reimagine the scholarship of teaching and learning and develop next practices for post-pandemic higher education. We explored the shifts and changes to our practices and the pedagogies that informed our reimagining of teaching and learning in higher education.

Teaching and learning at the University of Melbourne were predominately an on-campus, face-to-face experience pre-pandemic. March 2020 was very much business as usual in terms of preparing for classes on campus and using the Learning Management System (LMS) as an administrative tool to inform, for example, students about class times, subject outlines, material to read in preparation for class, and notes from lectures. There was little preparation for the pedagogical tsunami that hit at the end of March 2020. The pivot to online was challenging, in the main because many were unfamiliar with translating their educational pedagogies into the online environment. For example, how do we engage with students online when the majority prefer to turn off their videos and mute their microphones? For many of us, the reality was teaching online, at home, to faceless and voiceless students. Engaging with students was a concern particularly as issues of student wellbeing, connection, and belonging were amplified as 2020 rolled into 2021, and we were still teaching from home. In addition, access and equity issues compounded concerns, as some students did not have access to the Internet, or shared Internet with other members in their household. We also noted that the freedom to speak freely and openly online posed a few problems for students when classes were recorded. There were also knowledge ruptures, particularly pedagogy in the digital learning space as many academics sought to decolonise the curriculum. There were challenges for rethinking higher education considering Australia's historical mistreatment of our First Nations people, while teaching in digital spaces to students in diverse educational contexts, locally, nationally, or globally. As a collective, we sought to reimagine the possibilities, rather than be weighed down by the challenges.

The four chapters in this part explore the educational pedagogies that emerged over the two-year Melbourne lockdown and how these have informed the educational turn towards communities of inquiry around SoTL. The pandemic raised challenges for us on issues such as who has access to education; how can we develop inclusive practices and connections within learning context; what is the impact on student experience and wellbeing; and emerge from the pandemic with pedagogies that address some of the educational inadequacies of the past.

The chapters in Part II offer possibilities for a future higher education where students are globally dispersed and able to study anywhere. They speculate on the emergence of a new and opportunistic higher education. The ecology of higher education will shift as institutions consider the changing needs and aspirations of students across the world. The notion of 'the campus' will probably expand beyond the local, and institutions will need to consider educational pedagogies for the globally distributed teaching and learning context. Within this reimaging, the higher education landscape will become more competitive, and institutions will need to expand their business model, to innovate and develop next pedagogies for a changing higher education landscape. This will also require a repositioning from individual academic and siloed disciplinary pedagogies to collective academic activism within interdisciplinary spaces, informed by communities of inquiry around SoTL.

Chapter 6
Reconceptualizing Assessment in Initial Teacher Education from a Relational Lens

Mahtab Janfada, Martina Tassone, Marian Mahat, and Nadine Crane

Abstract This chapter examines the challenges and possibilities of assessment practices in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs. Informed by Bakhtin (1986), speech genres, dialogic approaches and a democratic lens to assessment, the chapter questions the nature and purpose of assessment considering the COVID-19 pandemic. New understanding of the concept of 'relationality' through pandemic experience provides opportunities for 'democratic' assessment is perceived as a point of departure in the learning process for both students and teachers, and not a destination. This perspective incorporates students' diverse voices and agency and encourages assessment practices to promote not only instrumental aspects of learning, but also the epistemological and ontological layers of learning and being. Though this conceptual interrogation can be applied to any educational context across programs locally and globally, the focus is on ITE in the Australian context, due to the important role of pre-service teachers in creating and designing assessment practices. The chapter provides case study a example that enabled pre-service teachers to play an active and influential role in the development of assessment artefacts and practices. It concludes by projecting opportunities and challenges to teaching and research practices, locally and globally.

Keywords Dialogic approach · Democratic assessment · Relationality · Initial teacher education

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the challenges and possibilities of assessment practises in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter questions the nature and purpose of assessment in higher education and explores how insights emerged from pandemic times inform what next practices might entail. In essence, the dominant perception of assessment is challenged, usually defined as

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"making judgements about what someone is capable of, based on some sort of demonstration or product" ranging from high-stakes examinations to low-stakes formative tasks, and it includes judgements made by educators, students, their peers, and others (Dawson et al., 2020, p. 3).

By contrast, 'relational' assessment is the focus, and development of this in ITE is outlined in this paper. Relational and sustainable assessment has emerged as one of the most significant lessons from COVID-19 times locally and globally, as teaching academics have attempted to connect students through assessment while enhancing their interaction and engagement in learning. Bakhtin's (1986) dialogic approach to self, knowledge and the world informs the philosophical positioning of our chapter, which will be translated in how assessment literacy can be perceived from different theoretical lenses; from structural, to cognitive and social toward critical approaches. This will lead to a discussion of democratic assessment (Shohamy, 2001) which underpins the importance of 'relationality' and sustainability in assessment practices.

New understandings of the concept of 'relationality' and sustainability through the pandemic experience created opportunities for 'democratic' assessment in which, assessment can be perceived as a point of departure in the learning process for both students and teachers, and not a destination. As will be shown in the vignettes later in this chapter, this perspective acknowledges student' diverse voices and agency and encourages assessment practices to promote not only instrumental aspects of learning, but also the epistemological and ontological layers of learning, connected to rethinking educational pedagogies.

Though this conceptual interrogation can be applied to any educational context across teaching programs locally and globally, with the focus on ITE in the Australian context, against the backdrop of the pandemic. There is an important role for preservice teachers in creating and designing assessment practices for use in teaching placements, practicum, and professional practice. To prepare for such tasks, they need to experience a diverse range of assessment approaches during ITE (Hamodi et al., 2017). Thus, this chapter will explore the opportunities of such diverse approaches to assessment design and implementation within ITE programs.

The relational framework for assessment in practice is explored through the authors' personal experiences and vignettes in applying or designing a more relational and sustainable assessment practice. This includes initiatives at the subject level, at program level for re-accreditation and at university level such as using an innovative co-design approach that enables multiple stakeholders to play an active and influential role in the development of assessment artefacts and practices. It concludes by projecting further opportunities and challenges to assessment locally and globally, leaving the readers with provocations to contemplate in relation to their own context of teaching and learning.

6.2 Theoretical Framework

At the philosophical level, Mikhail Bakhtin's (1986) theory of dialog and heteroglossic narratives of the world inform this chapter. He conceptualizes self, knowledge and being as contested, diverse, and in dialog with each other. Bakhtin's main philosophical claim is that language (including the language used in educational context and assessment) is inherently dialogic, and there is a dialogic relationship between language, culture and the formation of the self (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986). For Bakhtin, language is dynamic, multi-voiced and contextual. Dialog, therefore, is a "complex metaphor that incorporates the intricate relationship between speakers, between points of views, between social discourses, between past, present, and future that are held together in language" (Hamston, 2006, p. 56). This perspective acknowledges that the world is contested and full of tensions and struggles, which results in multi-voicedness (the existence of multiple voices in one utterance). Therefore, in each utterance and dialog, different ideologies are faced, worldviews, and conceptual horizons which interact with each other (Wertsch, 1991). In doing so, a heteroglossia emerges, reinforcing the integral role of unique, heterogenized narratives people tell/create as life-long students. True dialog, in Bakhtin's terms, leads to transformation of the self, or what he calls "ideological becoming" (Bakhtin, 1981, pg. 341). Bakhtin's notions which inform this chapter, in particular, are heteroglossic perspective to self, being and culture, and the process of 'ideological becoming'. We will explore how our own assessment ideology and practices allows for the plyphonic and heterogeneity of ideas/perspectives coming to the fore. It is important to realize how heteroglossia is promoted in our assessment, to prevent the homogenization of students' voices through use of templates which kills off people creativity and unique signature.

Moreover, we discuss how assessment practices can be re-visioned to be perceived as a process through which students become more competent and confident not merely to pass the course but also to apply them in future pedagogic practices in teaching. This philosophical perspective is richly translated into assessment literacy perspectives across sectors and disciplines which in turn encourages us to think about relationality/dialogic lenses and democratic assessment.

The main questions addressed in the chapter are also unpacked from each theoretical perspectives elaborated below, i.e., analyzing the purpose of assessment in each perspective, identifying issues and obstacles in assessment practices in each approach, and exploring what hinders opportunities for students' voice/identity. In particular, how this pandemic climate offered opportunities for moving from classic approaches to assessment toward more 'democratic' and 'relational' assessment is discussed. This in turn will highlight and speculate what 'next practice' might look like and how it can be informed by SoTL. It is worth noting that as we speculate around 'next practice', we are not looking at the notion of time in a linear fashion of past, present, and future; rather, we contemplate on the notion of time as iterative, and dynamic phenomenon where past, present, and future are constantly shaping and informing each other. COVID times afforded us with this retrospective contemplation

of what we learn from the past experiences which might be revitalized or brought to the fore for the 'next' practice. Vignettes in the following section will highlight this dynamicity and emerging nature of insights across times.

6.3 Multi-layered Thinking Around Assessment Literacy: From Structural to Relational

Literacy in the current globalized world, is beyond a person's ability to read and write; it also encapsulates the person's ability to competently and confidently present themselves socially and critically (Gee, 2015). This has high significance in a multilingual, multi-cultural context such as Australia. The insights to the way assessment is theoretically conceptualized through different lenses are discussed and explored it under three categories for assessment literacy, namely: instrumental, epistemological, and ontological. These categories are important to be unpacked as it uncovers how in each approach the role of human connection and relationality is dismissed or marginalized at the expense of homogenizing voices or arriving at pre-defined goals through dominant approaches to assessment.

6.3.1 Instrumental Lens

This is based on *skills-based approach* to assessment, which is grounded in behavioral psychology, and emphasizes technical aspects of knowledge. According to Hyland (2006), this approach assumes that literacy is a set of atomized skills to be learnt by students and transferred to other contexts. Hence, the focus is "on attempts to fix problems with student learning, which are treated as a kind of pathology" (p. 120). Meaning is perceived as static and there is not much room for dialogic negotiation over multiplicity or complexity of meanings for the students to operate as inquirers in the world (de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2016; Pennycook, 2014) and they remain as voiceless outsiders. In assessment, this corresponds to surface features, such as Handbook description on assessment tasks or how to tick boxes required for passing a test. Though it is vital to have that pragmatic information for students, that level does not encapsulate the ideological underpinning of the assessment practices, nor promote knowledge around assessment itself. Critical scholars challenged this approach because of its focus on the de-contextualized features and myth of neutrality (Benesch, 1999) governing that ideology. That neutrality is exemplified in the 'template-driven' design of assessment tasks which promote the identical and homogenized outputs from students. This is in the form of 'banking education' system where students are perceived as passive recipients of information and they take that information back in the assessment.

6.3.2 Epistemological Lens

This is based on *socialization approach* which is grounded in a socio-cognitive paradigm, appreciating social and cultural aspects of learning and education. Though this approach brings awareness to the transformative nature of communities, and authentic learning is considered as contextual, it considers culture, knowledge and discourse as homogenized, uncontested and universal. In doing so, it fails to appreciate the complexity, diversity and heteroglossic identities/narratives that Bakhtin (1986) speaks of. In assessment practices, it can be considered as efforts made in having some peer-review or feedback or doing a group assessment. Communication is key here, but it does not always lead to diversity of ideas, instead, it may be a space in which inadvertently group members try to come up to a shared point and focus on similarities rather than differences. This is not to say that group work or peer feedback is not helpful but the ideology that informs that practice is important. This is what critical lens tries to underscore.

6.3.3 Ontological Lens

This is based on the *critical approach* to literacy and grounded in Freire's (1993) critical pedagogy and critiques a positivistic paradigm to education or a 'banking' model of education (p. 248) which encourages passivity in students and does not afford any opportunities for students to develop an authentic and autonomous voice in society. Unlike the socialization model, this approach emphasizes students' experiences, or more critically, the unequal power relations which structure those experiences. That is where Lea and Street (1998) see literacy as something we *do* which is an activity "located in the interactions between people and stories they weave together" (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 3). The core focus here is on individual's signature and voice as they are in communication with others. In other words, the community of practice and social groups are considered as spaces for becoming aware of one's unique views and positionality, making it contested and debatable within the community and beyond (Janfada & Thomas, 2020). In this view, assessment is seen as a space for manifesting one's own unique journey of becoming a more proficient, competent, and literate person locally and globally.

Scholarship in literacy approaches elaborate on the way students' needs are considered in academic contexts. According to Benesch (1999), in dominant skill-based approaches, students' needs are seen as students' 'lack' of certain competence which results in students' attempt to assimilate to and accommodate the existing hierarchy. In other words, it "narrows human capacities to fit particular forms" (Simon, 1992, p. 142). This is when using one template to measure everyone learning is based on rigid, pre-determined and monologic criteria. Benesch (1999) talked about *rights analysis* which calls attention to the importance of taking into consideration students' opportunities for negotiation and resistance both within and beyond the classroom.

In other words, within specific social contexts, students can exercise their right to challenge dominant discourses and pre-existing sets of expectations. For teachers, this process involves a complex discovery of what is possible, desirable, and beneficial at certain moments and in certain contexts for students. Hence, the concept of students' needs becomes more complex and is focused, not simply on what students need to do, but also on who they want to become.

Shohamy's (2001) key ideas around democratic assessment tackles the fundamental ideological questions in assessment policy and practice. She states in democratic assessment, (a) tests are not considered as instruments of power and thus not reaffirming societal power, (b) rights of elites are equally considered as ordinary students in multicultural societies, no loser or winner is identified, (c) collaboration and cooperation in assessment process are encouraged, (d) assessment shall mediate ideologies and practices in more open, democratic and negotiable ways, and prevent the use of tests as powerful mechanisms capable of imposing draconian policies that have no empirical base.

Shohamy also poses important questions which will act as speculative questions for the readers of this chapter and address them from our own experience and expertise. These questions are:

- How can assessment play a role in changing old notions of homogenous and uniform policies and practices?
- How can tests be introduced to create more constructive, open and updated policies?
- Where is it all happening? diverse multilingual and multicultural societies, but assessed through monologic tests/assessment

6.4 Assessment in Initial Teacher Education in the Australian Context

The literature on assessment in teaching courses acknowledges the need for more relevant formative approaches to assessment in initial teacher education (ITE). In particular, it emphasizes that if graduate teachers are to implement robust assessment strategies in their own teaching, they need to experience a range of assessment approaches during ITE other than traditional ones (Hamodi et al., 2017). These include a range of formative assessment approaches such as self-assessment, peer assessment, self-grading, and negotiated grading (Hamodi et al, 2017). However, Thomson et al., (2021) in a critique of university assignments, found that 70% of assignments only required a single communication mode and this was usually in the form of a written response. They found "less than a third of the assessment pieces were multi-modal. And only 11% enabled students to practice their spoken, written and visual communication skills in an integrated way" (Thomson et al., 2021). There is a strong focus in universities on summative assessments which researchers have found can impact negatively upon students' learning (Harris & Dargusch, 2020).

What is seen as ideal in terms of university assessment can sometimes be difficult to achieve due to a range of external mandates are placed on universities in terms of assessment requirements for pre-service.

ITE providers have been mandated to implement the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) which enables pre-service teachers to demonstrate their learning against the Australian Institute for Teaching and School leadership (2017, AITSL) 37 teaching standards, and which ITE providers can report on. This would be considered a high-stakes summative assessment that all pre-service teachers in Australia are required to pass to be eligible to graduate and commence teaching. At the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, this is referred to as the Assessment for Graduate Teachers (AfGT) and each pre-service teacher completes this high stake summative assessment as part of their final teaching placement.

The adoption of the TPA by universities is a direct response to growing interest in the ITE sector and the preparedness of graduates for teaching. This can be directly related to the increased criticism of teachers' practice based on student declining performance as reported in large-scale testing regimes such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). In the Australian context, the results from these assessments have directly been attributed to poor classroom teaching which in turn is traced back to poor teaching preparation. A 2014 report into ITE (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, 2014) identified the need for ITE providers to ensure a final summative assessment was implemented that provided pre-service teachers with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the links between academic and practical skills and thereby ensuring they are classroom ready, this resulted in the mandating of the TPA for all ITE providers within Australia.

In 2021, as part of the re-accreditation process of the Master of Teaching at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, a range of assessment options to enable students to demonstrate their knowledge were explored, as opposed to the standard essay that has often been the dominant mode of assessment in ITE programs. The re-accreditation process occurred during the COVID pandemic, and this provided a backdrop to think about how assessments could be done differently. The following section outlines three examples that illustrate relational and sustainable assessment in practice. They highlight the importance of the inclusion of collaborative voices in assessment. This re-imagined approach to assessment is part of potential change in the landscape of ITE.

6.5 Relational Assessment in Practice

In this section, three examples that illustrate relational assessment in practice are provided. These examples consider Bakhtin's (1986) dialogic approach and Shohamy's (2001) democratic lens to assessment, that takes into account pre-service

teachers' diverse voices and agency and encourages assessment practices to promote not only instrumental aspects of learning, but also the epistemological and ontological layers of learning and being.

6.5.1 *Relational Assessment in Two Subjects: Global Literacies and Curriculum Design in Plurilingual Context*

As part of introducing teaching and learning initiatives and pedagogical interventions, the design of two subjects—*Local Literacies in Global Contexts* and *Curriculum Design in Multilingual Era*—reflect the ideas captured in this chapter. The focus on individual identity, creation of unique learning space for each learner, promoting heteroglossic perspectives to knowledge, language, and self was explicitly evident in both subjects, specifically in their titles, resources, assessment practices, relationality and students' engagement, and pedagogical practices toward pre-service teachers' life-long learning and expansion of their learning to their workplaces as potential/actual educators and teachers locally and globally (Janfada, 2021).

The title of both subjects suggest that local stories are equally significant as global ones; they suggest awareness on living, being, and teaching in a multicultural and plurilingual context of education which needs competent and confident global citizens. Consulted resources from different theoretical and pedagogical paradigms offer depth and breadth for pre-service teachers and to consider heteroglossic views and choose resources agentively as relevant to their purposes. In the latter subject, the driving principles, aligned with Bakhtin's theory, is on van Lier's (1996) AAA principle (Awareness, Authenticity, Autonomy). In his influential book, Interaction in the Language Curriculum, Van Lier (1996) firmly reinforces the dialogic nature of teaching, learning, and language education. He establishes the AAA principles, namely, Awareness, Autonomy, and Authenticity to underscore the multivoiced narratives that teachers as curriculum designers can bring to their classrooms. He argues that this occurs, only, if they become critically aware of what drives their practice, ideologically, politically, and socio-culturally; seek for authentic texts and authentic practices for particular people, context and times and exercise their autonomous pedagogical action which serves students best. Thus all class discussion, and group work shed light on these principles. At the end of the subject, in dialogic discussion and reflection with students' works the fourth 'A' as 'Agency' was added. If the classroom is a space that truly endeavors to be dialogic in nature, based on relationality, it challenges conventional understandings of 'assessment' and its dynamic nature; in this light, both teacher and learner must be able to exercise agency, albeit interchangeably and with some barriers of circumstance.

Both subjects acted as windows to open up new horizons to learn 'language', 'culture', and 'self' in the dialogical sense, rather than being assimilated into it. Moreover, local and global identities, or self and other can continuously and dialogically be

constructed among students and pre-service teachers, between pre-service teachers and the lecturer (me) as well as within the lecturer as both insider and outsider. Beyond that, the dialogic nature of language, culture, and 'self' helps students in the process of *authoring*, which contributes to the (re)formation of the self. As Fecho and Clifton (2017) remarked, "to cultivate agency in a dialogical self is also to cultivate awareness of selves in dialog, in flux, and in progress" (2017, p. 134).

These values and principles unfolded in the way assessment is designed and promoted. Informed by Bakhtin's (1986) and Shohamy's (2001) dialogic and democratic lens, the subjects encapsulate the instrumental, epistemological, and perhaps most importantly the ontological levels. In essence, tasks were scaffolded in order to provide them with increasing level of Awareness, Authenticity and Autonomy through weekly reflections on scholarship and their practices, discussing them with peers and, demonstrate their own agentive voice in making a change in their context locally and globally. Not only did they include the individual as well as group's work, it also allowed for multi-modality and multi-literacy practices across languages, countries, and educational contexts. One significant task in both subjects is for students to share their (potential) transformation as a result of the subject: this transformation could be at any level (being/self, knowledge, teaching, languages). This was designed to reinforce the idea of unpredictability and emergence in the process of learning, beyond the pre-set learning outcomes. Moreover, in this collaboration, there was no *More (or less) Knowledgeable Other* (MKO) (Abtahi, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978), rather 'differently knowledgeable' professionals could bring their thoughts together to explore and expand pedagogical possibilities across times and places.

Last but not least, the assessments were perceived not as a destination or final point in the subject, rather as a point of departure which meant pre-service teachers need to think about the purpose of writing an assignment in relation to their future professional life, or identity as a teacher/educator and how this might inform their vocational literacy.

6.5.2 Co-design as an Example of Relational Lens to Assessment Practice

Learning is a social process where multiple stakeholders or community partners interact with one another to challenge and develop new knowledge and ideas (Wenger, 1998). Learning is not static, nor is it a process of transmission, instead through the social environment, learning is dynamic and, in fact, co-created. Knowledge co-creation, however, is not only a process that emerges from the interaction and construction of multiple perspectives and/or artefacts (Paavola et al., 2004) but also where new knowledge is socially validated through the interaction of multiple stakeholders (Kangas, 2010).

If pre-service teachers are to implement robust assessment strategies in their own teaching, they need to experience a range of assessment approaches during ITE (Hamodi et al., 2017) and have opportunities to validate these approaches through interaction with others (Kangas, 2010). In a higher education context where stakeholders tend to have more say (Mahat & Dollinger, 2019), co-design is one way for graduate teachers to experience the dialogic, social, and critical (Bakhtin, 1986) approaches to assessment design, which in turn embraces the structural, cognitive, social, and critical level of learning.

Co-design can be defined as "a highly-facilitated, team-based process in which teachers, researchers, and developers work together in defined roles to design an educational innovation… for addressing a concrete educational need" (Roschelle et al., 2006, p. 606). A bottoms-up collaborative approach to design with those at the chalk face (or rather, interactive white board or computer monitor) that 'fit' into real learning contexts have important and measurable outcomes.

In one case study example, a workshop activity that used design thinking principles of 'Discover, Reflect, Ideate, and Evolve' to co-design innovation with teachers (Mahat & Imms, 2021) was used. The process begins by taking stock of current practice and learning contexts. This was done by 'Discovering' different student personas and how this reflects the diversity of the student body in one case study school. Here, the complexity, diversity and heteroglossic identities/narratives that Bakhtin (1986) speaks of become very important as pre-service teachers consider the variety of students' needs and learning approaches.

This was followed by 'Reflect' on the students' experiences by mapping a day in the life of these students. The Conversational Framework (Laurillard, 2012) and the ABC learning design approach (Young & Perović, 2016) was used as a basis for these pedagogical activities and assessments. In this workshop, 11 types of pedagogical activities were explored: Direct instruction, Focus, Hands-on learning, Group discussion, Student Agency, Creative Brainstorming, Physical Practice, Presentation, Transitions, Reflection and Research, to underpin the six learner types articulated by Laurillard (2012).

Using Lego and art and craft materials, teachers then 'Ideate' a prototype learning environment based on the desired learning activities of students. In this context, the learning environment consisted of physical and virtual environments, as well as formal and informal learning spaces in which students learn that offer a range of teaching and learning modalities (Mahat & Imms, 2020, 2021). Finally, teachers 'Evolve' by co-designing an action plan to change one teaching practice and assessment for students. The action plan includes measurable tasks, timelines, resources required, and desired outcomes for the change in practice.

The dynamics of co-design often elicit strong emotions among teachers, moving them between divergent, expansive thinking exercises and convergent, solution-oriented modes of thinking (Mahat et al., 2017). The focus on human values requires collaboration of individuals with varying experiences, which enabled different pedagogical and assessment approaches to emerge from prep-service teachers' collective knowledge and from multiple perspectives. The process positioned pre-service

teachers as active constructors of knowledge, conceptualizing and creating pedagogical and assessment artefacts that are transformed and improved through divergent ideas and continuous iteration. The co-design process also produced relevant pedagogical and assessment artefacts that are situated in real world contexts, and enabled graduate teachers to reflect in and on practice that may have a measurable impact on their own students.

Admittedly, this case study was not an example of co-designing assessment approaches within ITE. It is an example of how, as academics and lecturers of ITE, co-design was used with pre-service teachers to think more broadly about teaching and assessment practices in schools. This case study enabled pre-service teachers to collaborate with each other and consider the alignment between the myriad of learning approaches of students to learning activities and consequently assessment practices in order to support the development of learning outcomes of our students. This community of practice enabled pre-service teachers to become aware of their unique views and positionality (Janfada & Thomas, 2020), challenging and developing new knowledge and ideas with each other. This process of co-design goes a long way to reinvigorate the teaching profession and the transformation of educational practices.

6.5.3 Thinking Critically About Questions in Assessment Policy and Practice

Teachers having the requisite knowledge and skills to assess effectively is described in the literature using the term assessment literacy. De Luca and colleagues (2019) describe assessment literacy as the professional capacity to integrate and utilize assessment to effectively facilitate student learning. Additionally, they describe the more recent commentary as teachers having "assessment competency," and "assessment capability" (p. 1). Commencing in 2023, In their final year of the Master of Teaching (Primary) Course at Melbourne Graduate School of Education, pre-service teachers engage in a literacy subject designed to promote critical reflection on the ways language and literacy is assessed in primary schools thereby enabling them to build their own assessment literacy. The subject will require final year pre-service teachers to think critically about literacy assessment practices and explore the notions of authentic assessment (Clay, 2002), that is related to the real world, and ethical assessment that is fair and just (Gee, 2003).

Throughout the subject the pre-service teachers will engage in a critique of literacy assessment tools and processes and using a set of criteria from Renshaw and colleagues (2013). They will evaluate the literacy assessment tools and processes they have seen being used on their placement as well as a range of literacy assessment tools and processes they will be introduced to throughout the subject.

The assessment for the subject will require the pre-service teachers to engage in their own investigation and critique of a literacy assessment tool or process. They will engage in using the tool or process in schools with a group of students. They will reflect on the assessment and drawing upon assessment literature, they will evaluate the assessment tool/process. This task will enable pre-service teachers to think critically and be meta-cognitive about assessment, and they will then share this knowledge with their pre-service colleagues through a presentation.

This is a clear example of assessment being seen as a departure not a destination. The knowledge the pre-service teachers gain through this assessment is something graduating teachers can take into their teaching career and further enhance their assessment literacy through engaging in critical reflection.

6.6 Conclusion: Possibilities and Challenges

While ITE programs around the world differ in significant ways, these programs tend to include multiple, coherent, and complementary components associated with developing effective teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2017), as is the case of Australia. This coherence around the different components of ITE reflects an increasing neoliberal emphasis on accountability and homogeneity considering criticism of teacher quality. The importance of exploring possibilities within such compliance regimes provides critical opportunities for heteroglossia and multi-voicedness in the assessment process, and to continue to cultivate innovation in ITE.

Whilst the digital world has afforded a range of technologies that have enabled ITE providers to do assessment at a massive scale, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it more critical than ever for ITE providers to approach assessment practices differently. These forms of digital assessment—a much broader concept than 'e-assessment'—require a broader set of "disciplinary voices" (Dawson et al., 2020, p. 3) than traditional approaches to assessment. This provides an added challenge to the complexity of the design of assessment practices.

In this chapter, the inclusion of preservice teachers' voice is presented as essential to design an approach that enables preservice teachers to play an active and influential role in assessment. It can provide a pathway in which they can not only follow their areas of interest and expertise, but also develop their teacher identity with the notion of agency by actively pursuing learning considering their teacher goals (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). This is particularly important considering restrictions in teacher-student interactions during the pandemic (Konig et al., 2020). The inclusion of student voice is not an emphasis on a laissez-faire approach but should be purposefully included and valued to allow each pre-service teacher to develop their identity as teachers whilst fostering creativity, developing expertise, and feeding forward into their contribution to the profession as a graduate teacher. Nguyen and Yang (2018) emphasise the importance of pre-service teachers undergoing shift in identity, particularly as they transition from university student into their role as a teacher. They also emphasize the role of agency as discussed by Beijaard et al. (2004),

and its importance in identity construction through negotiation and tension between agency and structure (Miller, 2009). Purposefully planning to include the voices of pre-service teachers within assessment practice in ITE, particularly in assessment feedback (Nieminen et al., 2021), provides a shift from a traditional focus on an instrumental lens, to embrace a more dialogic and democratic approach in which agency is cultivated and multi-voicedness can be realized.

Cobb and Couch (2018) challenge ITE providers in their role stating, "ITE providers, can play either a reproductive role by reproducing the ideas and practices produced by governments, or a transformative role by disrupting oppressive ideologies and shaping new ideas and knowledge" (p. 40). It can be difficult to challenge mandates in a climate that is dominated by requirements that have a focus on standardization. However, the pandemic has illustrated that rather than merely following policy mandates, schools and universities can be on the front foot in terms of innovation and disruptions to teaching and learning. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how ITE providers and pre-service teachers rapidly adapt to new contexts of teaching and learning online in such unexpected circumstances (Flores & Gago, 2020). The pandemic has not only raised questions about the nature of teaching and ways of supporting the learning and assessment of students but also "challenges teacher education to (re)think ways of (re)educating teachers for scenarios that are unpredictable and unknown" (Flores & Swennen, 2020, p. 453). In addition to increased collaboration between teachers, Darling-Hammond and Hyler (2020) discussed the importance of strengthening collaboration between departments in universities to support pre-service teachers. In particular, teachers need to learn how to support their work with formative assessments (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020), especially when teacher-student interaction is absent or significantly reduced (Konig et al., 2020). In terms of assessment, ITE providers developing assessments for pre-service teachers, need to be prepared to disrupt oppressive ideologies and have a clear set of guiding principles that inform assessment practices, such as those from Shohamy (2001) articulated earlier. This would ensure that ITE providers are not merely technicians blindly implementing policy but become innovators in the field of assessment.

When investigating this complex terrain of assessments in higher education, any synthesis can never truly capture all perspectives. This chapter focuses on one ideological underpinning of assessment practices, i.e., the importance of dialog and voice, and in the specific context of ITE. The theoretical and practical sections in this chapter unpacked some of the nuances and complexity of the issue and offered some pragmatic and tangible suggestions for ITE. The intent is not to illuminate the implications of assessments in higher education generally. Speculative questions and provocations to engage the readers in constant dialog with their own practice and practices of others locally and globally and to re-examine the ever-increasing neoliberal approach to ITE are also offered.

Firstly, how can educators embrace relationality in the design and implementation of assessment to enable it to be seen as a departure rather than a destination? In this chapter, three examples of such instances were provided. Rather than addressing underlying symptoms, the challenge is to engage in continual critical dialog that

embrace relationality more holistically and consistently across ITE. In thinking more broadly, how then do educators implement this relational approach across faculties and institutions?

Secondly, how can assessment be redesigned to promote heteroglossia, and incorporate polyphonics? Co-design is discussed as one method of incorporating pre-service teachers' voices in assessment practices. The challenge here is ensuring that these voices are 'heard' and insights are reflected in assessment practices. In thinking more broadly about polyphonics, educators also need to include collaboration and cooperation in the assessment process with various stakeholders in ITE, including placement schools.

Finally, concepts of identity and agency are considered by asking, how can pre-service teachers be encouraged to challenge dominant discourses of market orientated pedagogies, and consequently develop their teacher identities through being agents of change as they move into the profession? This speaks to teaching as a profession that demonstrates respect and professionalism in teachers' interactions with their own skills, knowledge and practices, as well as with the skills, knowledge and practices of others. Educators need to move from relying primarily on reiterating what is already present in current ITE so that they can imagine a world where our students are academically and developmentally ready to face any challenges.

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Chapter 7
The Teaching Profession: Where to from Here?

Sharon Klieve, Shelley Gillis, Kylie Smith, and Sophie Arkoudis

Abstract During the health crisis in Victoria, teachers were positioned as essential workers in the media and by government. Teachers were seen to play a critical role in minimizing the impacts of the health and economic crisis. At the system level, reactionary responses targeted online platforms and structures to support remote learning. Along with supporting learning, educators' roles broadened to encompass the additional responsibilities of social and emotional support and wellbeing for their students, particularly those at risk of disengagement. This chapter will present four vignettes across early childhood, disability, vocational education, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) delivered within school contexts. The vignettes illuminate challenges faced by the teaching profession in maintaining equitable access and learning for diverse students. Issues around equity and inclusion have long existed in education. In recent times, policies have been employed as the means of achieving an equal playing field for all students. The vignettes highlight the challenges that continue around equity and inclusion. This chapter speculates on how higher education can reposition the complex role of the teaching profession in striving for inclusivity and equity in the constantly changing educational landscape. The chapter advocates for pedagogical and funding changes to support more interconnected and collaborative approaches to teaching.

Keywords Diverse learners · Pedagogy · Teacher training · Engagement

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7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we explore the educational turn as we discuss the challenges for teachers working with diverse student groups across educational sectors. For us, the central issues focus on how we can reimagine education as an interdisciplinary space for collaboration rather than a site that promotes individualism where teachers work in silos. In this chapter, we frame our discussion around 'academic activism' (Barnett, 2021), which Barnett defines as being exhibited in a situation of epistemic injustice and as an expression of epistemic agency. We consider the place of academic activism in preparing teachers to develop their agency to address the educational fault lines that exist for students from diverse cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. This also requires rethinking funding to higher education to support collaboration and dismantle discourses of competition (see Chap. 10).

We draw on our experiences as researchers and educators in the areas of early childhood, disability and neurological difference, English as an additional language (EAL) and vocational education and training delivered to secondary school students. Globally, across educational systems, education is increasingly being constructed within human capital discourses where education policies focus on the production of students as future productive citizens that need to be ready for the current and changing labor market (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Roberts-Holmes & Moss, 2021). These education discourses are shaped within neoliberal ideologies with a focus on managerialism, accountability, marketization, and commodification. Parents are positioned as informed consumers who choose the 'best' educational settings for their children.

Angus (2010) argues that 'evidence is mounting that the neo-liberal experiment has been a failure on many grounds, not least because of its de-professionalizing effect on teachers' (p. 231). Teaching becomes instrumental where the focus of teaching is on the gathering and reporting of data as an administrative task and the teaching of prescriptive outcomes. Neoliberal ideologies place educational success at the site of the individual (student, teacher, and lecturer) and their engagement with teaching and learning. Issues of educational inequality and access are neutralized through quality discourses, namely, that highly qualified teachers and national curriculum, and standards provide a level playing field for all students (Savage et al., 2013). These discourses purport the notion that if a person works hard enough, they can be successful. In this chapter vignettes are presented to examine how neoliberalism silences inequities. We argue that the restrictions during the pandemic made the educational gaps visible. These gaps are not new, rather they have been hidden through neoliberal quality discourses. The chapter invites teachers and academics to rethink the ways in which we might (re)engage in academic activism to speak out against inequity beyond pandemic moments. As such, the educational turn has allowed opportunities to question who has access to education and reimagine educational pedagogies within the changing contexts and landscape of higher education.

During 2020 and 2021 for many countries worldwide schooling has been disrupted due to the pandemic. The response has been a focus on online remote learning, the skills required by teachers to teach in the digital space, and the deployment of technology for students. Materials, pedagogy and policies have been focused on supporting student outcomes and diminishing learning delays often homogenizing the learner as if they are experiencing education and disruptions equally. This is a time where the teaching profession needs to reengage with the question of what is the role of education? There is a need to reconsider and reflect on what works well in different locations for diverse learners, and the implications for developing next practices in pedagogy, not just now during a global crisis, but beyond. This raises many questions and challenges globally for the training of preservice teachers and the role of the university. What types of teachers do we want to produce? What are the effects of instrumentalist teachers? How do we support the development of politically active teachers who critically reflect on how their pedagogical practices support relational teaching that makes inequities visible in the classroom? Giroux (1995, 2007), calls for teachers to engage with border pedagogies and be border crossers where we engage with and theorize power, ideology, and pedagogy. How can preservice teacher programs provide theories and opportunities to critically engage in dominate educational discourse to speak back to policy and pedagogy that silences diversity and difference? What are the possibilities for universities to refine and refocus on education as a more interdisciplinary and interconnected site for collaboration to draw on distributed expertise?

7.2 The Educational Contexts

In this section, we provide four vignettes from different educational contexts. They were selected because they mainly operate outside what would typically be considered as mainstream educational cohorts and contexts. The vignettes illustrate some of the challenges and highlight the pedagogic fault lines that were evident during the extended lock-down in Melbourne for those who educate diverse students from varying developmental, cultural, social or linguistic backgrounds. The vignettes illustrate the realities and the silo approach to education which re-enforces the marginalization of not just the students but also the teachers who catered for these diverse students during the 18 months of on-again off-again lockdown in Melbourne. They also highlight the inequalities of who has access to education during a health crisis across these differing educational cohorts and contexts. We ask the reader to consider the questions these vignettes raise about which students and teachers are forgotten in the larger educational machine? And how universities might work to disrupt the silo approach to teaching across structures, policy, and pedagogy bringing separate sectors and expertise together to create interdisciplinary communities of practice (see also Reaching for Reconciliation in Digital Spaces).

7.2.1 Early Childhood Vignette

Historically, in many Western countries, the policy context in early childhood education and care has been part of a workforce strategy, with a focus on supporting women to participate in employment and support the national economy. In the 1960s in the United States, the Perry Preschool Project undertook research which looked at the effects of a high-quality preschool program for a group of three-and four-year-old children from an African American background who were living in poverty and had been assessed as being at a high risk of failing in the education system (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1981). In more recent times, influenced by the neurosciences, the importance of the early years of life in relation to environments and relationships on brain development has been identified as a significant impact on lifelong learning and successful outcomes for children (Mustard, 2006). Internationally, governments have turned their attention to the importance of early quality education for young children to ensure that they are productive future citizens (OECD, 2019).

During the pandemic in Australia, education departments across the country worked with schools to support teachers to develop online material to support students to learn from home. Early childhood services were not part of this resourcing or support. Long day care and preschools remained open to support front-line workers to continue to deliver essential services to keep economies going across nations. For families who were unable to work during shutdown periods children didn't attend care and there was no mandated requirement for early childhood services to provide online learning to children birth to 5 years of age. The Federal government provided an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Relief Package to support services with low utilization 'to ensure the viability of the ECEC Sector and the continued provision of care for children of essential workers and vulnerable children (for the period 6 April to 28 June 2020)' (Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2020, p. 3). This period has highlighted the precarious status of early childhood education and the inequity for young children to access early learning and early intervention. Globally, emerging issues will rise across the coming years about the impact of young children missing early education. For current and preservice teachers, there are a number of challenges and provocations that will need to be examined. What skills and knowledge do current and future teachers need to become (1) advocates for young children as learners who should have equal access to education like any other older learner; (2) what would be the best ways to support remote learning for young children that reflects their developmental skills and capabilities; (3) what skills and knowledge do preservice teachers need to develop flexible curriculum and resources for children birth to five years? The retention of early childhood teachers in Australia is already a challenge due to comparative poor working conditions compared to other educational services (United Workers Union, 2021). How has the lack of pedagogical support created further incentives to retrain to work in other sectors? How does higher education promote and support early childhood teachers?

7.2.2 *Students with Disability and Neurological Difference Vignette*

Prior to the pandemic, a key focus of policy commitments and initiatives was creating equitable access to education and fostering inclusion for students with disability (SWD). In spite of policy frameworks and legislation initiatives inclusive education for all has not been realized (Tiwari et al., 2015). This inequity in educational access and outcomes was in many ways both illuminated and exacerbated by the rapid switch to remote home learning during the pandemic. Media reporting around experiences of families of SWD internationally in the pandemic period described a number of common issues, with parents and carers reporting that SWD were under acknowledged, "unfairly left out or forgotten" (Knopf, 2020) and that it [felt] "a little bit like they [were] acknowledging these kids after all the other kids" (Cardoza, 2020). Rather than these students' needs being considered as part of core teaching or overall initial planning, family members and carers of SWD reported that their children were "being forgotten.., or being the last group to be considered after arrangements had been made for the rest of the class" (Dickinson et al., 2020) and that "their education [was] "pushed to one side" during the course of the pandemic "for the convenience of the majority" (Weale, 2020).

The shift of responsibility for students' education to families in remote learning allowed family's an insight into children's progress and learning needs. Which in turn resulted in concerns about the ability of schools to cater for SWD specific learning needs both during and prior to the pandemic. A lack of differentiated instruction led to some students being excluded from learning platforms that other students were using, provided with different work that "highlighted" the "low expectations" the school had [with] [s]ome teachers [making] very little effort to ensure [SWD] could participate in classes (Henrique-Gomes, 2020). Many parents voiced concerns regarding lack of adequate support, noting that SWD were more vulnerable than students without disabilities as the learning "gap and the lost time … [was] already a lot more dramatic, … and so this [was] going to put them a lot further behind" (Cardoza, 2020). It was not only families that expressed concern, many educators also spoke of the "the challenge of just reaching their [SWD], engaging them online, knowing if they were understanding" (Sparks, 2021) illuminating the lack of support and skills to cater for this vulnerable group.

Falling behind academically was not the only concern raised in reviewed media. Social isolation from peers was cited as negatively impacting SWD mental health. Families reported that when teachers did provide social supports families felt supported, reported reduced feelings of social isolation and increased engagement in learning for SWD (Dickinson et al., 2020).

In contrast to media that covered the challenges of equitable access, reporting that focused on schools and teachers who were proactive in identifying and addressing access issues for SWD were scarce. The press described some strategies that schools

actively engaged to increase access to remote learning for all students. These educators outlined strategies such as teaching that was "more robust (explicit) and structured with daily schedules and live classes and fewer online platforms" (Stein & Strauss, 2020). It outlined the importance of "stay[ing] consistent and keep[ing] a routine (Knopf, 2020). "Open communication… and frequent check-ins with students and parents" (Villano, 2020) was highlighted as key to inclusion and social support and along with inclusive pedagogical choices supported these vulnerable students not to be "pushed to the side" at risk of becoming a sidenote to the teaching and learning process.

7.2.3 English as an Additional Language Vignette

In Australia, similar to the UK, USA, and Canada, English as an Additional Language (EAL) students are positioned largely on the peripheries of mainstream educational contexts (Davison, 2014). Within the Australian context, EAL students are eligible to attend English language centers for between six and twelve months. In English language centers, the curriculum is taught by EAL teachers who have studied at university for their EAL qualification. One of the challenges faced by EAL teachers in language centers is to teach students from diverse linguistic and educational backgrounds and to ensure their preparedness for entering primary or secondary education. EAL teachers' expertise is informed by second language acquisition theory, as different approaches are required to learn a second language. They are not only teaching students to communicate in everyday conversation; EAL teachers are also developing students' cognitive academic language skills, important for learning and participating in educational contexts. In addition, EAL teachers need to cater for their students diversity by developing their English language skills through consideration of both their language level and prior educational experiences. These aspects of English language are taught with the aim of preparing students for mainstream schooling. In mainstream school, EAL students are not necessarily taught by EAL teachers, depending on available staff and resources. Within secondary education contexts, the challenges are amplified as in the state of Victoria, Australia, EAL curriculum closely mirrors the mainstream English curriculum.

The extended lockdown and pivot to remote learning highlighted some of the inequalities for EAL learners. While students could be kept to a set routine, the educational environment via technology was difficult for EAL teachers. Some of the students struggled with understanding how to use the technology within the learning environment. Some students were shy to communicate online, preferring to remain quiet and not communicate orally with their teachers. This resulted in busy work focusing mainly on writing skills, and less on speaking and listening skills.

EAL teachers found it difficult to transfer EAL pedagogy to an online environment (particularly around oral language teaching and learning). While this is not an issue only for EAL teachers, it is important to consider that EAL students in language centers have only six months to one year to develop their English language skills

before they enter their local schools. This government policy did not change during lockdown, and there has been a negative impact of student learning.

There has also been a loss of EAL teacher expertise since 2020. English language center enrolments have all but evaporated as Australian borders remain shut which limit new enrolments. This has resulted in the closure of one center in 2020 and outsourcing of English language center staff to mainstream schools to support student learning in 2021. This has highlighted the precarious position of EAL teachers as they are positioned as support staff with limited pedagogic authority in mainstream schooling. This has been an issue for EAL for many years in Australia, as well as UK and Canada (Arkoudis, 2005; Leung et al., 2015). As a result, EAL teachers have limited academic activism and ability to share and impact teaching in mainstream classrooms to support EAL students, especially when faced with the possibilities for losing their positions due to decreasing enrolments.

7.2.4 VET Vignette

Policy makers world-wide recognize that a skilled workforce is vital for the economic development and sustainability of a nation (OECD, 2010) and that Vocational Education and Training (VET) will play a pivotal role in a country's post-pandemic social and economic recovery (ILO, World Bank and UNESCO, 2021). Whilst this may entail helping displaced workers upskill or reskill to find new employment opportunities in industry growth areas (ILO, World Bank and UNESCO, 2021), it also entails helping young people to make a successful transition into the labour market from school and/or further education and training. That is, vocational education and training offered to young people whilst at school can help them develop the broader capabilities required to become adaptive, resilient, lifelong learners that will support their career development in a rapidly changing world of work (Firth, 2020).

In Australia, VET can be delivered in a variety of learning contexts including schools, industry, and/or formal off-the-job training settings. Within the school context, students can undertake nationally recognized VET qualifications (or partial qualifications) in combination with general/traditional subjects as part of their final school completion certificate. These VET courses can be delivered entirely by the school or by other approved providers through either partnership and/or auspicing arrangements. The courses are designed to help students develop industry-specific technical competencies, gain greater awareness of employment pathways, and develop transversal life and career skills to support successful post-school transitions into the workplace and/or further education and training whilst satisfying the requirements of their final years of compulsory schooling (Firth, 2020).

These VET courses have also been designed to help improve school engagement and retention rates among vulnerable, disadvantaged groups of learners who prefer to learn through applied learning pedagogies where they can 'apply their knowledge and skills in situations with real-world relevance' (O'Connell & Torii, 2016, p. 77). Traditionally, these learners may have included students with low levels of prior

academic achievement; students with little motivation to study academic subjects with a strong theoretical basis; students with disabilities or special needs in main school or specialized settings; as well as students seeking a vocational and applied pathway into further education, training, and/or employment directly from school (Firth, 2020; Polesel et al., 2020). The pandemic-enforced shift to remote learning was particularly challenging for the VET sector with its applied learning pedagogies, but it also highlighted the agility and innovative capacities of the sector with practical classes delivered via video link, learning tools and kits delivered to homes, and knowledge content packaged in new ways. Through the VET sector emerging innovations may be identified that are applicable more broadly and the benefit of drawing on collaborative practices to enhance delivery and remain responsive to diverse study bodies.

Moving forward, as Australia attempts to recover from the pandemic, applied VET programs within school settings may be the key to reengaging the large proportion of young people who were disengaged with remote learning during the midst of the pandemic and have continued to be disengaged with schooling as schools returned to on-campus teaching. That is, the benefits of applied, experiential learning can be realized by all learners, irrespective of age and/or level of education. However, to develop authentic learning experiences for learners, teachers need to develop "specialized applied pedagogy skills to cater for the diverse needs of student cohorts" (Firth, 2020, p. 4). They must be able to make strong connections between what is being learnt and the 'real world of work' and learn to become 'reflective practitioners' (Downing & Herrington, 2013, p. 239). This raises the question as to what extent does pre-service teacher training adequately prepare teachers to apply age specific, applied learning pedagogies to their teaching? Currently, there is very little coverage of vocational and applied learning programs in pre-service teacher training in Australia and limited leadership and mentoring support within the schools (Firth, 2020).

7.3 Strengthening Teacher Efficacy

The vignettes above are presented to highlight equity and access issues for learners during of the pandemic. Educational inequities existed long before the pandemic, and if we do not make this visible there is a risk that these gaps will continue long into the future. Across the vignettes are three key issues. Firstly, there is a lack of recognition and parity of esteem for teachers specialist skills and knowledge that sit outside the mainstream such as early childhood, EAL classrooms, VET, and special education. Questions need to be asked as to why this is the case, and what are the implications for attracting and retaining teachers in these fields? Teaching in the early years is often associated with care rather than education. Care is seen as a natural mothering ability that can be undertaken by women innately and without skill (Moss, 2006) and therefore devalued. Further, care cannot easily be categorized, accessed, and reported on, limiting possibilities to rank and benchmark. VET education is framed within applied learning and often positioned as training that students who

have lower academic outcomes are guided toward. Secondly, teachers in these spaces have curriculums and outcomes that reflect universal state or national government priorities. These curriculums are Eurocentric and founded on middle class developmental norms. This means that students from diverse backgrounds (neurologically, physiologically, linguistically, economically, and culturally) are displaced or marked as deficit when the content and assessment does not recognize differential learning. Thirdly, teachers are operating within neoliberal education policies becoming instrumental in their teaching practices and expected to have the expert skills and knowledge to meet the needs of all their students. Where teachers lack these knowledge and skills neoliberal discourses place the responsibility at the site of the individual teacher to undertake professional development or upgrade their training. Rather than non-teaching time becoming a space for this upskilling, administrative tasks are prioritized where student data is documented, collated, and reported on to the school community and broader education authorities.

As we think about the future of the teaching profession inclusive of all educational contexts we pose the questions—What does it mean to be a teacher? What skills and knowledges does a critically and ethically engaged teacher need to create a classroom in which all children feel connected, respected and capable of 'success'? What might a community of learners look and feel like that reflects, celebrates, and supports diversity? The critique of neoliberal ideologies helps to acknowledge the way that teaching has become an individual rather than a collective endeavor. Teaching has become instrumental with a predominate focus on data collection to assess, compare and rank learners locally, nationally and globally (e.g. PISA, TIMMS and QS World University Rankings). The result is that teachers attempt to build expertise through ongoing available professional development and upgrading of qualifications. This discourse rubs against the grain of existing research that shows that effective inclusive education requires teachers and other educational professionals to regularly engage in collaborative problem solving. For example, through whole school/institutional collaboration, staff (and associated professionals) can share ideas and strategies to address the specific challenges faced by individual students (Carter & Hughes, 2006). Research shows that when collaborative plans are consistently implemented students' academic and social skills improve (Hunt et al., 2001). Within a community of learners, individual teachers are not required to be experts in all areas but to foster proficiency and build skills along with collaborating with others to address equity for diverse students and enhance learning for all students. At moments of crisis for student learning, teachers do come together to develop a collaborative approach to address the issues. This results in reactive rather than proactive collaboration. This has been the case, for example, in dealing with EAL students in various educational contexts (Arkoudis & Harris, 2019). A distributed expertise approach to inform pedagogy creates different opportunities for student learning across the whole classroom (Arkoudis & Harris, 2019). How might we rethink the scholarship of teaching and learning to situate the important place of collaboration and partnerships?

Through examination of the vignettes, it is apparent that the institutional/government/public gaze needs to be disrupted. Educational inequities are not new. They pre-existed the pandemic and are imbedded in structures and systems of

education. To not pay attention now will result in the continued disadvantage and discrimination of the same communities of learners into the future. The experiences of moving to remote learning have created an opportunity to rethink how SoTL can establish an evidence base for facilitating learning for all students. Without this renewed focus drawing on the benefits of collaborative problem solving and distributed expertise, we will continue to replicate the inequalities that exist for diverse student groups or return to casting shadows on the deepening fault lines.

7.4 Equity and Advocacy at the Centre of the Teaching Profession

As we explore the educational turn post pandemic, we call for a (re)turn to the work of scholars such as Giroux (1995, 2007) and Freire (1970) to recognize the importance of critical pedagogies and to empower teachers as political activists in and out of the classroom. Freire (1970) reminds us that.

> Education as a practice of freedom – as opposed to education as a practice of domination – denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people. (p.8)

Teaching as a practice of freedom, a way to open up fair and equal opportunities for learners, requires the teaching profession to critically question how current systems and pedagogies privilege particular students and not only silence but marginalize (and at times demonizes) others. To create border pedagogies that support respect and navigate diverse cultural and academic knowledges and learning; teachers need to turn their gaze inwards to recognize their own biases and limitations along with those of educational institutions. Teachers across all educational sectors from early childhood to higher education need skills and opportunities to firstly, reflect on systems and pedagogy that supports inclusion and diverse learning and recognize the gaps; secondly, explore opportunities as teacher researchers to use experience and classroom evidence of inclusion and exclusion to advocate for change; and finally, to seek and be permitted opportunities to access and engage with collaborative problem solving and expertise. Distributed expertise both external and, equally importantly, internal to the teaching profession needs to recognize and value the knowledge and input of teaching specialists, industry, allied health, families, student voice, and diverse cultural communities. There is clear and consistent evidence that inclusive educational settings, those that offer ongoing opportunities for the sharing of skills, knowledge and methods to facilitate learning, can confer substantial short- and long-term benefits for students with and without disabilities (Hehir et al., 2016; Kritikos & Bimaum, 2003).

To create change there needs to be engagement with expertise, interdisciplinary knowledge, and diverse paradigms to disrupt the dominant ways that learners are seen, assessed and their learning facilitated. Drawing on the same knowledge, interventions and pedagogical practices results in a remapping of the image of the student and of

the teacher within a binary of success/fail. When we draw on diverse knowledge and experiences, we create what Dahlberg (2003) calls an 'ethical encounter'. In these encounters, the taken for granted truths of how we see and assess the learner and pedagogy is ruptured and new possibilities come to light. To question and change thinking, knowing and doing that is embedded in the SoTL the existing silos of expertise and practice that exist in the teaching profession need to be broken down. Working as a collective community creates opportunities for radical transformational educational change.

7.5 Speculative Implications for the Future of Higher Education

In rethinking higher education, we cannot separate the experiences and realities of teachers in the workplace to our pedagogy approaches in the higher-education institution. Academics also need to demonstrate and model academic activism to allow the teachers that we are educating to take on these roles within their teaching contexts. Silos exist between governments, schools, and higher education institutions. There is a need to develop collaborative practices and infrastructure to support the addressing of big educational issues and to break down the silos that exist. To create real change requires collaboration across higher education and research, government, and schools so that the real-life emerging needs in practice in schools are addressed to inform change. Yong and Watterson (Global Distribution of Students in Higher Education) refer to this as rethinking the ecology of higher education.

Transformative change moves beyond the technical and instrumental. It requires a deep theoretical, historical, social, political, and cultural understanding of education. Transformative change requires a shift from neoliberal human capital discourses that focus on quality, high returns and consumer markets. Higher education needs to lead education as an emancipatory practice for students and teachers which requires collaboration, solidarity, collegiality, and agency (Moss, 2014). Moss argues that education and the teaching profession should value 'interdependency, obligation, responsibility, and contest a self-interested autonomy' (p. 109). Moreover, there is a need to disrupt understandings of students as a homogenized group. The implication of this discourse is that teachers need to not only reflect on their own practice but also identify structures that need to be challenged to enable all learners to achieve their potential. Teachers rather than governments need to drive curriculum. Few professions (e.g., medicine) allow government to drive curriculum and position themselves as experts of discipline knowledge and assessment. The teaching profession needs to take back control of curriculum content and pedagogy. Preservice training courses need more focused anti-bias content across subjects that enables teachers develop the skills to teach, reflect, and evaluate curriculum and the impact on diverse learners. Preservice training needs to provide teachers with the skills and confidence to advocate for change that will improve outcomes for all students. This requires a rethinking

of the structure of university curriculums and the facilitation of connection between interdisciplinarity scholars both within faculties of education and across the university more broadly. In this way, Universities can develop a distributed expertise framework and assist to establish a culture of enquiry in future teachers through building their valuing of communities of practice, rather than siloed expertise. This positions expertise and teachers as valued whilst illuminating the insensibility of the teacher taking on the mantel of expert of all.

This returns us back to the idea of academic activism. If we are asking teachers to be critical pedagogues, then we require academics in preservice teacher training to engage with radical transformative curriculum. Academic activism requires universities and education faculties to speak back to government policies and teacher certification boards, using SoTL as the evidence base to inform change. We need to create sites for debate and dissensus to rethink education as a site for democratic freedom where participation, cultural knowledge exchange, and dialog are the norm and children, families, teachers, and diverse communities can speak and be listened to. Morin (1999, p.90, cited in Moss, 2014) wrote.

> Democracy implies and enhances diversity among interests and social groups as well as diversity between ideas, which means it should not impose majority dictatorship but rather acknowledge the right to existence and expression of dissenting minorities and allow the expression of heretical and deviant ideas. (p.120)

What might democratic higher education curriculum look like? How could we imagine preservice training where students across programs come together? What are the possibilities for more group assessment that involved interdisciplinary and cross-sector inquiry? What would 'training' in networking and interdisciplinary partnerships require? How would relational pedagogies and partnerships disrupt assessment matrix?

Shifting pedagogical approaches is not enough. Creating change within higher education to support interdisciplinary and integrated collaboration within and across faculties/schools and universities will require a return of governments' financial investment in higher education. Universities have become a knowledge-based industry that promotes competition rather than collaboration. Universities rely on full fee-paying students and industry and government tenders to fund academics. Job security and the casualization of employment have also perpetuated competition with every task or activity itemized and formulated within a workload model. The 'ownership' of subjects equals workload points which equals renewal of a contract. What are the risks when inviting others to teach within a subject? The risk is sharing hours and potentially a reduction in the time fraction you are employed. Equally what are the risks of working collaboratively across faculties or universities for teaching and research—the loss or sharing of income? Future sustainability of universities that promote academic activism and collegial collaboration across sites to challenge educational equity will require imagination, innovation and leadership (and funding). This work was required pre-pandemic and will not disappear with a vaccine or digital technology post pandemic.

How might higher education, locally, nationally, and internationally express dissensus and pose *heretical and deviant ideas* to create more inclusive education opportunities for all students and teachers? We suggest that part of the answer lies in also establishing a distributed expertise approach in collaboration with educational bodies, universities, and schools to break down the silos that exist and focus on challenging the status quo of educational curriculum and pedagogic practices. We cannot go back to what we have had before because that ship has sailed. Therefore, we need to use the spaces that the pandemic has afforded to foreground what the future should look like to improve outcomes for marginalized students, thereby improving outcomes for all students. Academic activism and drawing on distributed expertise are one way to address the fault lines that the pandemic has exposed, and reinvesting in higher education needs to occur alongside this. Higher education should lead the way in partnership with other educational sectors, resistance to neoliberal government education policies will require a collective endeavor.

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Chapter 8
Reaching for Reconciliation in Digital Spaces

Maurizio Toscano, Aristidis Galatis, and Catherine Smith

Abstract This multi-voiced and polyphonic chapter discusses the usefulness of discomfort in contestation in digital pedagogies when working for reconciliation in colonised geographies. To do so, we outline the complexities of teaching in digital spaces during the pandemic, and the imperative to honour the first peoples and custodians of the country from which we are teaching. We consider the global and local considerations of movements like #blacklivesmatter, and how the affordances of pedagogies like Communities of Inquiry provide possibilities for embracing the discomforts of whiteness in virtual spaces and providing opportunities for authentic connection in digital teaching and learning.

Keywords Reconciliation · Whiteness · Digital space · Digital pedagogy · Community of inquiry

8.1 Background Context

This chapter is a reflection on *the convergence of changing contexts and changing pedagogies in higher education:* one precipitated by a rapid shift towards 'digital spaces' and the ongoing work of reconciliation with Indigenous individuals and communities. This chapter, written in polyphonic voices, represents our respective encounters as educators and academics with and within the spaces and places of higher education in colonised and unceded Australia—and especially those constructed and mediated by digital technology. The aim here is to gather our collective thoughts and experiences; thoughts and experiences that necessarily carry with them questions concerning whiteness and colonisation, but which nevertheless remain open to the promises and responsibilities that accompany ethical participation in learning and teaching. Central to this chapter is a commitment to preserve the voices of each contributor—as each is expressive of a different inflection of scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)—whilst simultaneously using SoTL and the

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challenge of speculative thinking as a way of unifying the chapter's overall argument. The contribution of this chapter to SoTL in higher education is two-fold. Firstly, it provides examples of the movement from comfort to discomfort that is the prerequisite for change. Secondly, it demonstrates that speculation as questioning (questioning power, knowledge, the means and ends of education, etc.) is an activity and not merely the precursor to action. For discomfort and questioning are the learning and teaching spaces—the places—in which we are most open to the Other.

Learning and teaching in higher education takes place in spaces. These can be physical spaces enclosed by walls and adorned with labels such as 'seminar room', 'classroom', 'laboratory' or 'lecture theatre'. The spaces described here are embedded in over 200 days of teaching and learning in rapid and repetitive periods of social and geographical isolation resulting from pandemic lockdowns. These conditions fructified the extension of learning and teaching 'spaces' to interactive environments mediated by digital technology, including but not limited to, teleconferences, podcasts, games and simulations, multimedia, social media, discussion fora and other digital communication modes and methods. Learning and teaching environments in which digital technology is central to the educational experiences of students and teachers, shall hereafter be referred to in this chapter as 'digital spaces'. Examples of digital spaces (e.g. a seminar via Zoom) or 'traditional' settings (e.g. a seminar that does not rely on multimedia facilities) by no means exhaust what constitutes learning and teaching 'spaces'. After all, the practise of learning and teaching spills over into, and is simultaneously inundated by education that takes place 'elsewhere'. Students and teachers already bring themselves and their experiences of other places (e.g. home, nature, workplaces) into every educational setting, figuratively speaking. However, increasingly, digital technologies allow such places to be co-opted into the 'digital spaces' of higher education.

Our first concern then, with respect to *re-thinking pedagogy* characterised by a tectonic shift towards the proliferation and normalising of 'digital spaces', is to question the ontology of 'digital spaces'. That is to say, exploring the question: What *is* a 'digital space' in higher education? This makes possible a re-imagining of teaching spaces beyond the assumption that they are closed, neutral, material, objective and reliable, and towards a position where we encounter them as 'places' that may be dynamically and communally occupied by bodies, memories, tensions and paradoxes.

There are many contenders for what constitute learning and teaching spaces, and unsurprisingly, just as many objections or criticisms of spaces so defined. For instance, viewing spaces as material, neutral and inert learning architectures may support a rather technical and functional commitment to efficiency, utility and optimisation in learning and teaching. Critics of such a view would insist on greater acknowledgement of bodies within these spaces and their inter-activity with the 'agentive' materials that make up such spaces. What a learning and teaching space is today (its ontology) is just as likely to be a 'digital space' consisting of chimera of physical bodies (staff and students present on- or off-campus) and digital representations and mediators (e.g. webcam streams or avatars). Yet despite the superficial differences between digital and non-digital spaces, the importance of what makes up such

learning and teaching spaces may run much deeper. Undergirding these and other constructions of 'spaces' may be more profound and enduring metaphysical commitments that only become evident in moments of discomfort and disequilibrium: bidden or unbidden.

This brings us to our second concern. Coincident with the rapid turn towards learning and teaching in digital spaces in response to the pandemic was a commitment on the part of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) towards greater acknowledgement and inclusion of the knowledges, perspectives, and histories of nations and communities indigenous to Australia (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) prior to European colonisation in the eighteenth Century.[1] Such a formidable task was undertaken within a broader social movement within higher education and other public and private institutions in Australia that was dedicated to practises of de-colonisation and a reconciliation between Indigenous and post-settlement Australians. Within our Graduate School this amounted to a re-imagining of learning and teaching across all programmes and a major shift in curriculum and pedagogy (which included the development of new subjects and the incorporation of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into coursework activities, readings and assessment). Importantly, this collective enterprise went beyond a mere administrative restructuring. Re-thinking higher education in the light of Australia's historical and current mistreatment of Indigenous people demanded a re-examination of our respective positions of privilege, power and culpability as Australian academics from white-immigrant backgrounds. That is, doing the work of reconciliation through learning and teaching in higher education called for a movement away from the familiar and the comfortable and towards a critical examination of what it means *to be* a white academic creating educational spaces that make reconciliation possible.

A moment in practise that contextualises the spaces we are evoking is recalled. In an initial teacher education class, an American international student questioned why we were devoting so much of our work together on addressing the 'gap' in the educational outcomes of Indigenous students when Indigenous Australians make up only 2% of the population. Anger arose in the room at such a statement largely in the form of indignance. One Australian-born student became so incensed that they had to leave the room to calm themselves. This was in the context of a student-led lesson, so the decision to step in was a loaded one, but the disruption as a discomfort emerging as anger, defensiveness and shame required a reset of the class, and then a debrief.

What the students think they need to know is 'how to teach Indigenous students', as though some essentialist reading will homogenise the needs of members of the oldest continuous culture on earth. What we aim to teach them is how whiteness informs much of the way that they have been taught and are learning to teach. There

[1] The terms Indigenous, Indigenous knowledges, Indigenous ways of being are used in this chapter not as closed, singular and predetermined categories, which would risk reifying these ideas and perpetrating the colonising of language. Instead, these terms are used to speak to the plurality of Indigenous cultures and communities, and the plurality of ways in which knowledge and being are experienced and embodied by Indigenous Australians. That is, our approach is one of 'coming to know' rather than an assumption of 'knowing' about Indigenous Australians.

is pain in this. It is an embodied sensation that tells us we are doing the work. To acknowledge the privilege of whiteness is to acknowledge that until it is disrupted, all that protects this privilege—the power of cultural historical knowledge and legacies, the way it has written itself on our bodies and minds as most valuable—needs to be washed away to make way for social justice. In the neo-liberal university, competitive and capitalist, this cannot easily be seen as logical or even possible. Doing so risks devaluing the very thing we are 'selling' to our customer-students.

Moreover, can we do this without re-traumatising the victims of this history and adding to their labour? How do we shoulder the responsibility for the dominance of 'white victimhood' in these conversations? Eddo-Lodge (2020) expresses that: "In theory, nobody has a problem with anti-racism. In practise, as soon as people start doing anti-racist things, there is no end to the slew of commentators who are convinced anti-racists are doing it wrong" (p. 98). We are informed by scholarship of trauma and the effects of the generational and immediate affective static that creates dissonance in learning and teaching. This affective turn in teaching is considered here alongside the epistemic. Knowing is affective and practises of knowing, teaching and learning create sites (virtual, digital, blended) that often reproduce oppression and dominance, but can be brought to be sites of emancipation and reconciliation.

What follows is not a set of useful findings or conclusions to be accommodated perfunctorily into the contemporary scholarship of learning and teaching in education. Rather it is a set of accounts—albeit personal—of the discomfort brought about by the necessities of a world in which the Indigenous 'other' is no longer, nor should be, silent before us, and nor should the other remain beholden to the disembodied certainties that re-emerge from time to time in different guises. So, we ask: does the rush towards new digital spaces of learning and teaching disguise the oppressive weight of Western metaphysical assumptions about the 'spaces' in which learning and teaching in higher education takes place, and to the detriment of reconciliation with Indigenous communities? If higher education is in chaotic flux, and we are simultaneously called upon to 'do the work' that we should not expect oppressed people to do, do we have reason to pause, lest our impatience and sense of certainty does more harm than good? If we no longer assume or assert the right, nor the privilege, of charging ahead and re-shaping the future in altered but familiar forms, it is because the future—higher education—is not exclusively our own.

These questions go to the heart of the matter. Whenever we decide to re-think the present or speculate about the future of (higher) education, we run the risk of forgetting or ignoring the hidden or dormant assumptions, biases and prejudices that may colour the complexion of our imagination. Hence our first point of departure in this chapter involves metaphysical (re)thinking. That is, re-searching what is foundational in our thinking about educational (digital) spaces (for reconciliation). This starting point is a comfortably uncomfortable one. It emerges from a Western tradition that saw the *vita contemplativa* in terms of philosophy distancing itself from the mundane world of politics in order to engage with what may be the bedrock of our thoughts and actions—and perhaps even what transcends these. Yet, the task of inquiry cannot dwell too long in this 'placeless' space, for our commitments to care about and with the world calls us to examine the foundational within the world. Only

then do we gain the advantage of surveying with scepticism the tyranny of certainty and dogma with which we often live our lives, or the prejudice with which we are encouraged unquestioningly to encounter the others.

8.2 The All and Nothing of Learning and Teaching Spaces

Two ideas haunt the Western imagination and infect our conceptions of education. The first is our capacity to entertain the idea of the infinite and the unbounded. The second is the evocation of nothingness: the empty, the void, a vacuum, zero. The discovery of these extremes has come to terrify us with their persistent threat of alienation. They threaten to make one, as Albert Camus (1955) put it: "[a] stranger to myself and to the world, armed solely with a thought that negates itself as soon as it asserts…" (p. 36). The availability of nothingness and infinity through reason and reflection are concepts at odds with an embodied experience of the finitude of life. They are also at odds with a larger historical account of the coming into being and the passing away of such things as species, mountains, climates and even (perhaps especially) cultures and civilisations. Nothingness and infinity also seem in conflict with that irrefutable experience of being (as being-with-other) that secures us against a free-fall into nihilism or solipsism. Yet despite the Western philosophical landscape being strewn with the wreckage of failed attempts to reconcile the way we live our lives socially and culturally with the metaphysical realms of either the universal 'everything' or the nihilistic and sceptical 'nothing', we remain bewitched by the promise of power and control that accompanies the potential for unlimited creation, or destruction.

The place of the infinite and the void in the Western imagination has a bearing on how we respond to the task of Indigenous inclusion in our teaching, as well as the call to adapt our teaching practises and content to the new platforms, technologies and practises that have come into prominence during the pandemic. An appreciation of the Western commitment to the metaphysics of nothingness and the infinite is helpful we suggest, not only in re-thinking the ways in which these commitments may have conditioned the ideology and practise of the British colonisation of Australia in the eighteenth century, but also in addressing the question of whether such a colonising impulse, or aesthetic (in the Kantian sense), is still in play today in higher education. If this aesthetic persists, then we ought to have concerns about the extent of reconciliation possible between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of being and knowing.

8.3 Learning and Teaching Spaces as Terra Nullius[2]

One way in which Western metaphysics and aesthetics of the infinite and the void may have bearing on supporting or hindering Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies in higher education, particularly under the 'emergent' and 'emergency' conditions of the pandemic. Specifically, it concerns an orientation towards the ontology of learning and teaching spaces that invokes *terra nullius*. The concept of *terra nullius* combines the infinite and void in a two-fold aesthetic, and simultaneously functions as an implicit political claim over the territory and sovereignty of the Other. Put simply, it is an impulse towards taking over educational spaces, negating what was there, and filling the space with a universalising sense of infinite 'potential'. This ignores the deepest ontological, cultural, existential, and phenomenological occupancy of educational spaces by Others (setting aside the possibility for tokenistic recognition of 'what has been done before'). Moreover, it calls upon a classical metaphysical distinction between essence and existence: one that serves to drive the experiences of being-a-student and being-a-teacher into the realms of infinite ideation and ideology, life-negating objectification, or nihilistic relativism. This double dis-placement of being leaves no room for the aspects of Indigenous ways of being that are deemed incompatible with the 'all and nothing' of education. That is, unless these other ways of knowing and being are co-opted.

The response to the pandemic, with its rhetoric of 'pivoting' to the 'new normal' is indicative of the profound challenge of including Indigenous ways of being into higher education within a climate favouring other priorities. It also suggests privileging a functional approach that 'places' Indigenous ways of knowing and being into digital spaces: into digital *terra nullius*. For *terra nullius*, involves a kind of rational and objective (but specious) 'creative destruction' that despite good and reasoned intentions, may result nevertheless in a combination of dis-placement and re-placement. Here the root word 'place' stands for conceptions of (learning and teaching) spaces that eschew the oppressive and negating ontology of *terra nullius*. Place is used to capture the embodied, phenomenological, and existential sense of being-in-the-world—in the tradition of Martin Heidegger's philosophy—whilst also accommodating the notion of place as a site of human and other-than-human inter-action (see for example, Braidotti, 2019; Latour, 2005; Schatzki, 2003). It also includes language and embodiment as a site for political action (see for example, Cavell, 1999; Mulhall, 2014). Hence, the aesthetics of *terra nullius* under the disruption of the pandemic, allows a re-location of education into another place that may be inhospitable to the (Indigenous) Other, whilst making void what was there before.

There is, however, something to be gained from an acknowledgement of this two-step process of dis-placement and re-placement that is already evident in the

[2] *Terra Nullius* is a Latin expression that translates as 'nobody's land'. The phrase is used to describe justification for colonising a territory on the grounds that it is legally unoccupied. British territorial claims on continent of Australia were made in the 18th Century on the basis of this principal, dispossessing the Indigenous nations and communities of their land without a treaty, payment or compensation.

language of 'pivoting towards the new' and its ilk. Such phrases speak not only to dis-placement and re-placement as such, but indirectly to an intermediate place: that which follows the experience of re-location but precedes a fully-fledged acceptance of the necessity to re-place what has been. This state of suspension in the in-between echoes contemporary uses of the notion of liminal space: literally the space marked by threshold. Rather than being seen as a place of inaction, passivity or apathy induced by an unavoidable transition, it may be better thought of in terms of dwelling in a place prior to any conscious, rational, or reflective thinking. This state of suspended judgement—a kind of intellectual silence or pause—is recognisable as the state of epoché as described by phenomenologists following in the tradition of Husserl (with earlier attribution to the Pyrrhonists). Viewed as such, the liminal is a space of 'being' of learning (and not simply online learning). It is a place to dwell—opened up by the 'disruption' introduced by the pandemic response; and not merely a necessary and rational step along the path towards a destination with infinite possibility. Moreover, dwelling in such an in-between place (as opposed to owning it) challenges the kind of nullification or reduction that is concomitant with the impetus for progress and 'getting things done' or 'doing things differently'.

The argument here should not be mistaken for one of political or cultural conservatism or the wholesale rejection of change. Nor should it be taken as an abstract and mysterious positioning that is insensitive to the complex relationships that give rise to asymmetries of power and agency as enacted and materialised in the world. Rather, the argument is meant to caution against a naïve perpetuation or re-instantiation of the metaphysical foundations and aesthetics that are claimed to be at odds with other, non-Western ways of knowing and being. For instance, the phrase Indigenous Knowledge is already made to participate in the discourse of science and technology as a chimerical combination of (i) what is situated or placed in the cultural experience of Indigenous people (inside bodies, on and in country, language and song but outside of history) and (ii) what is usefully appropriated to serve the aims of scientific and technological discourse and practises. Similarly, the aesthetics of modernity and late-modernity (and dare we say post-modernity!) also participate in the dis-placement of the experiences of *being* white (and the ontological, existential, and phenomenological questions that attend such a way of being) into objects referred to as White beings characterised by the essence of Whiteness.[3] Such a manoeuvre, parallel to what was described earlier, runs the risk of simultaneously performing the negation of being (white) whilst generating a free-floating, essentialist and universalising idea of whiteness as if it were a property that merely attaches itself to an object.

Critics of social, political, economic, or other injustices would evidently be opposed to such a re-framing of their positions. Moreover, critics of a status quo that maintains institutional and systemic inequities would argue that action to minimise or overcome the harm faced by the marginalised or oppressed must be immediate and urgent. Yet, the capacity to dwell in place, need not amount to a silence that is

[3] Whiteness is "an ideologically supported social positionality that has accrued to people of European descent as a consequence of economic and political privilege gained during and subsequent to European colonial expansion" (Steyn, 2005, p. 120).

complicit with oppression nor a form of moral negligence. For the kind of liminal, educational space imagined here provides access to ways of knowing, doing and being that counterbalance the controlling and calculative impulse that transforms things and experiences into merely manipulable objects and categories.

8.4 Artful Learning and Teaching Spaces

There are, fortunately, alternatives to the controlling and hyper-rational emergency response to educational practise that are likely to be better attuned to Indigenous life and culture. One alternative invites the recovery of a non-metaphysical orientation to being in the world that recuperates, rather than rejects wholesale, a conception of the infinite and nothing. Here we commend Heidegger's seminal work *On the Origin of the Work of Art* (Heidegger, 1971), which distinguishes between 'aesthetics' as we have described it so far, with aesthesis, which instead attends to works of art (and this includes learning and teaching) as embodied, experiential and 'placed' (in the more expansive and inclusive sense described above).

This proposal has two advantages with respect to the integration of Indigenous perspectives into educational practise and the need to dwell differently in learning and teaching (digital) spaces. The first advantage of this artistic re-conceptualisation of our relation to place is that it sets aside the compulsion to see Indigenous knowing and being simply, or primarily in 'aesthetic' terms. That is, it mitigates a compulsive and totalising 'aestheticisation' of Indigenous Knowledge and ways of being, which tend towards a pragmatic objectification or commodification of Indigenous experiences, and at worst a kind of fetishising. Put another way, approaching learning and teaching spaces as works of art, suspends Western metaphysical commitments, and holds open a liminal space for Indigenous ways of relational *being* without reducing Indigenous people or practises to useful objects. Secondly, spaces viewed in this non-metaphysical way, allows the practises and experiences of education in online spaces, or indeed elsewhere, to be foregrounded as embodied and relational, and characterised by the inherent mutuality of the educator and education, as well as the education and the educated.

8.5 On Multi-narratival Discourses

So, what do educational spaces devoid or diluted of their Western hegemonic metaphysical assumptions look like in practise? How, precisely, do we foreground the embodied and relational in our teaching and learning, to allow room for Indigenous and other multi-narratival discourses?

These are significant pedagogical problems requiring resolution to be sure, and not merely because we, as authors, have suddenly found ourselves teaching in online spaces and, in our cases, mindful of not wanting to contribute to the perpetuation of

the familiar Western metaphysical biases and commitments. The destructive dominance of hegemonic discourses over multi-narratival ones, of non-Indigenous over Indigenous narratives and ways of knowing, is not a purely Western or European colonialist story but a global one. The domestication, tokenisation and, in some instances, wholesale rejection or ignorance of unfamiliar Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies unfortunately has a long and sordid history.[4] The assault on Indigenous culture and ways of knowing can be found well beyond Australian shores, though we make for quite an ignominious pattern. As an example, the forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, and therefore from their education, languages and culture continued well into the 1970's. Asymmetries of power and agency, the marginalisation, minoritisation and exclusion of groups and silencing of voices has historically characterised the educational experience the world over. It is a phenomenon that knows no cultural boundaries and whose march into the digital world, if left unchecked, may well progress unhindered.

The move to digital spaces must therefore prompt educators and educational providers, interested in avoiding recasting the familiar old structures of power and perpetuations of inequality that have dogged the sector, to re-examine existing policies and practises, and especially pedagogies and knowledges. And nor should the motivation be thought of exclusively as a moral one. It is also one of blatant self-interest or self-preservation. The move to digital modes of delivery, whether synchronous or asynchronous, dual-mode or remote, has brought with it not just challenges but also affordances. Western-centric hegemonic narratives are, and will continue to be, diluted as the inevitable and well-publicised pivot to Asia gains pace and new educational markets open and spheres of educational influence shift and evolve. A paradigm demonstrated in part by the rapid growth in Chinese and South Asian citizens enrolling as students at Australian universities. Western narratives will inevitably continue to lose the centre stage. The educational turns and turbulence being experienced in our new digital domain, exacerbated by the disruption of the pandemic and the move to online learning, has led to the dissolution of spatial, temporal and, *ipso facto*, of cultural borders quicker than it would otherwise have been. This will endure well into the future.

Our classroom interlocutors have now changed, with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, native English speakers and non-native English speakers, 'domestics' and 'internationals', increasingly occupying most virtual classrooms: digital spaces. They straddle geographical boundaries, which invites opportunities and challenges to consider questions of indigeneity elsewhere and anywhere. How quickly institutions and educators can traverse this digital and multi-cultural terrain, will, one suspects, determine how well they are likely to flourish in this new order.

So how, to repeat, do we guard against the mistakes of 'our' Western past? How do we, in this instance, white-immigrant educators, who have benefitted from historical white privilege, disrupt this dominance of whiteness, and incorporate multi-narratival

[4] Whilst it is true that of the 250 Australian Indigenous languages spoken prior to colonisation, less than half are still spoken (Living languages|AIATSIS) the genocide of languages is a world-wide phenomenon.

discourses into our practise and educational spaces? What will other educational jurisdictions choose to do? What type of pedagogical practises will serve us best in our collective new order?

The answer may well lay in the promise of pedagogical traditions that rise above the cultural, metaphysical and ontological milieu that has given birth to them.

8.6 Community of Inquiry Pedagogy

Conversation and talk come naturally to most of us and commonly saturates most educational spaces; digital or otherwise (Splitter & Sharp 1995; O'Conner & Michaels 2007). This is significant, particularly if one accepts that semiotic mediation, 'the use of "signs" in dialogue with self and others' (O'Conner & Michaels 2007, p. 275) underlies learning and reasoning, language acquisition, meaning-making and knowledge construction.

In "Semiotic mediation, dialogue, and the construction of knowledge' (2007), Gordon Wells goes one step further arguing that "[a]s signs are internalised, so is the "dialogicality" or meaning-making stance of the home culture internalised" (p. 276). Understanding, therefore, the type of talk that dominates our learning and teaching spaces or institution, may well provide the necessary insights as to why those from different linguistic, social, cultural, or ethnic groups might find themselves marginalised or 'othered'. Knowing our classroom discourse allows us to know our classroom culture. Understanding how to manipulate the former, may in turn allow us to manipulate the latter. And there is one pedagogical heavyweight contender that may allow us to do just that.

Community of Inquiry (CoI) pedagogy is an educational practise whose theoretical roots can be traced back to the concept of dialectic, as evidenced in the extant works of Heraclitus, improved on by Socrates and his advent of the elenctic style of questioning and latterly by pragmatist philosophers Charles Sanders Peirce, John Dewey and practitioners of Philosophy for or with Children (P4wC) Matthew Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp and Gareth Matthews. As a pedagogical form, CoI is characterised by communal discourse, it is dialogical rather than monological, and constructivist rather than transmissive. Such participatory approaches aim to disrupt the patterns that make members of oppressed groups see themselves as responsible for their situations while also obliging those who are in privileged positions to identify practises of theirs that extend oppression and inequity (following Bozalek, 2011). Access to both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses are essential in overcoming discrimination. Content delivery, though fundamentally important, is necessarily accompanied by purposeful critical dialogue revolving around provocations, typically in the form of questions (student-generated or teacher-generated), appropriate for and accessible to its participants, and where collaborative and cumulative talk is favoured over disputational talk. This preferred interactional approach to teaching and learning sees the teacher-facilitator adopt a stance best characterised as being *philosophically weak* but *pedagogically strong*: 'weak' in the sense of

resisting the temptation to view one's role as being wholly about the transmission of facts and determining of truths, and 'strong' in the sense of knowing how to elicit critical engagement through one's dialogic practise. It is also an approach where problem-posing is as important as problem-solving.

Proponents argue that CoI pedagogy is a culturally neutral and inclusive place, where collective meaning-making is co-constructed and questioning, inquiry, creativity and criticality are encouraged in the pursuit of making collective epistemic progress. Designed to foster rich, democratic, pluralistic and tolerant educational environments and where intellectual risk-taking is encouraged, CoI pedagogy makes for far more "fluid narratival spaces" (Kizel, 2015, p. 35) helping, so the argument goes, to guard against the thoughtless acceptance of "authority, prejudices and fashion" (Chetty & Suissa, 2016, p. 13). Supporting rather than denying multi-narratives, it is a pedagogy that deliberately invites excluded narratives to find positive expression within its dialogic framework and to coexist. Extending the ontology of learning and teaching spaces, CoI (at least when well-facilitated) serves as a safe place that allows the expression of the 'otherness' of the 'Other' (in Levinas' sense). After all, "recognition of the Other/ness is a prerequisite for a philosophic CoI" (Kizel, 2015, p. 20).

Nevertheless critics, it must be conceded, have argued instead that even under optimal circumstances the challenge of enabling the voices of silenced, marginalised and excluded groups to be heard or noticed still plagues CoI practises (Chetty & Suissa, 2016). Its original founders, it is true, failed spectacularly to appreciate how differences in indigeneity, race, class and gender impacts classroom discourse: in terms of the stimulus material that gets chosen, the questions that get asked, and the voices that get privileged (Gregory & Laverty, 2021). But the CoI enterprise was never intended to remain fixed (at least as envisioned by one of its original founders Ann Margaret Sharp). It is now a sufficiently broad and robust enough field to welcome a diversity of theoretical views and practical approaches, and that openly invites critiques and debates.

CoI pedagogy, with its emphasis on dialogue and reasoning, intellectual risk-taking and democratic values still remains a largely Western construct with all the usual cultural baggage and more than a subtle whiff of Western-scented values. But it also provides lay educators, as well those tasked with populating our newest educational spaces, or those suddenly finding themselves caught under the yoke of their own nation's dominant narratives, valuable pedagogical insights on how teaching can be done differently, where Indigenous and alternative ways of being, doing and knowing are deemed to enrich rather than encumber educational experiences.

That said, the loss of physical space has necessarily forced upon us (educators and institutions) new questions and problems around positionality and privilege.

8.7 Digital Space

Education does not start out as an uncontested or 'uncontaminated space' (Biesta, 2020, p. 1024), nor is it constructed from the outside. It emerges from practises within the space. Digital teaching and learning relationships are suspended in virtual spaces of image, audio and text, where windows into the lives and homes flicker in and out of frame. Suspended in such spaces, positions and power are felt through the screens across the world. Coming together as a class, the shared interest is teaching and learning. The relationships are bounded and defined by roles: lecturers, tutors, students, etc. There is an understanding that defines the meaning of the digital space and time that creates the community space—signalled by handbooks (which are really websites), and an institution with buildings and commons covered in grasses and other flora that the students may never smell or touch. Simultaneously, the loss of sharing a physical space with physical bodies starves us of many of the human signals and gestures that help us to communicate and connect. Bodies tell each other things, they allow us to feel not just the physical, but also the social space. They tell us if we are in a *place* of safety, a *place* where we are wanted, where we belong. They are also part of what tells us what is right and what is wrong. How to care for one another's needs. These are ways of knowing (and knowing that one does not know) the Other.

The community members are living digitally saturated lives at a time when ethics in social media, machine learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are yet to face a reckoning. We share ideas through teaching materials and assignments that are scrutinised by software. Students are analysed into quantification of engagement that indicates how much of one's screen time has been dedicated to engaging with this material, this subject, this learning community. It is the best we can do and so we have halted the conversations about screen-free time for wellbeing, forging ahead with sometimes barely scrutinised apps and software that have inherent biases, assumptions and injustices built into the core binaries of their programming. All at a time when truth, veracity, and verification are being questioned and manipulated through curation of social (and traditional) media platforms designed to capture our wants, needs and relationships, feeding us more of what will capture time and attention. This is justified with discussion about the affordances of measurement outcomes and effectiveness (for a full accounting see Biesta, 2015, 2020), but do these accountings have any way of responding to the public good that is supposed to be the contribution of education and the academy? Advancing reconciliation should be careful, ethical work. Yet how do we establish a shared vision required without a shared country and in the face of polarised individualised streams of 'knowledge' blasted at us each day? With respect, resonance, and a willingness to connect with discomfort through the discourse of inquiry.

The academy and its traditions have much to answer for, but as new generations of Indigenous Australian scholars bring long histories of knowing into digital scholarship, opportunities arise for reaching into the past and present and engaging with these

works in our teaching of teachers. The work of a white educator for Indigenous awareness requires the positioning of oneself as the Other, forcing reflexivity into practise. One is guided by the discomfort, by the legacy of apology and the shifting foundation of country never ceded. Position yourself as an inquirer with your students and the discomfort of acknowledging and owning one's privilege and position. Bozalek (2011) also identifies the need to include participants in research, in identifying privilege and marginalisation through encounters across difference. She draws on Tronto's concept of 'privileged irresponsibility' to explain how decolonising methodologies (and we expand this to pedagogies) should include positionality discussions from both disadvantaged as well as privileged perspectives.

As white-immigrants to Australia, we force our discomfort to acknowledge the shame of the historical white privilege that serves us, yet we believe that we are working towards disrupting the dominance of whiteness. As we write this a storm is brewing around Critical Race Theory in the academy as our United States colleagues are under political surveillance for their scholarship drawing on Critical Race Theorists (hooks, 2014; Crenshaw, 2017; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016, for example) who argue that whiteness is a commodity and works as capital, garnering access and privilege. In the wake of the #blacklivesmatter movement, we can see how these themes resonate across experiences of exploitation and subjugation of people of colour across the planet, like the privileges of whiteness in Australia and Australian university classes.

Temporality and topographies shift and fold as centuries of physical and symbolic violence arise in emerging and now established Indigenist (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003) voices in the academy. We bring those voices into our teaching through assigning readings and providing examples of trauma to explain the complexity of power in education policy and practise. In our globalised education experience, our classes have many international students predominantly in China, who know little of the history of colonisation and genocide in Australia, and so we eventually find a need to contextualise our efforts in the retelling of trauma, conscious that we are doing so in the possible presence of Indigenous students who are also members of the class. Is this a form of intellectual colonisation? Are we casting our own shadows onto these students by bringing these events into a globalised classroom by being a 'nice white intellectual' coloniser using Indigenous students as "vehicles for learning" (Singh et al., 2016)?

Within a global distribution of higher education (refer to *Global Distributions of Students in Higher Education* chapter), many of the international students are unlikely to ever set foot on Australian country, or understand the connection, care and conservatorship that informs the centuries of Indigenous knowing and being so can we be the vehicle for bringing Indigenous insights through the workings of and in the position granted to white-immigrants by a Western institution? There is cultural care to be afforded here: care requires reciprocity. In classrooms where racial identity 'Others' students from China from the institution and local students, at a time when global fingers are pointing their racist blame for the virus at the heart of the pandemic, this history helps to contextualise the power and privilege that can contort societal gaze in such a way that they do not have to "pay the cost of representation"

(Eddo-Lodge, 2020, p. 148). Is it enough that we, as Nakata (2007, p. 315) advises, acknowledge that our versions of Indigenous knowledge are "screened through a filter that positions it to serve (our) educational objectives…drawing on…prior theoretical investments in knowledge and knowledge practise"?

8.8 Conclusion

Reaching for reconciliation in digital spaces of learning and teaching in higher education presents many challenges and opportunities as we are called upon to acknowledge the past, re-imagine education in the present, and carry on into that which lies ahead. This is an activity that ought not to be limited to the domain of experts and specialists. It is not an enterprise for others and by others. It begins instead by attending to our own experiences in the spaces of learning and teaching: spaces that owing to our embodied experiences of being, our memories, our histories, and our ethical commitments, are dynamic *places* that are alive with knowledge and knowing amongst others.

As colleagues, we believe that we must attend carefully and respectfully to such places of higher education even when—especially when—they are entwined with digital modes of inter-and intra-action, or they disrupt familiar and comfortable boundaries between beings, bodies, geographies and histories, or they are bewitched by a yearning for certainty and control. The care and respect required is available if educators can resist the temptation to rush in with solutions that negate the possibility for the ethical encounters with Other that are foundational to education. Likewise, it is to learn from our past, and take ownership of whiteness, to resist the temptation to (re)colonise (digital) learning and teaching spaces at the very point when they present themselves as globalised spaces that are at once everywhere and nowhere.

In this chapter we have asked if 'Communities of Inquiry' can address asymmetries of power and the privileging of some kinds of knowledge and knowing over others? How do we have conversations about our legacy of colonisation and neglect of Indigenous others when the embodied and existential aspects of country dissolve in the fluidity of occupying digital spaces? This chapter polyphonic voiced chapter purposefully invites educators to pose problems and speculate on other 'what if' questions rather than answering them: that is, evoke response-ability. To achieve this, we propose a speculative approach to the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education that is generative: questioning how it is to be ethically open and responsible to Others.

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Chapter 9
Global Distribution of Students in Higher Education

Jim Watterston and Yong Zhao

Abstract This chapter explores the potential of having students globally distributed in future higher education. There are many reasons for students to be globally distributed. The pandemic has in effect created the reality for many higher education institutions to teach students remotely. This experience can be the beginning of a new model of higher education: the global campus. The chapter discusses the possibilities and challenges of developing and operating global campuses to meet the needs of students who might be located anywhere on the globe.

Keywords Future of education · Globalisation of education · Global collaboration

9.1 Introduction

The advent of the pandemic forced educators across the world to innovatively and rapidly adapt the delivery of traditional face-to-face courses and educational content in order to continue to serve and engage students (Dreesen et al., 2020; United Nations, 2020). In particular, it forced many higher education institutions to offer their programmes remotely instead of in-person (Ali, 2020). Undergraduate and graduate students have regularly been forced during periods of lockdown to work externally as higher education providers worked assiduously and adaptively to provide continuity of learning and assessment. Agile instructors provided courses, advice, support and conducted meetings from home or off-campus locations. In additional to education providers, a large proportion of businesses and organisations across communities were also forced to develop ways to remotely transact their interactions online with staff located away from traditional workplaces (Lund et al., 2020).

In this context, as we continued to learn to live with and understand the vagaries of the pandemic, many higher education institutions shifted to dramatically different models of educational delivery than the traditional structures that existed before the pandemic. Whilst remote or distance education was not an entirely new mode of

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instruction, it had been an alternative delivery for many organisations over recent decades. Open or TV/Radio universities have previously offered distance, remote and online learning for decades in many different countries (Cuban, 1986). Many universities have also been offering Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for students from around the world for quite some time (Bonk, 2011; Bonk et al., 2015). Additionally, there have been abundant learning resources online, freely available or for a small fee (Zhao, 2021).

But not until the emergence of the pandemic at the beginning of 2020 did almost all higher education institutions engage in forms of remote learning for students as the dominant mode of learning. Continuity of learning experiences ensured that remote learning quickly became a staple and provided continuity for most students and faculty members. Higher education institutions made significant investments in ensuring that fundamental remote learning was accessible and effective. Many institutions developed parallel educational approaches, purchased new technology platforms, developed new partnerships with others, and provided 'just-in-time' professional training and support for their faculty and students to engage in remote learning. Whilst it was of variable quality across all providers, it enabled most students to progress through courses.

As the world learns to live with COVID-19, it is understandable that for many students, faculty, and university administrators there is a desire to revert to in-person pre-pandemic education delivery models. We strongly argue, however, that a return to the 'old normal' is not likely or even a necessity as, for better and for worse, the world has inextricably changed and that aspects of remote learning have been welcomed by many other students, faculty, and administrators who believe that they have benefited and will seek to retain those advantages (Durak & Çankaya, 2020). Importantly, remote learning as a safe-guard may have to exist long into the future for all education institutions, not only because it is an effective mode of learning, but also because schools and departments may well need to close for many reasons in the future. For example, climate change may cause extreme weather events to take place a lot more often, which can force campus closures much longer and more frequently than before. COVID-19 or, as is being predicted, other pandemics may impact again, for which educators should be much better prepared.

Moreover, well organised and relevant remote learning, in addition to in-person learning, may have other benefits such as reduced costs for students, more flexible learning schedules, greater capacity for collaboration amongst higher education institutions, and broader participation of students and faculty located in different places around the world. The driving need to provide different and more flexible modes of learning delivery will create opportunities and challenges for institutions, including the possibility of less demand for physical campuses and communities where a university is located. Such a movement could also stimulate intense global competition amongst higher education institutions as costs are potentially reduced and high-quality education becomes accessible to more students.

In this chapter, we explore the potential future of higher education with the perspective that students can study successfully in almost any location and be distributed globally. We focus on ways to attract and support globally distributed

students and the potential consequences of these changes. We outline and discuss the emergence of a new and opportunistic higher education landscape that is likely to catalyse from our experiences and learnings during the pandemic.

9.2 Global Distribution of Students

The pandemic has caused significant disruption to international students all over the world (Firang, 2020; Hari et al., 2021; Haugen & Lehmann, 2020; Mercado, 2020; Mok et al., 2021; Yıldırım et al., 2021). The multiple lockdowns due to the pandemic forced universities in many countries to close campuses and rapidly move courses online. International students had virtually no option but to remain in their home country and to engage through online courses.

Another significant disruption for students who left their campus and returned home between semesters was that they could then not return because of border closures and disruptions in international travel (West, 2020). For example, the United States saw a 72% decrease in the number of new international students enrolled in 2020 when compared to calendar year 2019 (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2021). Australian universities also saw a decline of over 200,000 international students in 2021 (ICEF Monitor, 2021). Other countries such as Canada, the UK, and New Zealand have seen similar declines.

As vaccines became available and more widespread, many countries opened borders to their international students, notwithstanding the likelihood that the impact and instability of the pandemic may continue for some time as new variants continue to emerge and force countries to limit travel again and again. The virtual educational experience that the pandemic has facilitated, in essence, has potentially identified a major opportunity for a more open global education market for international students. Most higher education providers have now had direct experience of offering many of their traditional courses online which have been accessed by students from domestic and international locations. Many educators have learned that during the pandemic, students can be in almost any place on earth with effective tuition possible. As long as students have access to the necessary technology, they were able to take courses from their home institutions and the great majority made progress towards their degrees. The emergence of remote courses has also led to the emergence of next practises in pedagogies.

The provision of remote options for learning applied to virtually all higher education institutions, regardless of whether they had international students or not.

9.3 Serving Globally Distributed Students

To serve globally distributed students, institutions of higher education have previously, and more recently, been forced to develop enhanced learning modes and platforms. The affordances of the twenty-first Century have provided us with emerging and more accessible telecommunication technologies which has meant that offering online courses has greater potential to create diverse communities and provide social and emotional connection in addition to providing digital content.

Whilst universities have previously utilised learning management systems to enable academics to manage at least parts of their courses online, the pivot to virtual learning as the dominant mode during the pandemic has required an uplift in the quality of digital pedagogy, personalisation, collaboration and student agency in order to build and maintain engagement. To enable synchronous learning opportunities, there were platforms including Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, and a range of others continue to emerge. Advances in technology, however important, are not enough as for the most-part students have been forced to replace interpersonal on-campus learning experiences with virtual interactive learning.

Whilst in the initial stages of the pandemic, most academics out of necessity provided purely online courses, some have had a Hybrid and Flexible or HyFlex model of learning (Binnewies & Wang, 2019), with some students in the classroom whilst other students were located in other places, and with synchronous and asynchronous content. Many online courses have required students to attend synchronous meetings and complete asynchronous assignments. They have also drawn upon, required videos, books, and other materials, including the conducting of experiments, and carrying out other research tasks depending on the programme.

Some universities, such as Tulane (USA), have also enacted other models in addition to online courses (Yang, 2020). For example, some have developed partnerships with local universities in students' home countries to create a sense of community and support in locations where their students could gather. The local universities offered more than a site for student gatherings as they provided classrooms for students to take online courses together. Moreover, some universities allowed students to take courses offered by the local universities for their degree programmes, which in promoted institutional partnerships and allowed credit transfer.

Other opportunities for collaboration between institutions have also evolved in recent times. Some proactive universities created opportunities for students to participate in activities that require face-to-face interactions such as science and engineering experiments. When students were not able to do so in their home institutions because of distance and lab closures, they have been able to carry out the necessary in-person experiments in local institutions.

Of course, students' needs go beyond academic offerings. They need advice, counselling, support and to engage in critical conversations with colleagues and academics throughout their courses. Whilst these sessions would generally be face-to-face, as we navigated through the pandemic this contact also became remote and online.

Library access has been another area where students have needed help. Whilst many publications have gone online in recent years and many older books and periodicals have been digitalised, there are still many publications that can only be accessible in print. When universities went online during the pandemic, students' access to these materials became more challenging. Universities have, however, found different and innovative ways to extend library access to students during the pandemic but like much of the innovation and adaptation that has occurred in relation to remote learning during this pandemic, solutions have not always been perfect or a sufficient replacement as the library services provided were not at the level previously provided to students before the pandemic.

What we have learned as a result of the immediate and mostly unplanned diversion to online learning in response to pandemic lockdowns, is that without too much initial finesse and preparation, it has fundamentally kept all education sectors operational and able to progress students in their learning. With more opportunity to strategies and learn from these challenging experiences, it is now time to use this experience to provide greater opportunities and options for students and academics across the world. As has been noted throughout history, we should never waste a crisis!

9.4 Future Possibilities

The global distribution of students and the various ways universities have developed to serve these students in recent challenging times provides great insights for imagining the future of higher education. Whilst online learning has evolved into a viable learning option for millions of students who have previously taken MOOCs and other online courses externally in recent years, it was not until the pandemic that nearly all universities began serving nearly all of their students from an online format. This pandemic-inspired transformation has initially increased costs and presented greater financial pressures for universities and their faculty, but the intense and immediate challenges have also made universities become more adaptive and innovative in order to develop new models of learning in serving students who are not on campus.

Whilst it is difficult to predict if COVID-19 will ever be completely eradicated, most countries opened campuses and students are able to return but not to pre-pandemic conditions as it remains possible that these campuses may close again due to further outbreaks of COVID-19 variants. It has also been widely predicted that it is likely that new pandemics will emerge or some other disease can, and will, affect the human community and, of course, the continuity of formal education.

Current and future geopolitical conflicts amongst countries may also prevent the movement of students to various countries to their desired places of study. Also possible is that universities, along with communities in general, may well be impacted by the rapidly emerging consequences of climate changes. Some universities already close for extremely cold and snowy days, floods, and extremely hot days which, in some countries are creating severe summer fire seasons.

The likelihood of campus closures in the future should make institutions of higher education think more strategically and flexibly before they simply discard their online systems built during the pandemic. Importantly, however, they should be very proud of the agility and courage their faculties took to develop initially these online courses and programmes. This has not been an easy achievement as academic teams rapidly invested enormous time and energy, often without previous experience or technical expertise to address student needs and course requirements. The pandemic rapidly changed all of that and it would be a strategic error for universities to stop this movement and simply return to in-person education.

There are, of course, compelling justifications and imperatives for universities to continue to invest and work on their future online offerings in addition to providing a rich and engaging student experience on campus. For a significant number of institutions, it will continue to be desirable to have undergraduate and graduate students participate in on-campus experiences offering value from cultural, social, academic, and psychological perspectives. It is also valuable for students to develop relationships amongst themselves, faculty, and other professionals on campus. Familiarity with the physical infrastructure, buildings, and history can have educational value and create affiliation and a sense of belonging. In considering what optimal learning experiences could look like as we move forward, universities will need to also imagine a different kind of education in the future, at least for portions of their students.

This post-pandemic future for many will recognise the opportunities provided by building upon remote learning models developed during COVID-19. Instead of as an emergency response, institutions of higher education will need to deliberately develop a global campus to serve students whether they are located in their homes, internationally and domestically, or on the university campus. This future has already been embraced by some universities, but it is far from being universal. We are arguing that such a development is necessary for the sustainability of many universities and to that end, the pandemic experiences can serve as a great foundation.

Such a future would not only serve on-campus students better should there be any closures, but also, and more importantly, serves a potentially new and somewhat neglected population of future students. These students will be globally distributed like many of the students during the pandemic. These students may also be those who are unable to leave their home countries to attend a foreign university. For some students who may not be able to afford the costs of studying abroad, an online experience will create accessibility and the opportunity to enrol in quality courses not otherwise available.

A student may not be able to study overseas for a multitude of reasons including their local employment, socio-economic capacity, geopolitical impact, medical issues, or family circumstances. There may also be some students who wish to have a foreign education but would like to build social and cultural relationships and potential employment opportunities at home. This is especially true for young students who have strong connections in their home country and wish to advance their career trajectory.

Potentially, the market for these students who have arguably never truly been served well, could from a global perspective, create new opportunities for all universities to attract high achieving students from beyond their shores. Until now, it could be argued that the reputations of distant, open, or online universities have not caught up with traditional universities, nor has their quality of education. MOOCs have only been part of informal learning and have not formed degree programmes in the traditional sense. A few universities have developed online campuses but by and large, traditional universities have not comprehensively entered the market.

Many universities will have to enter the market for a number of reasons. The first is finance. In the United States, public funding for the majority of four-year and two-year colleges has been in steady decline. A report by the Centre on Budget and Policy Priorities says:

> Overall state funding for public two- and four-year colleges in the school year ending in 2018 was more than $6.6 billion below what it was in 2008 just before the Great Recession fully took hold, after adjusting for inflation.[1] In the most difficult years after the recession, colleges responded to significant funding cuts by increasing tuition, reducing faculty, limiting course offerings, and in some cases closing campuses. Funding has rebounded somewhat, but costs remain high and services in some places have not returned. (Mitchell, Leachman, & Saenz, 2019)

The situation has been exacerbated because of the pandemic. It has caused many institutions to lose revenue and increase spending. States, with declining economies, have begun to cut funding to higher education. Even with federal assistance, a large number of higher education institutions face budget crises (Yuen, 2020).

In recent decades international students have become a major source of increasing revenue in order to maintain growth and research despite the decline of local revenue streams. According to an article by the president of Pace University, Mark Krislove, the number of U.S. high-school graduates is expected to grow by about 0.2% but international students can potentially grow by 6%. "That means international students are becoming increasingly important to keep our classes full, our tuition revenue up, and our institutions thriving" (Krislov, 2019). International students also make a huge economic impact. In the United States, international students directly contributed over $38 billion to the economy and supported more than 400,000 jobs during 2019–2020. The economic contribution was over $40 billion in 2018 (NAFSA, 2021).

But then COVID-19 came along! Many universities and colleges were confronted by a disappearing population of international students. For them to survive and thrive in the post-pandemic era, just trying to recover the pre-pandemic number of international students will not be sufficient for a number of reasons. Firstly, the wide variation in quality of remote learning experiences for existing students may make others hesitant about applying to foreign universities, as could the way particular countries have coped with or without lockdowns during the pandemic. In addition, no one can be sure when the pandemic will ever be under control enough for certain and ongoing international travels and when governments will resume issuing visas from a range of countries as before.

Secondly, international students may decide to pursue local options. The pandemic and resulting economic changes may force many students who would aspire to study abroad to consider local options because they no longer can afford the costs. The pandemic has certainly caused drastic economic disruptions and resulted in economic decline (Dam, 2020). Such decline will certainly affect income of certain families.

Thirdly, the current geopolitical battles may cause students to become more hesitant about exploring study abroad opportunities. For example, China, the world's second largest economy and largest source of international students, may, for example, permit fewer students to pursue their studies overseas for geopolitical and nationalistic reasons.

The fundamental message to universities and colleges that expect a return of international students is that they are unlikely to return to all previous destinations, at least not to the pre-pandemic levels unless the university concerned is able to enhance its value proposition and provide guarantees that any future lockdowns or associated issues will provide better support and tuition to those students intending to travel. Whilst universities may still have the students who are already enrolled in their programmes learning from a distance, most Western countries have initiated the enrolment of new students who are seeking to come to the physical campus in the short to medium term despite the reputations of some institutions arguably being challenged based on their performance during the first two years of the pandemic. Thus, it is wise for them to pursue additional cost saving contingencies include downsizing the university faculty and staff, shrinking operations, and even closing down some campuses. For the more innovative universities however, more positive possibilities can and will include cutting-edge approaches to operating virtual international campuses that serve students who are globally distributed.

9.4.1 Serving Students Culturally

The objective of a "global campus" is to serve students internationally, which is fundamentally different from serving international students on the physical campus. In this new context, a global campus primarily delivers high-quality and interactive tuition online. It exists across different time zones and geographical borders and its faculty and students can conceivably work from any place on earth. The courses delivered are customised to meet the needs of students across and in different parts of the world.

Despite the pre-pandemic growth of international students across many universities, very few higher education institutions actually deeply considered or changed their academic programmes for international students, although they may have adjusted other small cultural items such as food in the cafeteria. The assumption has primarily been that international students come to the physical campus for what it already offers. The underlying proposition has been that students travel to experience a different culture, a different campus, a different education, and a different

physical experience from their home country. Thus, no wholesale changes have been considered to be necessary.

The emerging conception of a global campus is substantially different to a traditional in-county international offering. It aims to deliver fit-for-purpose and highly engaging bespoke courses in different locations across the world. These students remain domiciled in their own cultures and communities whilst taking courses or enrolled in academic programmes of a foreign institution. A global campus will therefore, need to be much more than a pre-pandemic online provider as they will, in addition to the academic content, carefully craft the experiential and humanistic elements of the programmes and experiences they are prepared to offer.

An initial and highly important consideration relates to infusing the culture of the country, the local city or community, and the university to students who are located in different parts of the world. Of course, there are content and skills that can be considered universal without much culture attached to it, however, international students seeking foreign courses possess a strong desire to experience the culture of the country and the community in which the university is located. To enact this, smart and invigorated Global Universities will build their niche through multi-dimensional and personalised online experiences that move the dial on rapidly devised pandemic-inspired online responses.

Digital delivery is, of course, different from a physical experience, but online offerings can to a certain degree carry cultural elements. The deployment of expert online instructors will reflect certain parts of the university through their design of innovative course content, emerging digital pedagogical approaches, and personalised interactions with students to embody all that is expected from a high-performing institution.

But instructors are not sufficient. A global campus will also need to develop other cultural events online such as creating student gatherings periodically. These gatherings can be purely about the local and university culture in addition to the instructional programme. Recognising local celebrations, history, food, music, arts, or other significant events that feature the culture of the locality of the university will provide students with local connections and experience.

Additionally, global digital universities can build physical events and opportunities for students who are able to come to the physical campus for short periods of time. University programmes could include month-long events for students to attend for academic and cultural experiences. Students who are unable to leave their country of origin for long periods of time could take advantage of these short supplementary visits. The opportunity for cultural immersion and the building of affiliation and community would be a significant purpose for visits in order to enhance the student experience if desired.

9.4.2 Serving Students Academically

Serving students academically, intuitively seems easier than serving them culturally, but it must be recognised that the challenges are interlinked. For example, as the online course experiences during the pandemic, suggest international students located in different time zones can be highly challenged by the timeliness of synchronous class meetings, office hours, and private counselling sessions. Not all universities have been able to deal with these issues effectively and have generally only offered these events based on the time zone of the university. For many isolated students in some time zones during the pandemic it has been extremely difficult to manage classes and effective participation in meetings unless they get up extremely early or stay up extremely late, which has not always been conducive to academic success and well-being.

Operating a high-performing global campus will require significant changes to the student experiences of many during the pandemic. The access to courses and connection to the university cannot be simply offered within the same time frame following the local time zone of the university. Instead, considerations must be given to students' locations and how they can be functionally engaged. Whilst it is impossible to develop a schedule that suits all students in all locations, there are different ways to make the schedule better. For example, the schedule can be established with a focus on a better blend of asynchronous and synchronous learning whilst building local interactive communities where students can connect from within their domestic environments. Synchronous meetings can be developed for small group discussion and meetings with instructors at negotiated times. It will be essential for truly global universities to put the student at the centre of course delivery methodology, pedagogy, and practises.

It is also possible for universities to develop different programmes to serve students academically. The pandemic model of instruction has provided some flavour of this possibility. Universities will need to develop enduring local partnerships for academic purposes. As has been done during the pandemic on an emerging basis, global universities can partner with universities in the students' home country to offer some courses of the programmes and serve as gatherers of small group discussions. Local partnership universities can also provide lab services and integrated workplace learning placements.

Another possibility is to develop joint programmes with universities located in different countries. Universities have traditionally developed joint programmes with some universities, but they are far from global. Many joint programmes are with one or two universities in a limited number of countries. To effectively serve globally distributed students requires universities to develop a world-wide network of partnerships, which can be extremely challenging in the beginning because of different interests and the variation of traditions in different universities. Such a global network of partnerships, however, will enable students from different parts of the world to have access to quality courses and programmes from different universities in different locations.

Joint programmes can have a mixture of courses and educational experiences offered by different institutions. The student experience can be greatly enhanced through the provision of a mixture of these experiences based on their personalised interests and professional needs. Such courses could be made up of a variety of different programmes from undergraduate and graduate programmes. The programmes are offered and owned by different institutions, but they share courses that can be more bespoke and better customised which becomes a strong value proposition for students seeking to maximise employment opportunities in a more globalised working environment.

9.4.3 Preparing Staff for Globally Distributed Students

Teaching globally and online has been a relatively new experience for many university faculty. The pandemic forced them to move online globally but, in most cases there was not time for extensive preparation, discussion, or planning. The move to an online learning environment took courage, commitment, and in some cases, a leap of faith as many intuitively created their own methodology of teaching online. Many of the online courses, at least initially, were based around transferring current face-to-face courses to online courses. There is not necessarily anything wrong with such offerings in an emergency, but the courses can be more engaging when better designed with the student at the centre.

For example, a study of UK higher education during the pandemic found educators experienced an abundance of afflictions due to the rapid transition to online education and entry-level use of digital pedagogies. They suggest that the online movement has resulted in significant dysfunctionality and disturbance to their pedagogical roles and personal lives (Watermeyer et al., 2021). Experiences of faculty in higher education in other countries have had similar experiences and challenges. The same study also found affordances, which means that migration to online teaching also has some benefits for teachers and students.

Extensive preparation and planning can help ease the afflictions and enhance the affordances. When operating a global campus strategically, faculty and staff should be prepared accordingly. Preparation and planning should include contemporary digital resources and online pedagogy. Much research has been conducted in relation to online learning and teaching for quite some time now (Zhao, 2020). There is a growing body of evidence and advice emerging in relation to effective digital and online teaching. There is also developing research on the HyFlex model (Beatty, 2019; Binnewies & Wang, 2019). It is very important and productive for teaching academics to review and reflect on the emerging digital research in preparation for a more engaging and personalised student online experience.

Teaching preparation must also include a change of cultural and social mindset. Faculty cannot look at the globally distributed students the same way as their traditional local students. When students are taking online courses they will be in very different contexts. When students are in different locations, their local culture and

conditions can have a great impact on them, which can cause some challenges in interacting with each other and the course. A deeply considered approach to preparation and facilitation should help faculty members develop a global mindset when bringing together diverse communities that can effectively work and learn together.

9.5 Possible Impacts

Despite challenges that have been experienced during the initial stages of the pandemic, it is highly likely that many higher education providers and governments will collectively move to reclaim and attract larger cohorts of globally distributed students. More traditionally orientated higher education institutions will also have to accept this inevitability and plan for attraction of globally distributed students in what may turn out to be a more highly contested market with the emergence of a different business models through global universities. Governments or businesses planning to build new face-to-face orientated institutions may need to consider this potential change and plan accordingly. Such a movement towards globally distributed students will have a number of significant impacts on the institutions, their local communities, and their countries.

9.5.1 Shrinking Physical Campus

It is possible for universities investing in enhanced global delivery though high-quality digital learning that parts of the physical campus may be redundant due to the potential global distribution of students. Universities will have to think and plan for such a change if they are to compete for remote learning decentralised international students. If students can have access to high-quality education online from wherever they are, many are likely to stay home and enjoy the convenience and the safety of their country of origin. Of course, there will always be significant numbers of students who will prefer to immerse themselves in a full student experience by attending a physical campus, but for many universities a number may become smaller. More importantly, the potential market for more globally distributed students preferring a quality online experience could be very large for successful institutions. Higher education institutions, particularly those that are economically challenged in the current environment and finding it difficult to attract in-country international students, will also need to consider attracting this new and emerging market of global students.

With a shrinking physical campus comes a shrinking need for student dorms, cafeteria, classrooms, offices, and other physical infrastructure. For universities and colleges that have massive physical infrastructure, the possibility of unoccupied space may also become a liability or an opportunity to redevelop spaces to open the traditional university to connect with the surrounding community or city. At the very least, and with an eye to future student market trends, universities must

reconsider the future of new and existing infrastructure. Newer institutions must consider if they want to build more buildings or invest more in building a virtual global campus with cutting-edge technology. It may well be that a market-edge will be garnered through reductions in space and infrastructure which could well enable cashed-up universities to compete with greater agility in the online delivery market.

A shrinking campus may, however, have a significant impact on the local community. It is highly likely that businesses will be affected without a large population of proximal students. There will be fewer people in the community and thus grocery stores, restaurants, bars, transportation, and apartments will all experience declining demand. The declining demand can gradually lead to the decline of the local community, which means university towns may quite possibly change dramatically in the future.

9.5.2 Faculty Changes

University academics may also experience significant changes as a result of increased education offerings online. When students are more globally distributed, an increasing percentage of teaching and interaction will be online. This means that faculty must become digitally competent and savvy with online teaching. It also means that faculty develop a perspective that serves students well as global citizens rather than members of local communities.

Faculty has always been meeting physically and locally before the pandemic. They also gather socially locally. The pandemic has changed that forcing them to meet online. If higher education moves more predominantly to serve globally distributed students, faculty may be distributed as well. It is not entirely new that universities have their staff located in different parts of the world, but this can become more common for universities. If so, universities will have to rely on digital innovation to build their faculty and manage their work. As it will need to be advantageous for global students, universities will also need to invest in the creation of an engaging culture that continues to unify their faculty and staff.

9.5.3 Institutional Competition and Collaboration

Higher education institutions have been typically built to serve students locally and nationally. Although international students have always been part of the student body at most universities, their primary customers remain citizens of their nation and largely members of the local communities where the universities are located. Globally distributed students can have a significant impact on the nature and continued evolution of higher education institutions. They may still serve local students, but declining government investment is likely to force them to serve more international students online. When institutions move to online and take on a more global orientation, there

will inevitably be significant competition amongst the institutions. The competition will not only be amongst institutions that have similar business models or from the same country, but also involve higher education institutions from countries that have not been typically destinations for international students because newer colleges and universities will be part of the global chains of institutions to collaboratively offer education to students in different countries.

The competition could well be fierce. Higher education institutions from all over the world will have an expanding opportunity to be creative and innovative in developing programmes for students distributed across the globe. These programmes must meet the diverse needs of students as well as potentially the needs of local businesses, governments, and other entities because students seeking employment will need to be judged by local entities. Beyond programmes, competition can happen in other areas such as costs, services, and reputation.

Competition is unavoidable. So is collaboration. Universities and colleges will have to collaborate and create more connected partnerships in order to serve the globally distributed students. They will have to build joint programmes and services, trade courses and credits, and co-develop local programmes. Each institution will have to be smart in deciding with whom to collaborate with and what programmes they want to co-offer.

9.5.4 A Brighter Future for All Students

If efforts to serve students globally are taken seriously by higher education institutions around the world, students from all countries can have a greater range of options to suit their educational needs. Students in all parts of the world will have a range of alternative opportunities to attend a range of previously unavailable colleges and universities. New and restructured colleges and universities will have diverse and rapidly emerging qualities and reputations for their programmes. Currently, too many students are stuck in poor conditions and are forced to attend lower performing and less desirable institutions despite their ambitions.

If more global campuses are developed, with the world's leading higher education institutions taking the lead, students from around the world could have access to higher quality education. If the costs are well controlled, students from poor conditions could conceivably gain attendance at reputable institutions. These students would also be able to take courses with students from other countries and develop global connections and opportunities. Such experiences could ultimately bring a more peaceful and prosperous future across the globe.

9.6 The Future of Higher Education: A Summary

The pandemic forced higher education sectors across the world to become almost universally online for differing periods of time. It also forced many students to take classes and study from home. Whilst the pandemic may well be eventually brought under control through vaccinations, anti-virals, and other treatments, it is unlikely that all students, international and domestic, will return to campus learning as they did before.

The incredible impact of this pandemic across almost all facets of our livelihood, almost counter-intuitively, potentially creates a great opportunity for universities and colleges around the world as they seek to extend and expand their hastily implemented post-pandemic online offerings to create global campuses. These campuses will serve students personally, virtually, and globally. Potential global campus enrolled students, however, include not only those who could afford to study abroad, but also those who are unable to afford the time and money to go abroad. This population is potentially huge and if attracted, could transform higher education from serving local and national students into more equitable institutions to serve globally distributed students.

Such a movement is possible and indeed necessary because of the financial situations in many countries and geopolitical tensions amongst nations in the world, but such a comprehensive movement will not be easy or straight-forward. In addition to the challenges of conservative higher education institutions and the practical actions needed to make it happen, there are also potential impediments contained within national education systems, political constraints, and cultural values. There are also issues of instructional languages, which may be helped with Artificial Intelligence and machine translation.

In summary, we believe that higher education must pay attention to the changing needs and aspirations of students across the world. As educators, we need to consider how to serve the globally distributed, who could seek to become a significant part of higher education in order to fulfil their own aspirations but to also contribute to the economic growth and living standards within their own countries. In the face of an aggressively competitive international market, agile and smart universities and colleges that can pivot by expanding their business model will thrive whilst others who revert to pre-pandemic practises may continue to be challenged.

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Part III
Educational Policies (Interlude)

As the educational turn initiated shifts in our next practices and pedagogies, the existing policies around higher education also required rethinking and adjustment to address these shifts. At the start of the pandemic, institutional and government responses were reactive and focused on addressing immediate needs rather than developing a joint long-term strategy of dealing with crises. Some governments, including the one in Australia, were reluctant to provide direct support to the universities leaving them to navigate the issues resulting from the pandemic on their own. The pandemic amplified the existing tensions in higher education and revealed institutional points of weakness. In the case of Australia, this includes the casualisation of employment, dependence on the income generated from the international student fees, and lack of experience in online delivery in some institutions. The welfare of international students stuck in Australia with the closure of the international borders was also ignored by the government. Addressing these issues has largely been at the expense of consideration for student experience and their wellbeing.

Three chapters in Part III take the opportunity brought by the pandemic to consider the existing tensions in higher educational policy and speculate on the possibilities to rethink and reprioritise it to better support emerging practices and pedagogies. While often managed as complex businesses, universities remain public entities. The pandemic amplified the impact of government policy on university operations and the ability of institutions to meet changing student expectations. The educational turn brought forward questions about the mission and role of universities in society. These questions are especially pertinent when it comes to the international higher education policy that is often narrowly focused on financial and reputational gains rather than student learning and experience. In this part of the book, the authors ask: How can institutions facilitate engaged, diverse, and inclusive higher education policy where student learning and experience is front and centre and where social impact of internationalisation is clearly articulated?

As this postcard from the pandemic indicates, the disruption in some ways empowered educators to reimagine current practices and ways of engaging with colleagues within and across disciplines, through the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) inquiries and communities of practice. This can be a time for SoTL to inform

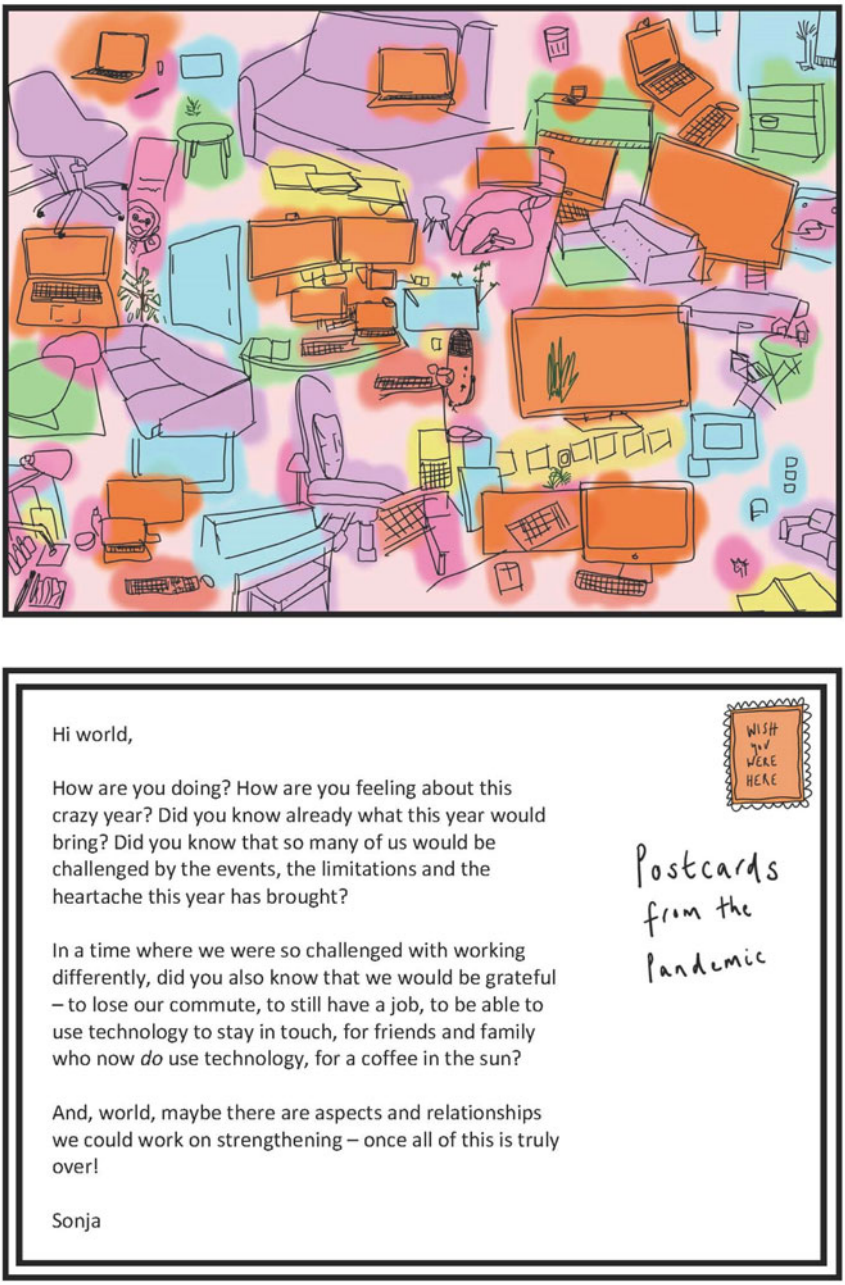

Fig. 3 Postcard from the Pandemic, 2020. 'Postcards from the Pandemic' were co-created to capture our collective data in new ways through a postcard sent to the self (past, present, or future) to archive this moment in our careers

educational policies. Student wellbeing is one of the areas where SoTL could make an impact. Student mental health and wellbeing need to become a priority for universities as higher education resets for an uncertain future. Promoting student wellbeing can no longer remain the sole responsibility of counselling services and educators, it requires a whole-of-university approach supported by institutional policies. This, in turn, requires reallocation of resources towards preventative measures, such as curriculum-based wellbeing initiatives and interventions, and mechanisms enabling educators to design learning and teaching that better support student psychological wellbeing.

Chapter 10
Government Responses to the Pandemic and Their Effects on Universities

Gwilym Croucher

Abstract For universities and colleges around the world the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption, which has created new challenges and possibilities, as well as amplifying existing trends. This chapter focuses on several dimensions of the pandemic-related disruption that affected universities and their students in many countries and has had widespread impacts on operations and teaching. The chapter examines some dimensions of government policy that widely affected universities: focussing on two main dimensions of those policies that temporarily reduced student movement, and those that involved a direct reduction in investment in public university education. It explores some of what government responses have meant for university operations, and the delivery of their teaching, and implications for the scholarship of teaching and learning. Focussing on the case of Australia as example of government policy responses that did little to address the specific issues universities faced resulting from the pandemic, and instead the government response was guided by ideology and reflected an attachment to using competitive mechanisms and market dynamics. The actions of the Australian government appear extreme compared to many jurisdictions, such as in many countries in Europe and in the United States, yet they align with their recent approach and their adherence to the New Public Management. That the pandemic significantly affected higher education policies is unsurprising, nonetheless examining how this occurred is instructive.

Keywords Higher education policy · Emergency online learning · Closed campuses · New public management

10.1 Introduction

As the chapters in this book reveal, 2020 altered much about how universities interact with their staff and students. From a rapid shift to online delivery to the widespread forced closure of campuses for many months during 2020, and measures

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such as social distancing and closed borders, affected universities. Whilst many of the impacts were consequence of public health responses not specific to universities, others resulted from changes directly aimed at higher education provision. Many governments around the world were presented with a dilemma in 2020: how to support their higher education systems when faced with other competing policy priorities that emerged rapidly throughout the early days of the pandemic.

Universities bring together a large number of students into what is often a small campus area, and so are affected by social distancing rules to a large extent. They are also often significant (and at times large) public institutions, often relying on some form of government funding, which became scarce in many places as the events of 2020 unfolded. The pandemic diminished available resources at precisely the moment when economic disruption increased demand for education. The dilemma of support was made all the more challenging in the face of questions about the mission and role of universities and changing expectations about delivery modes and quality.

This chapter examines some dimensions of government policy that widely affected universities: focussing on two main dimensions of those policies that temporarily reduced student movement, and those that involved a direct reduction in investment in public university education. It explores some of what government responses have meant for university operations, and the delivery of their teaching, and implications for the scholarship of teaching and learning.

How governments dealt with the universities within their borders, and how higher education policy changed during 2020, reflects longer standing trends in the approach by governments. Whilst there are significant politico-economic dimensions that are beyond the scope of this chapter attention here is on one key trend in the operation and management of higher education that has been widely embraced, although often reluctantly, being the New Public Management (NPM) (Hood, 1991). Whilst NPM has been particularly expressed in universities reflecting Anglo-European traditions in their structure, organisations and norms, it is seen in many countries around the world. Specifically, it is where governments seek to steer at a distance and hold public universities to account through performance and outcome assessment, as well as promoting the use of market and competitive mechanisms to facilitate this (Brown, 2010; Marginson, 1993, 1997). Guided by the strictures of policy to meet the aspirations of government, as well as being influenced by significant commercial and fee activity, universities have come to be managed as complex businesses, alongside their identity as public entities, in ways that conform to tenets of NPM.

Divergent government approaches reflect the expression of NPM in higher education, and more broadly how interventionalist countries are in their universities. The provision of financial surety during 2020 when universities were faced with tough choices and fewer student enrolments, reflects how governments invest and the local politics around setting tuition fees (Garritzmann, 2016).

Alongside examples from around the world of key impacts on students unable to attend campuses and governments faced with difficult funding choices for higher education, this chapter explores the case of Australia during 2020. Australia is of particular interest because of its strong embrace of NPM in higher education that has

shaped public debate and policy prescriptions, before the pandemic and throughout it (Croucher & Lacy, 2020). Central has been discussion of the cost of ensuring Australia's universities remain financially sustainable, and the role of international education fees in this. Whilst these tensions are not new, the pandemic has served to exacerbate them and has revealed institutional points of weakness in Australian higher education: reliance on temporary academic labour, uneven and immature online delivery, and growth and budgeting models with a high reliance on fragile revenue sources, primarily the fees from international students. These are challenges that are seen to a greater and lesser extent in many countries, and how universities and governments have responded to them is telling, especially the extent to which higher education has been left to the whims of the market.

Australia provides an interesting case as the government policy responses did little to address the specific issues universities faced resulting from the pandemic, and instead their response was guided by ideology and reflected an attachment to using competitive mechanisms and market dynamics. The actions of the Australian government appear extreme compared to in many jurisdictions, such as in many countries in Europe and in the United States, yet they align with their recent approach and their adherence to NPM. That the pandemic significantly affected higher education policies is unsurprising, nonetheless examining how this occurred is instructive.

10.2 Government Responses to the Pandemic and the Role of the New Public Management

As higher education has massified (Trow, 2007) in many countries it has seen the rise of many high participation systems, being where a very high proportion of a given age cohort complete higher education (Marginson, 2016). This has in turn required that governments must necessarily devote focus and resources to managing higher education institutions, including often making significant public investments to sustain and grow provision. Whilst there is a diversity around the world in high participation systems, many have developed in wealthy countries where a broad neoliberal-informed political approach is evident. This is an approach where government policies favour particular forms of free market capitalism and deregulation, and where there is an emphasis of national fiscal balance and continued efforts to reduce public spending. This has often gone hand in hand with the implementation of public sector policies and approaches that fall under the canopy of NPM.

Where NPM has become embedded, it has framed the approach to higher education, coming to dominate in many places in the Anglophone world, as well as throughout much of Europe. For higher education, NPM policies often come hand in hand with stronger leadership and managerial structures with a reduced role for collegial structures and internally representative bodies. Expenditure is managed through narrow outcome indicators focussed on 'outputs' rather than on initial resource allocation where there is a high degree of trust this will deliver on specified aims. At

the fore is an emphasis on performance and the measurement, assessment and monitoring of research and teaching activity. Finally, evaluation of academic institutions and disciplines has been formalised and developed, partly in order to make decisions on accreditation and partly as an instrument to improve performance in management, research and teaching (Paradeise et al., 2009; Slaughter & Cantwell, 2012; Taylor, 2017).

Whilst NPM polices and approaches have meant specific forms of performance management and accountability, they have also often promoted the perception by government and politicians that there should be stronger academic autonomy, although this has often manifested as institutional autonomy rather than the autonomy of the individual academic. This is a function of the emphasis on managing outcomes through vertical steering, where institutional leaders have a strong degree of autonomy over institutional strategy and internal resource allocation. This may be tempered by standardisation and norms within a national higher education context, including through regulatory and other government-imposed requirements, as well as by participation of *inter*- and *supra*-national actors for higher education, such as in the European Union (EU).

At times governments have enacted polices and approaches that support instructional autonomy in different ways and that cut against the vertical forms of steering inspired by NPM. In particular there has been an emphasis on what is termed network governance, with policies

> that encouraged the inclusion of stakeholders in academic affairs, on institutional boards and decision making on research funding, thus widening the networks of actors involved in decision making and opening up for the introduction of non-academic criteria, principles and preferences in such processes. (Bleiklie & Michelsen, 2013, p. 116)

Examining the response of governments to the challenges brought by the pandemic can be informed by the relative influence of NPM, as well as elements of network governance, their interplay and sometimes conflicting purposes.

The pandemic provides some useful insight into how NPM is expressed through government policy responses. Effects came both from policies that have directly impacted higher education provision (chiefly as unintentional consequences of public health responses), as well as resulting from reduced capacity for government to invest in higher education (following the broader the economic impacts of the pandemic). In many countries there is emerging evidence that direct policy intervention, and at times reduced investment, have affected universities in distinct ways. Nonetheless, the extent and nature of these effects varies significantly between countries and overtime, with a spectrum of impacts: some institutions face existential questions whilst others have markedly improved their positions. Given the complexity of the pandemic's impacts, the analysis here will focus on two of the main policy impacts that are seen in the large, wealthy, advanced high participation systems. These are, first, policies that have temporarily reduced student movement, and second those that have involved a direct reduction in investment in public university education.

10.3 The Experience of Closed Campuses and Reduced Movement of Students in Different Countries

In the first category of policy responses that this chapter examines are those government mandated actions to promote 'social distancing' that have stopped staff and students physically attending campuses and so prohibited delivery of education in a face-to-face mode. Measures include policies such as the widespread use of temporary 'stay at home' and shelter-in-place orders, sometimes styled as 'lock downs', as well as the closure of *intra-* and/or *inter*-national borders that have the effect of excluding some students from physically attending campuses, classrooms or lab-based education. Given the localised nature of many of these government mandated rules, higher education providers have been subject to overlapping national, regional and local policies.

During March to June 2020 the use of such orders was widespread at different times in many parts of the world, notably in North America, Europe and many Asian countries, including China. For example, many of the large U.S. states with major university systems were subject to stay at home order during much of 2020, with for example campuses in the University of California System closed from March 14 with face-to-face class not resuming until 2021, with students switching rapidly to "remote learning" (UC Davis, 2021). This was a pattern followed by many universities in North America, Europe and Asia as a response to successive waves of the pandemic and the associated health measures. Whilst the shift to remote and online learning was widespread for higher education institutions in 2020, so too was a return to at least some face-to-face learning by the end of 2020, as rates of vaccination against the COVID-19 disease were deemed sufficient to enable campus activity. Notable examples include the C9 universities in China, which are the leading research intense universities in the country, rapidly moved to online learning in March 2020 and had a full return to campus a semester later (Coates et al., 2022) after the widespread deployment of Sinovac.

Alongside localised shelter-in-place orders which shut campuses was the effect of temporarily closed borders and changes to visa arrangements for students. Subsequently the number of international enrolments at many universities around the world fell due to limitations on the number of flights available as well as the closure of consulates and embassies around different countries. For example, in the United States the number of international enrolments fell by 43% during the 2020–2021 fall semester (Adedoyin et al., 2021; June, 2020). Many students also decided to defer their studies during 2020 (Fisher, 2020). This was a pattern repeated across the world. For example, the number of international enrolments (where students study in a country for which they are not a citizen or resident) initially dropped significantly in many of the Anglophone countries during the early months of 2020. Both Canada and the United States initially suffered enrolment reductions but when campuses and borders opened, they came to increase their share of the international flows. In contrast, the United Kingdom declined in its share overall, whilst more markedly Australia's share of the international movement reduced by around 11% during 2020

(IDP, 2021). This was due to the extended border closure in Australia that prohibited international students from entering the country.

Universities in different countries responded to these challenges in many ways, depending on local context, though some common responses were seen in major institutions. To address the barriers for student physical attendance, many (and likely most) universities extended their online offerings, "emergency online learning" as it was styled by some, with two notable features. The first was the rapid pace that universities moved to fully online delivery (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Despite most universities having significant Learning Management Systems (LMS) and other online tools in regular and widespread use, campus education delivered with a face-to-face component is still the preference for public education providers worldwide (e.g. IDP, 2021).

Universities across Europe provide a good example of the challenge this presented for many, with the assessment by some commentators that their education systems were unprepared for emergency online learning (Marinoni et al., 2020; cf. Zawacki-Richter, 2021). Teaching largely moved to digital platforms as stay at home orders came into effect in many EU countries during March and April 2020. The European University Association (EUA) estimated that 95% of universities moved to distance learning at some point during 2020. The speed that this occurred for many required adaptions to their learning milieu, with a common assumption in institutions that it would only last weeks before returning to previous modes, necessitating "emergency solutions" (Irien, 2021). The EUA found that despite having online repositories in place and other supports for digitally enhanced learning and teaching, many academics had not taught online before the pandemic, with for example the Irish National Digital Experience (INDEx) Survey finding that 70% of academics had never taught online prior to the 2020 (EUA, 2020, p. 3). This was an experience likely mirrored elsewhere.

Whilst higher education was not always at the forefront of the publicly announced policy deliberations—in contrast to primary and secondary education and the impact that it would have on school students were front and centre—governments in most advanced systems largely elected to chart their own course. One exception is China, where leading universities were part of a major effort to transition to online learning whilst incorporating a change in courses offering, with the introduction of university wide auditing (for example 25% of all Tsinghua students), with more than 40,000 students having participated, as well as "Clone Classes" delivered to students at universities in China that remained under strict lockdown due to being located in the initial epicentre of COVID-19 (Wong et al., 2022). The Chinese response follows its increasing investment in education infrastructure, including for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Education Action Plan 2016 seeks a "proactive and exemplary" role for the Chinese education sectors as well as China's Vocational Education Action Plan 2020–2023. It is notable, however, that despite these initiatives in China, face-to-face delivery returned as the primary mode in the C9 (which are the large well-resourced research universities). It remains to be seen whether the Chinese attempt to foster large scale online education will be successful in the short run, or whether it will prove unfeasible, and unpopular with students. This pattern of a rapid shift to online,

followed by student indicating a preference to return to face-to-face delivery, was not confined to China, and surveys of student attitudes and preferences have indicated as such (IDP, 2021).

10.4 Public Subsidies

The second category of policy responses examined here capture a change, and in some cases a reduction, in public funding for public universities that has resulted from the pandemic. Where governments have had reduced taxation and other revenues matched with greater expenditure in many areas (such as health and welfare spending), this has amplified the need for prioritisation and policy trade-offs. Governments have been forced to assess their priority for funding higher education, where universities have at times been a lesser priority. Nonetheless, in some countries government funding for universities was maintained or increased even where universities overall saw a decline in revenue due to lower fee or other income.

Many institutions in South America and Europe had to contend with significant reductions in their public funding allocation where governments reduced their outlays or refused to provide support to universities to meet revenue shortfalls, either through existing programmes or temporary targeted funding measures (Al-Samarrai et al., 2020). This was evident in a diversity of countries, including Brazil, the United Kingdom (Ahlburg, 2020), throughout countries in the Middle East (Kawamorita et al., 2020), and Australia, as the case below illustrates.

Despite the reduction in public financing for many universities, there were some notable examples of growth in government subsidies for students. For example, in the United States during fiscal year 2020 per student funding in state systems increased by an average of 2.9% for public universities. In many areas financial aid for students was also increased during 2020 (IPEDS, 2021). Even where governments increased or maintained funding, universities still often had to contend with an overall reduction in their budgets. For instance, in the United States many major public universities in the state education systems suffered significant reductions in funding despite an increase government funding, which in large part came from a reduced revenue from non-tuition sources. For example, public four-year colleges contended with a reduction of 12.5% in the 2020 fiscal year (IPEDS, 2021; June & O'Leary, 2021). These cuts had significant affects, with many part-time academics losing their employment as the work force was reduced, with some by more than half. There is evidence that job loses disproportionately affected women (McMillen, 2021).

Here the narrative of neoliberalism and the NPM is more evident when governments took a more hands-off approach, continuing to steer at a distance, despite the fact that the pandemic is unlikely to have improved the position of many institutions and certainly caused a short-term crisis. There were few examples of structural change to higher education policies (though the Australian case explored below is one example to the contrary), and a preference for short-term funding solution if at all. Whilst it is too early to tell at the time of writing what the full effect has been

on higher education finances, the early indication would seem to correlate that the response from government mirrors their broader approach to higher education policy making. The next section explores some of these issues in greater detail through the Australian example.

10.5 The Australian Government, Universities and the Pandemic During 2020

Australia provides a useful case study that reflects trends occurring in other countries and shows how NPM has affected universities. During 2020 Australia was one of the most successful of the advanced economies in reducing the effect of COVID-19 on the healthcare system, with relatively fewer hospitalisations and deaths per capita than many countries (Hopkins, 2021). This was in no small part thanks to the country's 'island' status, allowing it to tightly control borders and the movement of people. The Australian government also initiated widespread stay at home measures during March 2020 and one state, Victoria, was also 'locked down' for much of the latter part of the year. This affected Australian universities in a similar manner that it did for many different countries around the world. Students were not allowed to attend face-to-face education due to the widespread stay at home orders, and closed borders meant that international students travelling to Australia were not able to enter the country, although many commenced their studies online with the promise of later attending face-to-face.

For the Australian universities this meant a rapid shift to online education as detailed throughout this volume, although this was not enough to maintain growth in the enrolment of non-resident international students who were barred from entering. This affected universities due to the reduced revenue expected from international students electing to either study elsewhere instead accepting delivery of their course online, or for some deferring their enrolment on the hope they would be able to complete the full course on campus. Universities Australia, the peak lobby organisation for universities in the country, estimated that the reduction in revenue was in the order of $4 billion during 2020, although recent analysis has shown this was closer to $1.8 billion (Larkins & Marshman, 2021). By mid to late 2020 universities appeared to be facing a significant revenue shortfall.

The widespread reduction in economic activity and furloughing of a large proportion of the Australian workforce prompted the Commonwealth government to introduce short-term financial measures. The largest of these schemes was the *JobKeeper* policy (ATO, 2021). This provided eligible employers and employees with a wage subsidy. Initially public universities were eligible for this programme, but its regulations were amended by the Treasury several times to reduce the chance that they would qualify. Whilst Commentators have suggested that the *JobKeeper* policy was not likely the best means to provide short-term support to universities it is striking that the government refused to implement another scheme that could provide short-term

certainty for public universities (Norton, 2020). This decision was one of several signals of how the government intended to deal with the various immediate challenges that the universities faced in 2020. From the outset, the Education Minister and federal administration indicated that international students would not be treated differently to other foreign nationals travelling to Australia for the purpose of tourism or business. Initially some Chinese international students were able to transit through a third country, many through Thailand, to enter Australia when it closed the border to China in February 2020, but such arrangements did not continue long and only a minority of those intending to travel to Australia during 2020 were able to benefit from this temporary policy. When Australia decided to only permit residents to enter the country in March 2020, the government signalled there would not be any special arrangements for international students who were enrolled in Australian universities and yet to arrive. Moreover, it signalled that there were to be no special arrangements for those international students who were already in Australia when shelter-in-place orders were implemented. Excluded from access to welfare, many international students came to rely on support from their university or from charity when they could not work due to lockdown. This exposed the reliance many had on work that was contingent and precarious ('off the books' and without a basic employment contract), and the consequences this had for these students (Soans, 2021).

Universities in Australia were quick to reduce the number of temporary academics employed on a 'casual' basis and made many permanent staff redundant, contracting their overall operations. By the end of 2020 most of the 37 comprehensive public universities reduced their staff numbers, with total job losses in Australian higher education estimated to be between 17,000 and 40,000 individuals (Littleton & Stanford, 2021; Universities Australia, 2021). Many of the job losses came as face-to-face teaching ceased for the second semester 2020.

The main response from the government to the growing predicament of the universities was to unveil the *Job-ready Graduates* package of policies in June, 2020. This proposed to change the funding arrangements for teaching, as well as modify various requirements attached to eligibility for funding. The government's stated intention for the proposals was to change the way that public funding is provided to public universities. The government announced publicly that 27,000 'extra' domestic places would be created by 2021, with a growth in subsequent years, to expand the educational opportunities for residents affected by the pandemic and assist in Australia's economic recovery. A discussion paper issued alongside the announcement of the *Job-ready Graduates* policy stated that it increases the share of cost paid by the government for courses that "produce higher public returns or which contribute to identified national priorities" (DESE, 2020, p. 23). Despite this rhetoric of the policy being substantively new in its aims and design, it was to be the latest in a similar series of attempts to change the basis on which domestic students were provided a public subsidy, following adjoining proposals that the government failed to legislate in 2014 and 2015. The government had managed to implement some changes in 2017 to, in-effect, reduce the number of publicly supported undergraduate places it provided to Australian residents, which was the only major change since the announcement of

a voucher system for undergraduate subsidy in 2008 (Croucher & Waghorne, 2020, p. 196–197).

The most important change that the *Job-ready Graduates* policies proposed was that the government would now set a maximum teaching grant for each university in its funding agreement, with a different subsidy amount depending on the course area in which a place was offered as set out in the legislated funding guidelines. Crucially, the government changed the subsidy amounts for many areas of study to significantly increase the proportion that students contributed through the HECS-HELP scheme (which is the primary loans scheme through which Australian students pay fees for their university education) and reduce the amount paid for by general public subsidy. The relative amounts that students contributed for different areas of study has remained similar since the introduction of the HECS student loans in the early 1990s. Generally, students have contributed a high proportion of the total funding provided to universities for disciplines in science, technology, medicine, engineering, commerce and law, whilst providing a lower amount for initial teacher education, social sciences and nursing (Chapman & Nicholls, 2013). The *Job-ready Graduates* policies significantly changed these relative contribution amounts for some courses in particular humanities degrees required a larger contribution from students than they had previously. Despite the stated purpose of these changes to incentivise students to study in areas that the government deemed necessary to support Australia's economic recovery (DESE, 2020), there was little transparency in the rationale for preferencing science and technology. These areas did not match the likely job prospects of graduates (National Careers Institute, 2020). Nor would the change in relative fees likely succeed over the long term as a means to incentivise students, as it was contravened by the evidence for how students have selected areas of study in Australia. Since the introduction of HECS students do not appear to have taken the price of a course into account, it has not affected demand. In short, the government proposed a system that was unlikely to achieve its stated aims (Chapman & Nicholls, 2013).

The *Job-ready Graduates* policy also meant the universities which would now have to decide the mix of places they were prepared to provide within the cap also incentivised by the relative amount of funding they would receive. This presented a risk of potentially perverse incentives for universities to provide more places than those for which they would receive higher subsidies, but they only receive the student contributions for additional places and generally these would be insufficient to cover their costs. The maximum amount of public subsidy is likely the determining factor how many student places a university can sustainably provide.

An increase in the number of student places was one of the major reasons the government proposed the rise in the average student contribution level and a decrease in the average government subsidy level. Yet, overall, it seems unlikely that these additional places will be provided on the current policy settings, as there is little transparency in how the estimated additional number of student places is to occur and based on the previous (Warburton, 2021). What the policy has done is change the basis on which university students are supported in Australia to provide a less coherent system for subsidy, with a weak justification for preferencing some areas,

focussed narrowly on a particular conception of 'jobs'. This incoherence is suggestive of the way that the government approaches higher education policy in Australia.

The government eventually short-term support to the challenge that the major research universities in Australia faced that came from to the impact on the research workforce that a projected reduction in revenue was likely to have, and whether institutions could continue to employ research-only academics, and predominantly those in the biomedical sciences. The government made a one-off increase in block grant research funding of one billion Australian dollars. This provided funds which were sufficient to ensure that job losses for many research staff were minimised. However, the government did not provide additional funding after 2021.

Much of the response of government to the challenges of 2020 for Australian higher education appears born of the immediate crisis. However, the government also elected to make significant other changes to higher education policy that appear less rooted in the immediate response.

The universities responded rapidly to the introduction of the government policies. Lockdowns and border closures meant a quick move to online education. This had the effect of changing how universities could deliver education, with fewer international students, and how education was received and understood. The reduced number of international students also caused a revenue crisis for many universities. Most Australian universities are public institutions funded through grants from the Commonwealth government along with a student contribution made through the HELP deferred tuition loan scheme, but they have also come to rely on international student fees to support much of their activity that is not funded by public sources. This reduction in international student revenue meant universities had diminished capacity. Like many Australian businesses, universities faced the prospect of shrinking their workforce for the foreseeable future and by mid-2020, it was clear they were going to have to make significant changes to their operations. The Australian case provides an interesting example of a government response to the challenge of the universities.

10.6 Government Responses and Their Effects

In thinking about the implications of the pandemic, and how this has affected countries' higher education policies, some observations of the distinct approaches by government during 2020 can be made. The pandemic, in amplifying current trends and tensions for universities, also does so for higher education policy. This suggests two things that are pertinent to higher education policy. The first is that the pandemic, like other major crises, provides the opportunity to undertake new initiatives that would normally not be publicly popular or politically possible. The second is that it strains resources and requires a reprioritisation of policy prescriptions. This is more pertinent to democratic representative systems where electoral politics influences the actions of government, but is likely a feature in all countries but those suffering under the most despotic of regimes.

Commentators have observed that the pandemic has served to amplify tensions within national higher education policy contexts (e.g. Witze, 2020). Those countries for which NPM is dominant in the mode of operation of higher education institutions have seen government responses that reflect its core tenants. In those countries where government has elected to steer at a distance and promote market mechanisms for higher education it has been reluctant to provide direct support for higher education institutions. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017) note that many governments, including those in Australia and in the Westminster tradition, are in the 'Public interest' model, where much of what government does is about arbitration and reconciliation for competing interests within a country. In higher education in Australia, this is the case, with universities positioned as an independent actor responsible for their own interests, despite their public status that endows both resources and social licence to operate. The message from government to Australian universities in 2020 was that in enjoying significant autonomy and acting as self-determining institutions, they were 'on their own'. Whilst government rhetoric was largely aimed in Australia at the value that higher education presented the actions of the government suggest that this rhetoric was hollow indeed.

Where governments have been slower to take an NPM approach to higher education policy, and to some extent throughout Europe, government support for universities has been more direct. The extent to which politicians were willing to prioritise higher education and directly intervene is perhaps revealing of the broader perception of the public role in supporting education in these countries. Even where there has been an increasing use of market mechanisms and attempts to steer at a distance, this did not preclude direct intervention and supportive rhetoric.

The pandemic has revealed weaknesses in higher education policy and the implications for universities. In some jurisdictions it is evident that despite the high degree of autonomy universities enjoy, even where they are still expected to perform to government criteria, they have struggled to be able to contend with the consequence of 2020, especially where they were faced with decisions over which they have had little control. The closure of borders has significantly affected some institutions that rely on the international student market, in particular in Australia and the United Kingdom. It has illustrated the consequences that NPM has brought with it—casual labour, uneven and immature online delivery, tenuous revenue sources—have been exacerbated by the government response.

10.7 Implications for Universities

The challenge that pandemic has brought for many universities, and the role of government in ameliorating or exacerbating these, brings various implications for how education is delivered into the future. It has highlighted that where there are significant constraints on resources universities must innovate in how they will provide education and other services to students, or be in peril. Whilst on one level it appears the autonomy that universities enjoy in many countries may not have been

eroded as result of the pandemic, their purpose has been more open to question, especially where there are expectations of their need to engage outside actors, and to meet the expectations of government. This has implications for their teaching and learning, and other functions of universities.

To a greater or lesser extent, many universities were left to chart their own course during 2020. Whilst some governments were willing to make significant investments online, or support universities to raise funds to do so, this level on intervention came with expectations and constraints which make innovation harder in the long run.

Early predictions that the online education revolution was finally here due to the pandemic seem a little hasty after the events of 2020. Many students have been vocal that they want much of what being on a campus offers and that what they expect out of their higher education does not always translate well to the online environment. The initial promises that massive open online courses would replace the need for campuses have not so far come true.

The issue here is not whether there is an important role for online education, nor that what students want out of their 'campus experience' cannot be delivered in other ways, as the pandemic so vividly demonstrated. Rather, it is that we likely do not yet know the optimal balance between what students expect and how the different elements of an education can be reimagined without the physical location. Many of the motivations for study—such as future employment, intrinsic interest, finding a sense of self or purpose, social experience or the search for a partner—are not easily unbound from campuses. Working out how students can seek and receive a combination of these things without physical proximity is a challenge.

This has implications for the scholarship of teaching and learning. For the successful ascension of online learning, it will be crucial to get the pedagogical models right, ensure learning gain is consistent and that strong student engagement is supported. However, there is also a need for this to fit with the wider questions around the student experience. Public policy for universities is not remote from many of these questions as the pandemic has demonstrated. How universities can respond depends on the actions of their governments in many ways, and these are not always immediately obvious.

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Chapter 11
Refocusing the Narrative on the International Higher Education Policy

Dina Uzhegova and Sophie Arkoudis

Abstract The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption to international higher education worldwide. This was particularly notable in countries like Australia that have heavily depended on the income from the international student fees. During the pandemic such transactional and economy-based models of international education proved to be vulnerable to changing environment. In this chapter we argue that enhancement of international education in the future will require refocusing the narrative on international education from financial or reputational gains to student learning and experience. To do so, academic community needs to be more involved in institutional international education discussions, development and decision-making. We frame our speculation about the possible futures of international education around four areas that could inform a more engaged, diverse and inclusive policy for international education. Drawing mainly on Australian context we invite readers to consider these four areas and ways to include diverse voices into the narrative on the international education in their institutions.

Keywords International higher education · Institutional policy · Student experience · Teaching and learning · Academic community

11.1 Introduction

The past twenty years have been a transformative period for international higher education, as it has made its way to the centre of institutional and national agendas in many countries across the globe. This was accelerated by the economic globalisation and rise of information technology. The rapid developments brought concerns that internationalisation process had become rather instrumental and focussed on "more exchange, more degree mobility and more recruitment," rather than preparing students to live and work in a global community (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011, p. 16). Some scholars have rightly pointed out that "hidden behind the rhetoric of

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maintaining and even encouraging academic and educational goals and purposes" the economic sustainability of higher education institutions has been prioritised over the values of teaching and learning in international and intercultural contexts (Ilieva et al., 2014, p. 877). More concerns about the possible future of international higher education have been recently brought by the changing global context fuelled by nationalist-populist argument of anti-internationalism and anti-immigration (Altbach & de Wit, 2018). Marginson (2020) goes further in his summary of the tensions that have existed within international student movement as "the global flows pushing against the limits of a nationally framed world" (p. 65). On top of this, COVID-19 pandemic has added another layer of complexity to the existing issues concerning international higher education, as boarders shut to protect against the virus, and vaccine nationalism reinforces national boundaries. Where to now for international education?

International education is not a level playing field and the current disruption of the higher education sector had different implications across the world. Some institutions have been affected by the interrupted international student flows whilst others struggled with the transition to online course delivery. The government responses and willingness to prioritise higher education and provide support in times of external disruption have also varied across the countries (see Chap. 10). Whilst this chapter draws mainly on Australian experience, the need to "broaden the scope of the objectives of higher education beyond purely instrumental goals and rethink its humanistic potential" (Zgaga, 2021, p. 53) is important in order to learn the limitations of internationalisation as profit and realign policies and practices to better respond to possible disruptions.

This chapter is an attempt to speculate about the future direction of international education by focussing on its intrinsic value and societal impact. We argue that sustained enhancement of international education in the future will require refocusing the narrative on international education from financial or reputational gains to student learning and experience. We frame our speculation about the possible future of international education around four areas that can inform the development of the institutional policy.

11.2 The Rationales for Promoting International Education

Despite different trajectories of international higher education development amongst countries, at its core has been an implied understanding that international education expands people, enriches higher education and fosters world-wide community (Marginson, 2020). However, international tensions between goals of profit, prestige, soft power and cosmopolitan education have often resulting in intra- rather than international experiences, and policy discourse has primarily focussed on quantifiable elements of international education.

In countries with advanced higher education systems (predominantly western Anglo-phone countries) international education has become a profitable export industry, although still veiled under understanding and purpose of international

education as "public good." This trend that has been described by Welch (2012) as "an opportunistic entrepreneurialism" has led to the overreliance of, for example, Australian universities on international student fees. The limited international travel caused by the pandemic exposed the dependence of the universities on the income generated from the international student fees. In Australia, where in 2019 the percentage of university revenue from fee paying overseas students was slightly over 27% (The Department of Education, 2020), many universities had to significantly cut their staff numbers and change course offerings to mitigate the sudden loss of revenue from the international student fees. This is an example of how the pandemic has highlighted the limits and vulnerabilities of entrepreneurial and economy-oriented model of internationalisation. Furthermore, the pandemic has drawn attention to the need to explore other more holistic models that focus on intrinsic value of international education and equip students with the skills to become "active, responsible and engaged citizens" and prepare them to deal with complexities of the rapidly changing world (OECD, 2018, p. 4). The tension between financial rationales and social propositions of the international education in western Anglo-phone countries has become so obvious that it can longer be ignored.

There is growing urgency to shift the conversation about international education from transactional terms and monetary benefits and reinvigorate its core values that are often opaque, if not invisible, in institutional policies and practices (Uzhegova et al., 2021). Jones and de Wit (2021) argue for a need to place political and economic rationales of internationalisation into context by:

> (a) measuring the things which are important, not simply those which can be measured, (b) learning from partners and diversity of policy, practice and research around the world, (c) understanding the transformational potential of internationalisation for all–students, faculty and support staff–and its link with employability and citizenship. (p. 84)

Indeed, it is the time to move beyond measuring international student mobility and profit associated with it or positions in the international university rankings. Rather than chasing quick quantifiable results, which can disappear quickly at points of crisis, the universities should refocus on the social dimensions of international education that have a potential to bring a long-term impact. Intrinsic benefits of international education such as intercultural competence and overall international student experience should be given more priority. However, it is not just about what is being measured as an outcome of international education, but rather what the government and institutional leadership chose to pay attention to and use as an evidence-base to drive the policy. For example, results of the *International Student Experience Survey* showing high level of student satisfaction with their overall living experience in Australia (91% in 2020) have been often used as evidence of success of the international education sector with Australian Minister for Education and Youth using survey results to claim that "Australia remains an attractive destination for international students, despite the impacts of COVID-19." ("International Students Still Rate Australia Highly," 2021). However, if we scratch beneath the satisfactions rates, more detailed research has indicated that even before the start of the pandemic international students were far from satisfied and faced challenges making social

connections and developing sense of belonging and that universities can do better to support international students' experience (Arkoudis et al., 2019).

Linking added value of international education to employability is somewhat problematic. On one hand, it reinforces a narrow role of universities to prepare job-ready graduates which is not sustainable in a diverse global environment (see Lorenz, 2006). On the other hand, academic mobility is still limited to a small proportion of students and staff and internationalisation at home, whilst often presented by universities as a viable alternative to mobility and an indicator of the comprehensive approach to internationalisation, has achieved little progress in permeating across the universities (Green, 2021). Thus, the transformational potential of internationalisation linked to employability is yet to be equally accessible to all. Instead, universities need to focus on the intrinsic value of international education, its common good and benefit for the global society. This can also help to foreground the social contribution of the higher education sector.

11.3 Diversity of Global Contexts

It is important to acknowledge the diverse experiences of higher education internationalisation across the world. Strikingly different costs and benefits of this experience largely depend on how national higher education systems are positioned in the international knowledge network (Yang, 2021). Outside of the so called academic "core" are emerging economies that are seen as peripheral and require more effort and different approaches to the internationalisation process (see Uzhegova & Baik, 2020). In recent years, many such countries have achieved much progress in promoting international education as part of the overall agenda to boost reputation and presence of their universities internationally. The pursuit for global recognition is often linked to the international institutional rankings and the policies focussed on injecting additional funding into a selected group of the most promising universities. These universities are required to increase international publication productivity and recruitment of international students and staff as these are the typical indicators for ranking internationalisation in league tables (e.g. Times Higher Education rankings and QS World rankings). As governments follow the Western model of internationalisation, reproducing similar international education policies and benchmarking success against the same set of indicators, they limit their ability to suggest alternative possibilities and creative approaches to the international education that are outside of the dominant trends.

The dichotomic models currently used to describe the uneven academic landscape of higher education, such as North–South or centre-periphery, are insufficient to explain the complex dynamics in the academic landscape. They reinforce replication of policy from centre to the periphery whilst undermining the activism of the marginalised academic communities (Kuzhabekova, 2020) or assigning them "a passive role in the interactions and exchanges" (Perrotta & Alonso, 2020). Such dichotomic models fail to acknowledge the diversity of international education policy

that exists not only across centres and peripheries but also within them. For example, such advanced higher education systems as Germany and Finland allow international non-EU students financially contribute to their education on the same basis as domestic students, whilst in Australia or the U.S. international students pay double or more of what domestic students are charged. Thus, despite the diverse experiences of countries within the rapidly evolving global higher education landscape, the dominant global higher education culture or institutional university ranking seem to set a common trajectory of the international education development reducing "beneficial diversity amongst systems and institutions" (Hudzik, 2016, p. 29).

Learning from diversity of policy, practice and research around the world proved to be especially important during the pandemic as countries were searching for best ways to deal with the crisis. According to Yang (2021), "against a backdrop of unprecedented human connectivity and mobility, being able to learn from others becomes a vital precondition for sustainable development of any society" (n.p.). The diversity of policy and practice in international higher education is often overlooked. It seems that international institutional rankings with the set of indicators created a standard system of measuring successes of the higher education institutions. However, as Kromydas rightly noted, standardisation does not create equal opportunities:

> … harmonisation and standardisation of higher education creates permanent winners and losers, centralising all the gains, monetary and non-monetary, towards the most dominant countries, particularly towards Anglo-phone countries and specific industries and therefore social inequalities increase between as well as within countries. (2017, p. 7)

It is doubtful that standard ways of measuring success and competition for international prestige will produce societal benefits, embracing the diversity and ethical and reciprocal models of collaboration is therefore critical for more equitable and sustainable future of international education.

11.4 Refocusing the Narrative on the International Higher Education Policy

Scholars have been speculating about the future of international education for the past couple of decades, often predicating its end (e.g. Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011) or hoping for renewed focussed on its social value (e.g. Leask & de Gayardon, 2021). How can we refocus the narratives dominating the international higher education policy to ensure the centrality of the teaching contexts and the students' learning experiences? Whilst Jones and de Wit's (2021) argument points to the importance of shifting the discourse on international education away from economic and political rationales, it largely reinforces a dichotomised view of international education, relying on an overreliance in existing thinking, and limits speculation of next practices. Almost a decade before the pandemic Barnett (2013) noted that universities had become risk adverse and hesitant to deviate from the expected institutional structures

and norms. This impoverishes the ability of the academic community to critically analyse, challenge and suggest alternatives to the status quo. When it comes to the international education, the ability of institutions to reimagine existing policies and practices are also constrained by pressure of gaining profit and/or prestige. In the case of Australia, the surface level of the institutional policy is on the one hand often disconnected with the academic practice, and on the other hand is not influential enough to guide the direction of government policies that affect international education. We think that educational turn provides the opportunity to speculate and reimagine international education policies within contexts and landscape of higher education. A return to past practices is no longer possible because the context in which they operated has changed due to the pandemic.

A range of national and institutional contexts where international education takes place is diverse. However, foregrounding the student experiences and the activism of academic community in our discussion of the institutional policy provides some common ground and relevance across different contexts. Whilst future developments of the global landscape for higher education internationalisation are arguably beyond the control of the academic community (Altbach & de Wit, 2018), academic activism can lead institutional international education discussion, development and decision-making. After all, classroom is an important place of "global learning." Speculating on the future of international education, we focus on four areas that could inform a more engaged, diverse and inclusive international education policy.

11.4.1 Getting the "Process" Right

Rather than focussing on outputs, the priority of the international education policy should be given to the process itself with a strong consideration for student needs and global learning experience. One of the key components of internationalisation process, that is not limited to a student's ability to undertake study abroad, is internationalisation of the curriculum. The implementation of internationalisation of the curriculum and support of staff development need to be embedded within departments and therefore have direct implications for institutional policy (Beelen & Jones, 2015). Universities often declare their aspiration to internationalise the curriculum, for instance, the University of Melbourne stated the aim to "ensure that curriculum is informed by a global range of perspectives" as one of its strategic priorities until 2030 (Advancing Melbourne, 2020). However, the implementation process is often left to individual academics to navigate and there is a lack of clear guidance or supportive mechanisms from the institutional policy.

In 2020 Australian universities had no choice but to allocate resources to transitioning to online teaching and learning in response to closed borders and lockdowns. If institutions are serious about internationalising the curriculum it will require similar efforts and resources. Drawing on the experience of Australian universities, it would

also require addressing such institutional issues as staff casualisation and prioritisation of research over teaching. With a large proportion of current undergraduate teaching in Australian universities delivered by casual staff and international dimensions of academic work of many full-time academics being predominantly centred on research, for academics to buy into the redesigning curriculum to include diverse perspectives and voices requires substantial incentive and reward from the institutional internationalisation policy. Dedicated roles can also be designed, like those created for online teaching and learning, to promote internationalisation of teaching and learning within the university, address potential challenges and develop supportive institutional climate by establishing communities of practice.

However, it is not only *what* is being taught at the universities but also *how* it is being done. It is important that university leadership through resources and policies prioritises student engagement in teaching contexts. This is something that requires urgent attention from Australian universities where international undergraduate students have consistently rated satisfaction with their learning engagement much lower than other aspects of their student experience, such as skills development, teaching quality, student support or leaning resources in the *Student Experience Survey* (Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching, 2021). Learning engagement in this survey included such aspects as interaction with other students in and outside the classroom and sense of belonging to their institution. Interaction between international and domestic students does not always occur naturally (Arkoudis et al., 2019), positive social learning relationships between students need to be encouraged through a careful design of programmes and group work:

> Programme designers need to develop a holistic, integrated view of their programme, balancing size and scale with sufficient diversity and opportunities to develop cross-cultural and interdisciplinary learning relations. (Héliot et al., 2020, p. 2368)

There are existing resources that provide guidance on how to enable interaction between domestic and international students. For example, the *Interaction for Learning Framework* that consists of six interrelated "dimensions" such as planning interaction, creating environments for interaction, supporting interaction, engaging with subject knowledge, developing reflexive processes, and fostering communities of learners (Arkoudis et al., 2010). The "planning dimension" is a fundamental in this framework as it is where teaching practices are aligned with the course objective, learning outcomes and assessment tasks that give a clear message to all students of what is important in the curriculum.

To achieve a holistic and integrated view of the course or programme and internationalise the curriculum, in addition to the institutional support, resources, and policy changes, requires breaking the academic silos and developing a shared direction and ownership of curriculum (Green, 2021). The rapid changes and adjustments in higher education that commenced in 2020 might present an opportunity to shift the institutional culture to create more connections and engagement between rigidly predefined academic roles within and between the disciplines, fuelling collaboration across the silos of university policies and practices.

11.4.2 Global and Local Connectedness

As higher education institutions position themselves internationally, it is expected that they would act as an "anchor" between global and local, creating pathways for global interconnectedness to be relevant to local community and providing outlets for local knowledge to address global issues. Whilst Australian universities have been successful in recruiting international students, they have failed to address growing misconceptions about the value of international education to local communities and society more broadly. A dominant market discourse surrounding international education in Australia has led to a widespread perception of international students as "consumers" and "cash cows." Over the last decade this has been amplified by "the political and legal *Othering* of globally mobile students by national governments" (Marginson, 2012, p. 10) with international students being treated as outsiders by the nation-state regulation. Such non-citizen identity of the international students in the country of education have become evident at the start of the pandemic when the Australian Prime Minister at that time shamelessly stated that international students could make their way home, absolving government responsibility and commitment to safeguard their welfare during the crisis.

The pandemic heightened existing issues of discrimination and racism towards international students in the community. A report on the experience of international students before and during COVID-19 (Morris et al., 2020) has shown that students experienced more discrimination during the pandemic because of their racial-ethnic or cultural background with more than a quarter of 724 surveyed students reporting that they have experienced more discrimination. Similar sentiments have been echoed in another report (Berg & Farbenblum, 2020) revealing that students experienced racism in the form of verbal abuse or people avoiding them because of their appearance. Within the universities, however, there were some positive changes. According to the *Student Voices: Domestic cohort engagement with international students through COVID-19* report, a large majority of Australian students changed their attitudes towards international students during the pandemic and increased appreciation of the challenges associated with living away from home and sense of isolation (Lawrence & Ziguras, 2021). The issues of discrimination and racism are not unique to Australian context and it is important that they are acknowledged by the universities and addressed in the institutional policy with more efforts in place to integrate international students on campus and within a wider community.

What binds us together is that we are human. We have more commonalities than differences and should reimagine community engagement and interaction based on these similarities rather than differences. Interaction with the local community can ease cultural adaptation of international students (e.g. Gautam et al., 2016) and contribute to improving the student experience. To achieve this will require specific strategies that include engagement with the greater community and bringing a community-based approach to internationalisation processes (Marangell et al., 2018).

Whilst community work is often left to informal or extra-curricular student experience, to reach the diverse student population it is important to incorporate community-based projects into the formal curriculum. Otherwise, these projects remain limited to those students who have time outside of their studies to engage in them (e.g. those with no childcare responsibilities or financial difficulties). To change course structure and include community-based projects into the formal curriculum will require support of the university leadership and academics, as well as more involvement of professional staff to connect students with organisations in the community.

Community work does not only benefit international students in Australia, domestic students can gain a lot from close engagement with the multicultural and indigenous local community. Cultivation of global competencies is incorporated in graduate attributes across Australian universities with most universities stating that their graduates will be "responsible and effective global citizens" (The University of Adelaide) able to "engage with national and global issues and are attuned to social and cultural diversity" (The University of Melbourne). It is important for universities not only to ensure the availability of opportunities for local students to engage within multicultural and diverse contexts throughout their studies but that these interactions are coordinated and well-designed. As pointed out in a recent study by Tran and Bui (2021) who explored the social impact of Australian students' learning in the Indo-Pacific via the New Colombo Plan (NCP) from the host perspective:

> There should be a more coherent and coordinated mechanism, co-designed by the government, home and host universities and host organisations, to help NCP alumni maintain deeper and ongoing connections with their host communities. (p. 439)

The authors also noted that close engagement with host institutions is important to achieve mutually beneficial cooperation. As noted earlier in the chapter, there is a lot that can be learnt from diversity of policy and practice in other parts of the world.

Whilst the pandemic and closed borders limited study abroad opportunities for students for some time, the social and cultural diversity within Australia itself presents untapped opportunities for building connections as the country recovers from the pandemic. In addition, the accelerated use of technology over the last two years may offer additional ways for building global and local connectedness that have been underexplored in the past.

11.4.3 Multidisciplinary Perspectives and Policy Co-design

Speculating about the future of higher education internationalisation Hudzik (2016) suggested that faculty would have more at stake in the defining of international policy as "internationalisation offers opportunities to strengthen research and scholarly capacity and impact the content and pedagogy of teaching and learning" (p. 27). This requires dissolving the institutional structures that silo disciplines and teaching and limit the possibilities for including engagement with diverse multidisciplinary perspectives in teaching contexts. This can be achieved through dispersed leadership

model based on sharing of knowledge and experience through communities of practice. Such co-design of practises inclusive of different voices can provide an evidence and experience base to inform and guide the policy direction (an example of such model is presented in Transversing Learning and Leading Collaboration chapter). It is important that universities create supportive environment enabling such communities of practice to review and critique curriculum and pedagogy of teaching and learning. Academic participation in such initiatives need to be rewarded and acknowledged at different levels of the university structure, making it as important as engagement in research activity.

Silos also exist across different phases of learning and impede the development of a holistic international education policy. The report by the Group of Eight Australian universities highlighted a reduction in the languages offered at Australian universities from 66 to 29 between 1997 and 2007 and called for urgent action emphasising that

> The languages crisis Australia is experiencing cannot be solved by one sector of the education system alone. A coordinated national approach involving schools, community groups, universities and state and territory governments is required. (2007, p. 1)

Without a co-designed policy that involves stakeholders and representatives of various levels of learning the national policy risk to remain localised and disconnected with the real needs. The fact that language studies were identified as a "national priority" under the Australian Government *Job-ready Graduates Package* adopted in 2020 to guide government funding of the universities, did not appear to save the language programmes from closure. When university enrolments dropped due to the pandemic, language programmes were amongst those affected and some universities discontinued offering of Chinese, Indonesian and Japanese programmes (Asian Studies Association of Australia, 2021). The financial sustainability seems to outweigh the value of foreign language and cultural studies as an important component of the international learning experience of Australian students. Despite its multicultural and diverse population, not to mention the Indigenous languages, Australia is at risk of remaining largely a monolingual country.

Finally, students as the main stakeholders in international education should be invited to co-design the institutional policy on international education. "Students as partners" approach has already been gaining its momentum in learning and teaching, described as:

> A collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualisation, decision-making, implementation, investigation, or analysis. (Cook-Sather et al., 2014, pp. 6–7)

By engaging students as partners in the international education policy development and implementation not only can intuitions gain from students lived-experiences and perspectives, they can also shift the existing entrepreneurial and economy-oriented model of higher education where students are viewed as "customers." As Green (2019) notes, the existing "student as consumer" rhetoric might make "university management more eager to listen to their "customers" than their staff" (p. 24) and strengthen student voices demanding for significant policy changes.

11.4.4 Teaching-Research Nexus in International Education

Next practices should include research so that the extent to which students achieve the learning outcomes and graduate attributes connected to internationalisation can be better understood. A recent study by Whitsed et al. (2021) who interviewed academics serving on editorial advisory boards of international higher education journals highlighted a limited focus of existing research on exploring the connectedness of internationalisation to the imperatives of the local context and evaluating the real impact of internationalisation on graduates. Some of these limitations may be addressed by the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). SoTL enquiries can measure the impact and effectiveness of the initiatives related to the internationalisation of curriculum or incorporation of student peer interaction on students learning and development of global competencies. Importantly, collaborations across different disciplines and institutions will strengthen policies and practices and offer a strong evidence-base for further development. Such enquiries not only can better inform our understanding of students' global learning but also build a base to push for more significant changes in the institutional policy and processes. This would require strong leadership on the part of the institution to facilitate SoTL communities of practice, where ideas and research findings can be shared and further developed. University leaders can also provide means by which academic activism is informed through SoTL and further reinforced through performance development frameworks, in order to recognise and reward such scholarships.

Focussing on graduate international students that present a large proportion of overall international students, Sharma (2019) points out that research and scholarship do not guide policy decisions affecting these students and calls "to rethink convention" and introduce diverse students' stories and perspectives into the agenda of scholarship, arguing that

> A more broadened and complex view, coupled with new perspectives, will help to liberate us from the limited role of academic service in the margins of institutional organisation and conversation, helping us provide better support for students, provide more significant intellectual and educational leadership to our institutions, and thereby make more significant contributions to society. (2019, p. ix)

Such scholarship can also lessen the existing "deficit" discourse around international students and support student activism. Developing deeper connections with students and leveraging their voices can help to move away from overreliance on student surveys that provide surface level information on how students are experiencing the current changes and what international education really means for them.

Sharma (2019) also suggests establishing an interdisciplinary field of research on "international student study" to explore students' experiences and ways of navigating the changing higher education landscape, where scholars, members of academic support services, career centres, recruitment and student affairs could work together to lead the "institutional conversation, programme-building, and policy-making" (p. viii). Such collaborative process is an example of SoTL in practice. It would be

beneficial to include students as partners in these SoTL activities. In doing so we could move away from treating students as subjects of research to inviting them as co-researchers and co-creators of a shared understanding of international education that can inform policy.

11.5 Future-Proofing International Education During Times of Disruption

International education is vulnerable to a range of possible future disruptions, whether it is related to international politics, climate change or another pandemic. Without a doubt the impact of these disruptions will depend on the local context in which institutions are situated, but it will also depend on what is perceived as a core value of international education. Whilst international higher education has made its way to the centre of institutional and national agendas, the issues and concerns that surround it today are not much different from those raised over the past decades. A rapidly expanding scale, in particular in countries like Australia where international student numbers have almost doubled in a short period of time (between 2013 and 2019), has amplified some of these issues related to discrimination, lack of opportunities to engage with peers in and outside the classroom and sense of belonging to the institution. Two years of pandemic have shown the fragility of the perceived "success" that is based on the neo-liberal paradigm and the need to refocus institutional policy on international education to better prepare for possible future disruptions. How can the universities do better?

The education turn presents an opportunity to refocus the narrative on the international higher education and to move away from a narrow view of international education as physical mobility, which continues to dominate the discussion in western Anglo-phone countries as the international travel resumes post-pandemic (de Wit & Jones, 2021). International education needs to become a core business of university educational policies where student learning and experience is front and centre. To achieve this, it is important to develop a shared understanding of the value and purpose of international education and engage in a collective action to shape institutional policy. This requires refocusing institutional policy to better support interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary collaborations across the university through communities of practice and university wide incentives and to invite students to engage in these collaborations as partners genuinely listening to their voices and paying attention to their experiences. To shift the narrative away from "purely instrumental goals", universities need to break the silos between classrooms, departments and universities and to allow generation and sharing of knowledge through SoTL enquiries that highlight the impact of international education on student learning and experience. Afterall, universities have an important role to play in promoting social impact of internationalisation, including tolerance and empathy for diversity.

In this chapter we argued that the involvement of the academic community in guiding institutional policy and creating a long-term vision of international education that foregrounds student experiences is crucial in order to truly rethink the value of international education. The classroom experience is where maximum traction can be gained through creating learning discussions where students from diverse backgrounds feel comfortable communicating and express their ideas. The importance of shifting a learning approach from content dissemination to student learning and engagement has become even more urgent with the transitioning to online teaching. Returning to campus will not automatically result in more student engagement and there is more pressure on academics to create conditions for positive student interaction. Internationalising the curriculum and incorporating peer interaction within academic courses cannot be achieved without distributed expertise approach to curriculum design and shared ownership and responsibility amongst course coordinators, teaching academics and learning advisors. Equally important is a supportive institutional culture that incentivises and rewards such initiatives and encourages communities of practice.

The pandemic and remote learning heightened areas of student experiences that have already proved to be problematic, such as student well being and connectedness within student learning and experiences, as well as within the university. This can no longer be addressed by band-aid solutions and requires urgent attention and clear direction in the university policy. More focus on diversity can be a starting point. Treating international and domestic students as two separate groups generates a false dichotomy which is unhelpful in that it creates the perception that there is some homogeneity within these categories and difference between them. By facilitating opportunities for purposeful and inclusive engagement in the classroom and promoting positive social learning relationships between all students, it is possible to create spillovers of such engagement beyond the classroom to the local and international community. Expanding efforts to include engagement with the greater community and bringing a community-based approach to internationalisation process will both better serve the international student population and create a more well-rounded internationalised university experience for all students by harnessing the inherent diversity of the local community and acknowledging our social responsibility towards it.

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Chapter 12
Examining Mental Health and Wellbeing Policies in Australian Universities

Tracii Ryan, Samantha Marangell, and Chi Baik

Abstract The mental wellbeing of higher education students has become a salient issue facing higher education worldwide. This increased attention can be at least partially attributed to prevalence studies which indicate that the severity of mental health difficulties is growing across student populations, and a high proportion of students—higher than the general community—are experiencing moderate-to-severe levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. There has also been increasing recognition that universities have a critical role in providing supportive and health-promoting environments and developing whole-of-institution wellbeing policies. In addition to their moral imperative to ensure the safety of all students, supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students should be a priority for universities given that psychological distress is known to adversely affect students' academic motivation, retention, and achievement. This is arguably even more important in the wake of COVID-19, which led to rapid changes in learning delivery, as well as a reduction in social connectedness and students' perceptions of the quality of their university experience. This chapter examines the current state of play with regard to institutional mental health and wellbeing strategies and policies in the Australian higher education sector and suggests recommendations for future directions.

Keywords Psychological distress · Mental health · Wellbeing · Policy

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12.1 Introduction

In higher education research, mental health and wellbeing are often investigated by researching the prevalence of students' psychological distress (e.g., Larcombe et al., 2021; Stallman, 2010) which encompasses high symptom levels of depression, anxiety, and/or stress (Ohayashi & Yamada, 2012). In recent years, empirical studies—both in Australia and internationally—have consistently revealed a high prevalence of psychological distress and mental health concerns among university students (Eisenberg et al., 2013; Larcombe et al., 2021; Stallman, 2010). Therefore, the mental health and wellbeing of students has become an "issue of significant concern for universities" (Baik et al., 2017, p. 1).

In addition to their moral imperative to ensure the safety of all students, supporting mental health and wellbeing must be a priority for universities given that psychological distress is known to adversely affect students' academic motivation, retention, and achievement (Dyrbye et al., 2006; Marin et al., 2011; Stallman, 2010; Struthers et al., 2000) and may also lead to suicidal ideation and behavior (Brownson et al., 2016). This is arguably even more important in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which required students to quickly shift to mandatory remote learning and involved extended periods of social isolation and restricted access to university campuses and facilities (Aristovnik et al., 2020; Mollenkopf et al., 2020). Indeed, emerging research suggests that students' mental health has been adversely affected by the pandemic and its associated reductions in the quality of students' university experience (Li et al., 2021).

Given this context, universities clearly have a critical role to play in providing supportive and health-promoting environments to enrich student wellbeing, as well as engaging in whole-of-institution policy development in this area (Baik et al., 2017; BUPA, 2020; Ryan et al., 2021). However, as noted by Veness (2016), few universities to date—in Australia at least—have developed comprehensive mental health and wellbeing policies or strategies. To determine whether this is still the case and to provide a foundation for speculative thinking about how such policies should look, this chapter aims to evaluate existing mental health and wellbeing policies and strategies in the higher education sector and propose recommendations for how universities could rethink their approach to mental health and wellbeing.

12.2 Prevalence of Mental Health Concerns in Higher Education

In the last 15 years, research has consistently revealed that mental health concerns, such as depression, anxiety, stress, suicidal ideation and self-injury, are highly prevalent among university students across the globe, including in countries such as the United States (Eisenberg et al., 2013), China (Lei et al., 2016; Zeng et al., 2019),

Malaysia (Wong et al., 2016), Turkey (Bayram & Bilgel, 2008), Brazil (Demenech et al., 2021), Belgium (Levecque et al., 2017), and France (Marais et al., 2018).

A similar trend is also seen in Australia. For example, a study of 6479 undergraduate and postgraduate students from two universities reported that 83.9% had elevated levels of psychological distress (Stallman, 2010). Another study of 4258 undergraduate and masters by coursework students from one university found that one in four were experiencing high levels of either stress, anxiety, or depression symptoms (Larcombe et al., 2016). More recent research based on 14,880 students from the same university as the Larcombe et al. (2016) study revealed that one in five were currently experiencing a mental health disorder, approximately 80% were concerned about their mental or emotional state, and 5% had experienced self-harm or attempted suicide (BUPA, 2020). Results such as these have led some scholars to declare that Australian universities are facing a "mental health crisis" (Lau & Pretorius, 2019, p. 38).

These high rates of mental health concerns can be partially explained by the multifarious psychological stressors associated with being a university student (BUPA, 2020; Larcombe et al., 2021). For example, some students experience pressure to succeed or threats to their autonomy because their parents have placed high expectations on them with regards to their academic achievement or career pathways (Baik et al., 2017; BUPA, 2020). Others may experience challenges coping with the academic workload, particularly those who are required to maintain paid employment in order to survive, or those with significant family care responsibilities (Larcombe et al., 2021). International students may experience difficulties associated with the transition to university, such as homesickness, harassment or discrimination, language proficiency, social isolation, and financial pressures (BUPA, 2020). Higher degree by research students (i.e., those completing Ph.D.s or Masters by research) may also experience lack of community within their departments (Hyun et al., 2006; Levecque et al., 2017), social isolation (El-Ghoroury et al., 2012; Janta et al., 2014), and issues with the supervisory relationship (Janta et al., 2014; Peluso et al., 2011).

In addition to the aforementioned stressors, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on both learning and teaching and the broader student experience (Bolumole, 2020). Unsurprisingly, emerging research indicates that students' psychological distress and mental health concerns have remained high during this time. For example, a study of 612 university students in Egypt during the pandemic found very high levels of loneliness, anxiety, stress, and depression (El-Monshed et al., 2021). In addition, a two-phase survey study of 68,685 Chinese students during the early months of the pandemic showed a significant increase on baseline rates of anxiety and depression after a six week period (Li et al., 2021). In that study, final year students and those completing graduate degrees were found to have higher risk of developing psychological distress, perhaps due to concerns about their academic achievement and future employability prospects.

In the general population, prolonged experiences of elevated psychological distress can have deleterious consequences for physical and mental health (Cuijpers & Smit, 2002; Essau et al., 2014; Yaroslavsky et al., 2013), as well as impeding their day-to-day activities and social interactions (Essau et al., 2014; Yaroslavsky et al., 2013).

Among students, psychological distress may negatively affect motivation, cognitive functioning, attention, and achievement (Marin et al., 2011; Stallman, 2010; Struthers et al., 2000) and increase the risk of attrition (Dyrbye et al., 2006), and suicidal ideation and behaviors (Brownson et al., 2016). Given this, it is imperative that universities address the mental health and wellbeing of their students using evidence-based strategies and approaches.

12.3 Conceptualizing Mental Health and Wellbeing in Higher Education

Mental health has been described as "an umbrella term encompassing a range of…states, from diagnosable mental illness and mental health difficulties at one end of the spectrum, to mental wellbeing and a state of flourishing at the other" (Baik et al., 2017 p. 3). In general, mental wellbeing refers to a positive state of mental health (also referred to as eudaimonia, self-actualization, thriving, or flourishing) and is commonly considered to be a multi-dimensional construct (Forgeard et al., 2011). While there are many different theories of mental wellbeing in existence, few have been used (or indeed, developed) for the higher education context. Three such theories are Ryff's psychological wellbeing (PWB; Ryff, 1995), PERMA (Seligman, 2011), and self-determination theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2000). These theories are discussed further below, along with two additional concepts associated with wellbeing in higher education students: belonging and autonomous motivation.

Ryff's (1995) PWB is a multi-dimensional conceptualization of wellbeing that was developed as an alternative to popular measurement approaches of the time, such as operationalizing wellbeing as the absence of psychological distress (i.e., rather than the presence of flourishing or thriving) or examining subjective unidimensional constructs, such as life satisfaction or happiness. In developing the PWB, Ryff (1995) examined key theories from the fields of life-span developmental and clinical psychology, as well as the extant mental health literature and identified certain "points of convergence" (p. 100) between them. The resulting conceptual framework includes six dimensions that support wellbeing:

- *autonomy* (the ability to resist social pressures);
- *environmental mastery* (a sense of competence in managing activities and contexts);
- *personal growth* (a sense of continued expansion and development);
- *positive relations with others* (the capacity for empathy, affection and intimacy);
- *sense of purpose* (having goals and a sense of direction in life); and
- *self-acceptance* (having a positive attitude about the good and bad aspects of self and past life).

Ryff and Keyes (1995) subsequently developed six scales of psychological well-being based on these dimensions, which have been used to investigate university student wellbeing in various studies (Larcombe et al., 2016, 2021).

Four years after Ryff's PWB theory was published, Martin Seligman proposed that psychologists should focus less on curing mental disorders and more on understanding and promoting ways that individuals can improve their psychological well-being (Seligman, 1999). This seminal premise formed the basis of a new field of study: positive psychology. A subsequent book on this topic of flourishing (Seligman, 2011) proposed the development of the PERMA theory of wellbeing, which incorporates five key elements:

- *positive emotions* (P) (happiness, joy);
- *engagement* (E) (obtaining a state of flow in daily activities);
- *relationships* (R) (forming positive bonds with others);
- *meaning* (M) (having a purpose in life); and
- *accomplishments* (A) (achieving goals).

As explained by Forgeard et al. (2011), the PERMA model is unique because it includes "both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of wellbeing" and supports "the measurement of each element using both objective and subjective approaches" (p. 97). This theory has been used as the basis of a wellbeing framework for positive universities that was developed by Oades et al. (2011).

In addition to PERMA and Ryff's PWB, Ryan and Deci's (2000) SDT is increasingly being used to understand student wellbeing. This macro-theory of human motivation posits that psychological wellbeing is supported when individuals simultaneously satisfy the innate psychological needs of *autonomy*, *competence,* and *relatedness* within the social environments that are central to their lives (e.g., universities for higher education students). At university, autonomy may involve the feeling that one has control over their own study and course experiences; competence is the belief that one has the appropriate skills and abilities to successfully complete their course, and relatedness is the feeling that one is a valued member of the academic community (Houston, 2014). Research indicates that the achievement of autonomy, competence, and relatedness may be at risk when students experience poor quality teaching or supervision (de Valero, 2001; Earl-Novell, 2006; Golde & Dore, 2001; Hyun et al., 2006), a lack of recognition or value by peers and academic community (Emmioğlu et al., 2017), or inadequate orientation and integration within the faculty, school, or department (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Barry et al., 2018).

Baik et al. (2017) reviewed the empirical literature relating to university student wellbeing and experiences, and found strong evidence that regular experiences of autonomy, relatedness, and competence in educational environments support student wellbeing. Those authors also identified another factor that is critical for supporting university student wellbeing: *belonging*. There is a long history of research into the importance of belonging as a fundamental human need and source of motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Kunc, 1992). For example, according to Maslow's (1943) highly influential theory of human motivation, once physiological comfort and safety has been achieved, belonging is the next most important psychological requirement.

A recent study found that university students were more likely to feel a sense of belonging when the university was perceived to be a place of respect and acceptance of individuals and their differences and when students had varied opportunities to connect with their peers (e.g., through clubs, events, societies) (van Gijn-Grosvenor & Huisman, 2020).

According to Baik et al. (2017) belonging, autonomy, competence, and relatedness are the key components of psychological wellbeing for higher education students. Moreover, having regular experiences of these four elements builds students' "psychological 'nutriments' or 'resources'" (p. 8) to increase their *autonomous motivation*, which is the recognition that one is engaged in activities that are interesting, satisfying, and/or valuable for the achievement of personal goals. Autonomous motivation is undermined when students who feel there is little point to completing their course (e.g., because they believe that their course is unrelated to their interests or unlikely to lead to a job), or who are only enrolled in their course to appease others (e.g., their parents). In these situations, students may be less engaged in the classroom and less inclined to persist with their studies.

12.4 Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Development in Australian Higher Education

Like many other nations around the world, Australia has developed national policies and strategies on mental health. However, the higher education sector has been missing from these policies and strategies until relatively recently. For example, the Australian Government's *National Mental Health Policy,* widely endorsed in 1992, acknowledged that adolescents are at increased risk of mental ill-health and proposed that the mental health and education sectors could collaborate to deliver programs (Australian Health Ministers, 1992). However, while primary and secondary schools were suggested as sites for such programs, there was no mention of higher education institutions. Similarly, while the *Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan* (2017–2022) acknowledges the onset of mental disorders most often occurs in mid-late adolescence, it does not identify the higher education sector as an important partner in developing mental health initiatives (Australian Government Department of Health, 2017).

In 2020, the Productivity Commission—an independent research and advisory body to the Australian Government—published the *Mental Health Inquiry Report* recommending that the Government commit to a more strategic and cross-portfolio approach to mental health promotion (Productivity Commission, 2020). One of the suggestions was for the *Higher Education Standards Framework 2015* (ACT) to be amended to require all tertiary education institutions to develop a student mental health and wellbeing strategy. It also recommended that the government provide or commission guidance for tertiary education providers on how to better support students' mental health and wellbeing.

Several years prior to the Productivity Commission's (2020) report, the critical need for higher education institutions to create their own strategies and policies to support student mental health and wellbeing was highlighted by a 2017 report produced by Orygen, the premier institution for youth mental health in Australia. This report, titled *Under the radar: the mental health of Australian university students,* pointed out the lack of clear guidance regarding the role of universities in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students. Orygen was subsequently funded in 2018 by the Australian Department of Health to develop a mental health framework for universities. This framework is organized around six principles (Orygen, 2020, p. 7):

1. The student experience is enhanced through mental health and wellbeing approaches that are informed by students' needs, perspectives, and the reality of their experiences.
2. All members of the university community contribute to learning environments that enhance student mental health and wellbeing.
3. Mentally healthy university communities encourage participation; foster a diverse, inclusive environment; promote connectedness; and support academic and personal achievement.
4. The response to mental health and wellbeing is strengthened through collaboration and coordinated actions.
5. Students are able to access appropriate, effective, timely services and support to meet their mental health and wellbeing needs.
6. Continuous improvement and innovation is informed by evidence and helps build an understanding of what works for student mental health and wellbeing.

Another framework which informed Orygen's (2017) report is the *Framework for Promoting Student Mental Wellbeing in Universities*, which was developed by an interdisciplinary team of Australian researchers (Baik et al., 2016). This framework comprises five actions that enable higher education institutions to develop a "whole-of-university approach" (p. 1) to mental health and wellbeing:

1. Foster engaging curricula and learning experiences
2. Cultivate supportive social, physical, and digital environments
3. Strengthen community awareness and actions
4. Develop students' mental health knowledge and self-regulatory skills
5. Ensure access to effective services.

In the remainder of this chapter, we use the Baik et al. framework as a lens to evaluate the comprehensiveness of existing mental health and wellbeing policies in Australian universities. We selected this framework for three key reasons. First, the five actions provide a useful, pragmatic, and comprehensive set of criteria for understanding where change is required to improve policies and strategies in the future. Second, the framework features three action areas (i.e., #1, #2, and #4) that are highly relevant to SoTL, and thus complement the central thematic of this book. Third, the developers of the framework argue that the five actions must be implemented in a context where university leadership allow for the review and development of policy,

encourage staff and students to participate, allow sufficient resourcing and recognition, and offer appropriate professional development opportunities for staff. These conditions are also conducive to supporting SoTL.

12.5 Evaluating Australian Higher Education Policies and Strategies

We conducted a desktop review of university Web pages in August 2021 to identify existing higher education policies and strategies relating to mental health and wellbeing. We began by compiling a list of all 39 Australian universities (excluding theological colleges, domestic campuses of international universities, and transnational universities). Iterative Internet searches were then conducted using Google and/or each university's Web site search function to identify a 'key document' that featured either strategies or policies related to student mental health and/or wellbeing. While many universities may have internal-facing directives or documents, these were not considered in this search. Instead, we identified strategy and policy documents that were explicitly available on each university's public-facing Web site. No attempt was made to inquire with any university about a specific document if it was not found through the initial Web-based search.

Initial searches revealed that all 39 universities provided a range of wellbeing-related services for students and provided resources and information about where to go for support. However, only, 20 universities (51%) had published public-facing strategy or policy documents that met the inclusion criteria noted above. Additional details about these 20 universities and documents are presented in Table 12.1. As shown, 15 of the key documents (75%) were strategic plans that were specific to student mental health and/or wellbeing (or draft strategic plans in the case of University of New South Wales); two (10%) were strategies relating to mental health and wellbeing that were embedded within broader strategic plans, and three (15%) were specific mental health or wellbeing policy documents.

The contents of each of these 20 key documents were then analyzed to identify whether they addressed any of the five action areas or 'dimensions' of the Baik et al. (2016) framework (see details in Table 12.1 and indicative examples in Table 12.2). In conducting this analysis, we used a binary classification system: a dimension was classified as 'present' if any element or indication of that dimension was visible within the key document; if not, it was classified as 'absent'. In other words, we did not consider the number of actional steps or objectives related to each dimension in our analysis.

As Table 12.1 shows, each of the 20 documents addressed at least one dimension from the Baik et al. (2016) framework. However, only, seven (35%) included elements relating to all five dimensions (NB. all were specific strategic plans). Community awareness and mental health knowledge and skills were both included in 17 documents each (85%); access to services was included in 16 (80%); supportive awareness

Table 12.1 Results of the desktop review and analysis of dimensions from the Baik et al. (2016) framework

University	Name of document	Document type	Dimensions covered from Baik et al. (2016) framework					Total number of dimensions covered
			Engaging curricula	Supportive environments	Community awareness	Access to services	Mental health knowledge and skills	
Australian Catholic University	ACU Student Mental Health Strategy and Implementation Plan	Specific strategic plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Australian National University	ANU Mental Health Plan	Specific strategic plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Bond University	Student Wellbeing and Safety Policy	Specific policy	×	✓	×	✓	×	2
Charles Darwin University	CDU Safer Communities Framework	Embedded strategic plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Deakin University	Live Healthily and Live Well 2016–2020: Health, Wellbeing, and Safety Strategy	Specific strategic plan	×	×	✓	×	✓	2
Edith Cowan University	ECU Student and Staff Mental Health Strategy	Specific strategic plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5

(continued)

Table 12.1 (continued)

University	Name of document	Document type	Dimensions covered from Baik et al. (2016) framework					Total number of dimensions covered
			Engaging curricula	Supportive environments	Community awareness	Access to services	Mental health knowledge and skills	
Griffith University	Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Specific strategic plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Monash University	Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Specific strategic plan	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
University of Canberra	Student Mental Health Support Policy	Specific policy	×	×	✓	✓	✓	3
University of New South Wales	Curricular Approaches to Student Wellbeing, Academic and Career Success Guidelines Strategy and Plan	Draft/initial guidance for a specific strategic plan	✓	×	×	×	×	1

(continued)

Table 12.1 (continued)

University	Name of document	Document type	Dimensions covered from Baik et al. (2016) framework					Total number of dimensions covered
			Engaging curricula	Supportive environments	Community awareness	Access to services	Mental health knowledge and skills	
University of Newcastle	UON Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy: 2018–2022	Specific strategic plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
University of Queensland	UQ Mental Health Strategy (2018–2020)	Specific strategic plan	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
University of South Australia	UniSA Student Association Strategic Plan 2018–2021	Embedded strategic plan	×	✓	×	✓	×	2
University of Southern Queensland	USQ Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016–2020	Specific strategic plan	×	×	✓	✓	✓	3

(continued)

Table 12.1 (continued)

University	Name of document	Document type	Dimensions covered from Baik et al. (2016) framework					Total number of dimensions covered
			Engaging curricula	Supportive environments	Community awareness	Access to services	Mental health knowledge and skills	
University of the Sunshine Coast	Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021–23	Specific strategic plan	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
University of Sydney	Student Mental Wellbeing Strategy	Specific strategic plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
University of Tasmania	Safety Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Specific strategic plan	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
University of Western Australia	Mental Health Policy	Specific policy	×	✓	✓	×	✓	3
Victoria University	Refreshed Student Mental Health Strategy 2018–2021	Specific strategic plan	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Western Sydney University	Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Specific strategic plan	×	×	✓	×	✓	2

Table 12.2 Examples of content within key documents which aligns with each dimension from the Baik et al. (2016) framework

Dimension	Key document type		
	Specific strategy	Embedded strategy	Policy
Engaging curricula	Expand the use of 'engaging pedagogies' (i.e., active, authentic, and collaborative learning) in courses and programs to facilitate students' engagement in connected and meaningful learning communities (Griffith)	[The university will offer] inclusive curriculum and assessment design (Charles Darwin University)	N/A
Supportive environments	Students are given opportunities to develop a sense of belonging to their campus by forming connections with other students, academic staff, and the broader university community. Students who study online are given the opportunity to build connections through a virtual environment (ACU)	[The university will foster] a sense of belonging in learning communities at the university and beyond (University of South Australia)	The university will ensure that our values of respect, equality, diversity, and inclusion are embedded within all aspects of our university life, including our academic and extracurricular pursuits, and our events, activities and messages, both within the University and externally (Bond)
Community awareness	Continue to work with student organizations and the Students as Partners Network to ensure all mental health promotional activities align to what students want and need (Victoria)	[The university will support] strategic partnerships with key community/health partners (Charles Darwin University)	The university takes a sensitive and informed approach to mental health and is committed to ensuring the University Community is aware of and responsive to the needs of those who have, or who are at risk of developing, a mental health problem and assisting members of the University Community to extend their mental health literacy (University of Western Australia)

(continued)

Table 12.2 (continued)

Dimension	Key document type		
	Specific strategy	Embedded strategy	Policy
Access to services	To improve timely and coordinated access to relevant university mental health services and referral to community services for students with identified mental health needs, with a service focus on building strengths and recovery (ANU)	Improved range of student services online and on campus, including chaplaincy, sexual health, and budgeting/finance (Charles Darwin University)	The university will provide a range of support services for students with mental health problems (University of Canberra)
Mental health knowledge and skills	Improve mental health literacy (Western Sydney)	Building resilience and connection, with physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual wellbeing • Proactive support • Community connection • Skill building • Suicide prevention (Charles Darwin University)	The university will educate staff to develop informed views, behaviors, and attitudes toward students with mental health problems (University of Canberra)

was included in 15 (75%), while engaging curricula was only included in eight (40%, none of which were policy documents). It is important to note that many universities may have mental health and wellbeing policies and strategy documents that are not publicly accessible on their Web sites.

As mentioned earlier, our analysis of institutional policies was limited to documents readily available on Web sites and thus can only reveal part of the picture across Australian universities. It does suggest, however, that engaging curricula is a somewhat neglected area in existing policies and strategies. This is an important area for universities to address given its importance for supporting student wellbeing in an educational context and when considering the arguments proposed in Designing Education for Wellbeing and Connection in a COVID Impacted World about the importance of designing education and pedagogy to support wellbeing and connection.

12.6 Conclusion

Developing a whole-of-university approach to promoting student wellbeing is important for addressing the growing severity and prevalence of mental health difficulties across student populations. An essential part of this holistic approach is the development of institutional policies and strategy plans focused on providing wellbeing promoting social, physical, and digital environments, as well as strengthening community awareness and actions. In addition—and perhaps most important to the student experience—are policies and institutional strategies that foster development of engaging curricula and learning experiences. This might include a focus on curricula and learning experiences that create social connection, build self-efficacy, foster intrinsic motivation, and learning experiences that afford choice and flexibility. To do this well, institutions will have to invest in teaching staff, including increased resources and time for curriculum redesign, professional development and recognition.

Our evaluation of existing mental health and wellbeing strategies and policies in the Australian higher education sector revealed two key points. First, only three out of 39 (8%) Australian universities have developed and published policy documents relating specifically to student mental health and wellbeing. This is a somewhat startling finding, given the recommendations in recent high-profile reports on mental health in Australian universities discussed earlier (e.g., Orygen, 2017; Veness, 2016). Second, additional work is needed to ensure that policies and strategies support SoTL in action, allowing and enabling teachers to adjust and adapt curricula in ways that not only help to mitigate the stressors for students, but also better support their psychological wellbeing.

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students must be a priority for universities given that psychological distress is known to adversely affect students' academic motivation, retention, and achievement. This is even more important since the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to increased prevalence of psychological

distress among students. Based on the analysis presented in this chapter, we present three recommendations for institutions to better address and prioritize student well-being and mental health as we begin to reset and reshape higher education in an uncertain future. While these recommendations are based on an analysis of policies and strategies developed for the Australian context, they are also likely to be highly relevant to institutions in other nations as well.

1. Create policy implementation or action plans. Frameworks are only as useful as how they are implemented. In addition to developing whole-of-institutions policies and frameworks, institutions and faculties/departments should develop an implementation or plan with short-, medium-, and long-term objectives that are specific and measurable. This should also include processes for reviewing policies and indicators so that policies and actions are based on current and appropriate information about students' circumstances, needs, and interests.
2. Develop multi-level evaluation strategies. It is important to examine the effectiveness of strategies and implementation plans at the institutional, school/departmental, and course levels. This will necessarily involve responsible data collection from students and appropriate analysis by experienced researchers. The evaluation strategies will be determined by the particular priorities and contexts of institutions and their students. For institutions giving high priority to curriculum-based wellbeing programs and interventions, there could be potential benefits in engaging educators in discipline-specific and cross-disciplinary SoTL projects.
3. Increase preventative and health-promoting strategies across the sector. To date, much focus has been on the provision of, and access to, services for students experiencing psychological distress. While essential, increased attention should be given in policy and practice to boosting the protective factors in the educational environment such as through engaging curricula and increasing students' mental health knowledge and skills. To do this well, university staff will need to adopt evidence-based approaches that may involve engaging in continued professional learning and other scholarly practices.

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Part IV
Educational Possibilities (Interlude)

As a graduate school of education, we seized the opportunity afforded by swift changes within education in our context during the pandemic to engage in collaborative imagining through a series of thought experiments. During these turbulent times, working in a university and teaching from home placed a multitude of demands to innovate, transform, and rethink as teachers and researchers. To capture the educational turn, we developed our speculative method to reimagine educational opportunities and explore the collective aspirations for education (post)pandemic; build new networks and challenge us as a learning community to co-research within what collides and emerges.

The educational turn put new pressures on schools, colleges, and universities, more specifically on teaching, learning, and assessment. We could feel the tensions as many schools and universities remained structured and designed in ways that might have reflected values and attitudes of a different era—when society looked quite different from what it does today. Part IV completes how we might bring these sites of scholarship together to pose bigger questions and pose possibilities as a team of educational researchers with a shared interest in reimagining educational opportunities during the pandemic and consider, what might be next.

As this postcard from the pandemic practice narrative explores, this pandemic shifted the ways we know ourselves as our places of work and life intertwined. For some, this was transformative, for others a constant juggle as they managed family needs with the daily issues of teaching, learning, and research with care and empathy. Many of the postcards in our collection tell a story of profound change. At the beginning of 2020, our senses were overloaded by devastation and destruction. They trace stories of a year that began like no other in Melbourne, Australia, as the smell of burnt eucalypts was a constant in our lives over the summer. Each of us could feel the weight of a haze that did not seem to end and for many has yet to lift, as the fires ended, the pandemic continued into its third year, and many students now only a pandemic experience of higher education.

The pandemic has shown the agility of faculty and universities as they navigated the disruption, often with little help. The perseverance of university staff in these wicked times doing complex work is to be commended, because none of them has

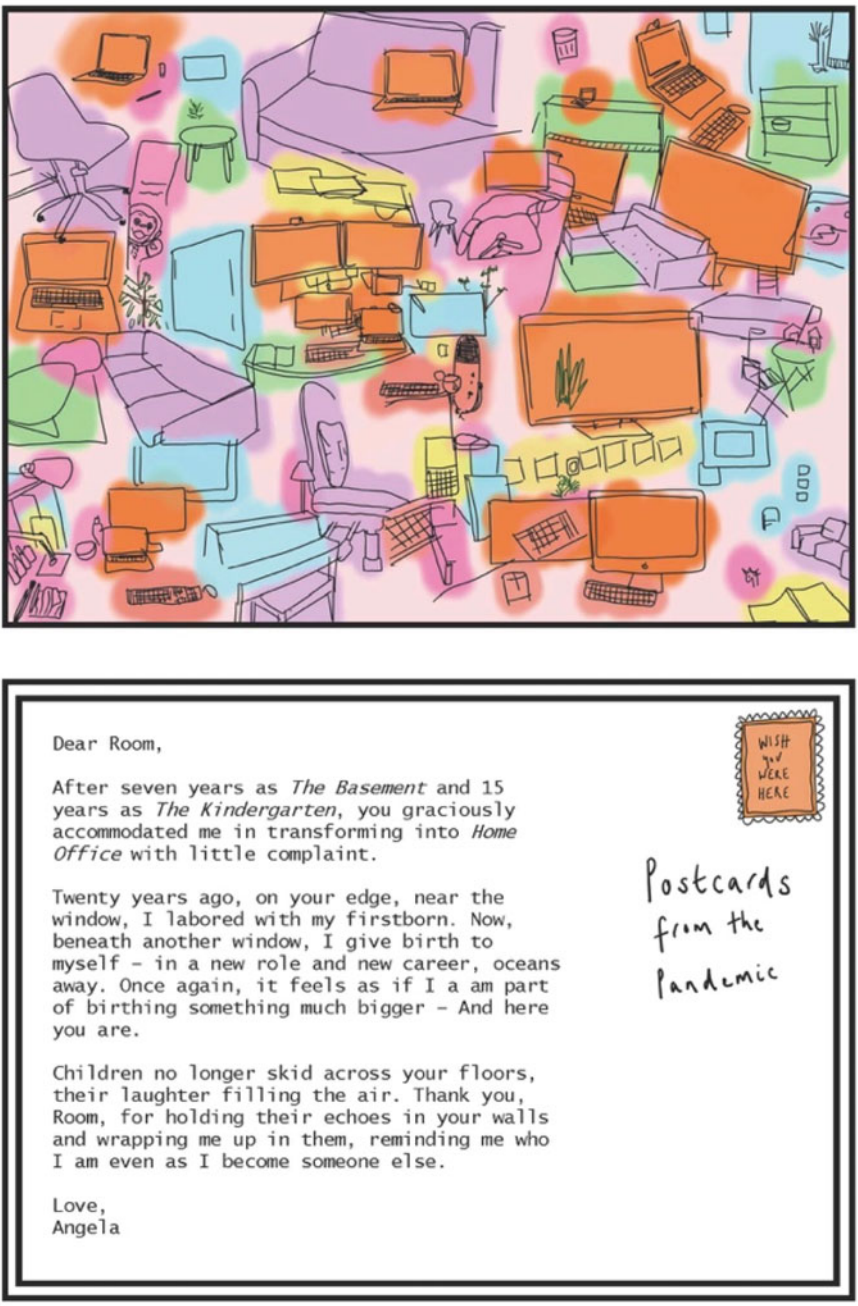

Fig. 4 Postcard from the Pandemic, 2020. 'Postcards from the Pandemic' were co-created to capture our collective data in new ways through a postcard sent to the self (past, present, or future) to archive this moment in our careers

experienced this the same way. There is no singular narrative of the pandemic experience in academia. There are several perspectives, affects, and knowledges shared and reflected in this book as the chapter authors developed new communities of practice in higher education to make sense and sense-make during the pandemic. For the editors, we found that this speculative project provided opportunities to reflect on our own experiences through the connections we were making with participants, as this process-oriented work opened new ways of seeing the emergent practice narratives around us. This guided the way to develop this volume and became a catalyst for rethinking our own practices, pedagogies, and policies in higher education.

Part IV tells the story of the project during the pandemic in two chapters. This part was developed as we curated the book in its final stages and is a reflection on why we began this ambitious project as an opportunity to reimagine the futures of education as a global community and wonder through speculating on education futures as a collective. As "Speculating on Higher Education in 2041—Earthworms and Liminalities" chapter wonders about these exceptional times, their storying indicates why we need a global response to the effects on education, and "Computationally Collected and Curated 'What If' Questions to Spark a SoTL Collaboration" provides an entry into new ways of thinking about the future of schools, colleges, and universities through a speculative SoTL approach as teaching-research nexus.

Chapter 13
Speculating on Higher Education in 2041—Earthworms and Liminalities

Sonja Arndt, Amanda Belton, Thomas Cochrane, Sarah Healy, and David Gurr

Abstract What if… this chapter asks, might higher education be twenty years from now? This chapter speculates a future that takes place 20 years from now, a future that acknowledges the challenges of the present, as discussed at greater length in the earlier chapters. We take up speculative inquiry as a method to consider a future where the teens of 2021 bring their experience of living and learning during *this* pandemic time to the shaping and leadership of universities in 2041. Beginning with a what-if scenario of a reconceived higher education, we create a speculative fiction text—a letter from the future—around which we perform a diffractive reading (Barad, 2014). What this diffraction brings about is a higher education imaginary of activisms and revolts that result from current tensions and challenges in education and research. The imaginary does not predict the future but offers a critical lens through which to make sense of *this* present and the possible futures tied to it. In so doing, we suggest potentialities of practices like elevating decolonised ways of knowing and engaging geographical, human and nonhuman diversities in campuses across urban and remote areas. Traversing twenty years from now, the chapter speculates on higher education, spanning virtual and physical spaces for re-connection of research, learning and assessment with, in and through assemblies of diverse beings, human and otherwise. The chapter concludes with a codetta, which leaves the reader with a brief account of a speculative encounter with Socrabots as they prepare to enter the teaching profession in the 2040s.

Keywords Education · Higher education · Practices · Time · Becoming · Futures thinking · Speculative inquiry · Diffraction · Inclusive academic practices

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13.1 Introduction

The subjects of the future-present that reveal themselves in this chapter are autoethnographic creations made from the composite lives of the collaborating authors. They came about through the speculative approach to our writing inquiry. Speculation, as an act, renders subjectivities in both future and present as partial, incomplete. The reality that speculative inquiry brings into being is also partial, incomplete. The emphasis on process, partiality and possibility creates the conditions for something new to take place and is part of what makes speculative inquiry powerful. Science fiction and science fantasy writers demonstrate this, fabricating worlds in a practice that Haraway (2016) refers to as speculative fabulation—which variously refers to not only speculative fabulation but also science fiction, science fantasy, speculative fiction, string figures and so far. In its multiplicitous form, speculative fabulation (SF) offers a glimpse of a way through an event horizon, a seemingly impossible situation, which in this case is the (re)creation of higher education systems, systems that currently capture difference within its structures and neutralise those that attempt to do higher education in more socially, technologically and environmentally just ways.

At the heart of speculative inquiry lies what Dunne and Raby (2013) call the "what-if scenario." Thinking about a particular scenario which is, in turn, prompted by a "what if?" question makes it possible to unsettle any kind of blind acceptance of the here and now and thus create the conditions for thinking differently—creating the potential for different realties to come to pass. And so, we begin with asking, what if we had in our possession a letter from a future imagined? A fictional world that we do not yet occupy a personal letter from an individual named Sandy who in 2041 is 34 years old, living in regional Victoria, Australia. A Sandy, whom, at the time of writing the letter, thinks they may have found a way to send communication back in time from their future-present to the past-present. They did not know if the letter would reach their past-present self but as an act of compassion, an outcome of hope and a testament to the endurance of their younger self, they give it a shot. Young Sandy in 2021, who kindly and courageously shared this letter, confesses they are at a low point when they received it, having lost sight of a future worth living during Melbourne's extended lockdowns of 2020–2021.

> Dear 2021 Sandy,
>
> It's the first day of spring 2041 as I write to you from 20 years in the future to reassure you that it is worth persevering with the challenges life is throwing at you (and will continue to throw at you). I want you to trust yourself and know that it is going to be worth it despite the hardships. I can picture you-me in 2021: a high school student having just spent our 250th day in lockdown – too-small, outgrown leather school shoes gather dust in the cupboard (hint: you may want to get mum to order the next size up online for when school reopens). School shoes aside, long periods of learning from home over the last two years was awful for us. And yet, I wouldn't be in this fortunate place without the survival skills and digital communities that formed during this time.
>
> Know that your dreams will come true, like travel to Japan, although not in the way we once thought. During the bushfires that are due to strike in the mid 2020s, you will be doing an internship in Tokyo with an Edutech simulation company rather than spending the Australian summer working in the Japanese ski fields as you're currently hoping to do.

> The ski season becomes much shorter and there is no snow at Christmas anymore. I'll not sugar-coat it. While in Japan you might experience an unexpected bout of post-traumatic stress, losing yourself as you scour news sources for signs of the next pandemic. You were in Japan's snowy mountains when the one you are in started after-all. Just remember you can always take a year off when you need it, when you no longer need to be on heightened threat alert. Be kind to yourself. Trust in yourself.
>
> I'm so proud of you-me for leaning into our dissatisfaction with digital boundaries – a fascination and dissatisfaction that grew during extended periods of lockdown and remote learning in 2020-21. When those 3am moments of doubt gnaw away at your courage, take heart in knowing you can change the world for better, in small ways, by making a place for other people like you. Eventually you will find yourself with the wherewithal to turn your fears and frustrations into the creation of a simulation of a world of hope, where kids can go and share/learn/play/experiment together without being inhibited by undue control and anxieties of adults or commercial interests who want to exploit kids' work for money. My pride in our work is the way we enfolded our digital and analogue lives through novel use of mobile, natural and sentient technologies.
>
> Forgive me for a couple more spoilers. When you hear a call to adventure, you are right to jump at the chance to break down systemic problems in your chosen field.
>
> One day, well, many days in the future before now, you are going to make some tough decisions: stay true to your values, they will steer you through troubled times. When it's time to put down roots, you and your adopted community will become both home and simulation hub. We are providing meaningful livelihoods for young people who want to stay in the regional towns of Victoria – or return there. This is where I am writing to you from. I want to tell you to never give up. Dark times need bright sparks like you. The world needs you.
>
> With love from 2040's Sandy

Sandy's letter from the 2040s to their teenaged self is augmented by further communications which, like the letter, hint at a future to come; a future whereby some kind of reckoning has occurred, leading to some kind of shift in higher education—although the degree of systemic change beyond Sandy and their field is not so clear. After all, systems have a surprising capacity to resist or nullify change and revert to singing the same old song even after a period of immense upheaval. Yet the confluence of crises, of systemic racism, casualised workforces, bushfires and pandemic that set the scene for the 2020s, when a new generation of Sandys are coming of age, may indeed create the conditions for higher education to be unmade and/or remade differently. We know these crises are not unrelated; they are symptomatic of the broader climate crisis, neoliberal socio-political structures and growing inequality in our local and global societies—with these being enmeshed in a struggle for planetary survival, brought about by hundreds of years of colonisation, conquest and unabated human exceptionalism.

Higher education's ongoing complicity in this period of crisis-upon-crisis becomes our event horizon, the impossible situation which, through a speculative inquiry practised with and through SF, we hope to bring about the possibility of a different (better) future for today's Sandys. This is a future that Sandy not only shapes but also a future which creates the conditions for a generation to address systemic injustices. The following timeline (Fig. 13.1), composed from careful analysis of Sandy's communications, traces key events in Sandy's life experiences between

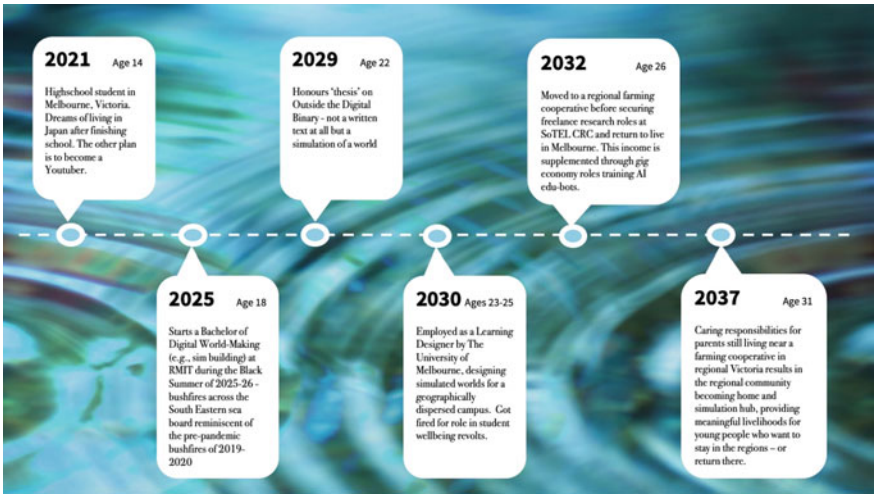

Fig. 13.1 Sandy's significant life experiences 2021–2041

2021 and 2041, as the planet and its inhabitants—human and otherwise—respond to what scientists are already referring to as the 6th mass extinction.

13.1.1 What If … A Speculation on What Higher Education Might Be, Twenty Years from Now

Somewhere between the local specificity of a past Melbourne where Sandy transitioned from child to young adult during lockdowns of 2020–21 and the future of 2041, this chapter again asks … What if? … The what-if question becomes a refrain: What if the grieving work being done by the teenagers of 2021 changes university education systems in the future? What if the teens who lived through lockdowns and protests, family ill-health and bushfire-driven displacement, teens like Sandy, were running higher education in the future? What is it that the future Sandy of 2041 (at age 34 years) is telling the present Sandy of 2021 (14 years), through their letter and reflections on the timeline of events that punctuate their life and higher education? What are the messages being related in further snippets from Sandy's communications interspersed throughout this chapter? What if the current tensions in higher education were to escalate, causing a revolution? Then, what would such a revolution change? What should change? As a group of academics pondering these issues during lockdown in 2020–21, we engage with future Sandy's dialogue with their past self to speculate on how universities and university education might be reconceptualised.

We confront some difficult issues by asking challenging questions. Shocked into realities driven by joint catalysts of the pandemic and climate change, we are in the

midst of a wholesale shift in our teaching–learning orientations across diverse areas of a graduate school of education. This work (as faculty) is at a "sandstone university" in Melbourne, Victoria that had prided itself on quality on-campus learning experiences and physical attendance until this moment in time. We use this chapter as a speculative, dialogic provocation towards our-Sandy's-children-of-the-present-future's teaching and learning in higher education. Together with Sandy, we take up some of these issues, offer responses to questions asked and seek to dig more deeply through further questioning. This deep dive into various lines of questioning is guided in part by Barad's (2014) concept of diffraction (a term introduced by Donna Haraway in 1992). Engaging diffractive thinking we speculate further, with our thinking being nourished by the Baradian figuration of earthworms. Sandy's life lessons, to/from their future self, open further ruminations which aerate our thinking around the implications for next practices in higher education. This then reveals a questioning and shifting of boundaries that, in an iterative move, turn into provocations once more. We map how these provocations become a comment on various issues raised in this book, provoked by Sandy's revelations regarding the changes they have seen in the 20 years since their time-capsule-esque letter (and accompanying communications) written to their 14-year-old self in 2021. Finally, we leave you, the reader, with a codetta to ruminate upon. This tail end of the chapter is comprised of a short segment of speculative fiction written at the very beginning of this writing collaboration as we were experimenting with how to weave speculative fabulation into our inquiry.

13.2 What Will Become of the University?

In 2041, what might the notion of the university do? Does it lose its power when reduced to a mere fragment of an idea, shattered by the forces of commercialisation, with an industrialised workforce at odds with oblivious corporate management? Is the future Readings (1997) foresaw in his projections of the university in ruins; a morally corrupt, market-driven institution, still relevant—or was it ever? Driven by this question, Dolgon (1998, p. 212) argues for a focus "on the people whose critical intellectual inquiry might inspire critical political engagements and create visions of what justice and reason might mean." However, the outpourings in Sandy's letter suggest a future that is increasingly contingent and supercomplex (Barnett, 2000, p. 415), more unpredictable and less sure. Putting aside the concerns for justice, equity and fairness alluded to by Dolgon (1998), then, necessitates multiple readings of the present and near future (as theorised through Barad's diffractions, explained below; Barad, 2014). Perhaps, it means moving beyond a postmodern dismantling of present Grand Narratives about *the* university and putting aside the solely human focus of the contemporary university (Tesar et al., 2021).

Setting out to question what future practices could or should be prioritised in higher education through the coming twenty years, we ruminate in twilight zones

and liminal spaces (Mulcahy, 2017)[1] at the threshold of the "post university." We ask, what do the sites, spaces and entities of higher education become, if universities are seen as twilight zones? What tensions do the liminalities in university spaces highlight, in between commitments to wellbeing, social justice, worldly concerns and marketised policy agendas, profit-driven university politics and research imperatives (Nørgård & Bengtsen, 2021)? Indeed, what activisms could be precipitated by the precarities, risks and catastrophes that are on the horizon (Croucher & Locke, 2020)?

Sandy's letter is both suggestive of Sandy's place in the future university and their position outside of its current boundaries—moving from the merely human to the other-than-human, technological and so-called artificial assemblages at play in conceptualising the entanglements of universities and university teaching and learning to come. We now move to exploring several perspectives that influence perceptions of the future of the university, and as we do so, we will be helped by several more notes from future Sandy.

13.2.1 Speculative Intra-actions and Diffractions

Speculating on the future of the university demands that we delve into its doings and purposes. Taking up a diffractive approach to our speculating in a type of speculative diffraction creates an opportunity to look at the notion of the university through the present-future twilight zone that is made possible by bringing Sandy's communication together with our thinking as collaborators and the thinking of the other contributors to this book. According to Barad, diffraction is a return, in thinking, that involves "turning over and over again" (Barad, 2014, p. 168). It prompts us to take our assumed knowledge of the university and associated teaching–learning practices then turn our knowing and practice over and over and over again to produce multiplicities of knowing. In other words, it pushes us to see what we know in a different light, to speculate on what the university multiple[2] might do and become.

Barad (2014) speaks of entangled ways of becoming with the world, through intra-actions between things, beings and ideas. To create the conditions for this way of knowing to take place, Ceder (2019) explains, texts (and things, beings and ideas) can be diffracted or "read" through each other. The aim is not to know the exact detail

[1] Following Mulcahy (2017, p. 109, original emphasis), we "take spaces in-between to be liminal ones and advance an articulation of them as sociomaterial assemblages or webs of relations between people, spaces and things." In occupying spaces in-between or transitional landscapes, we are actively engaging boundary work. In our case, we are doing boundary work at both the temporal threshold of present-future and the spatial threshold of the university itself. It is a transitory place, synonymous with movement or process and, as Mulcahy further argues, is implicated in effecting both empowering and restrictive social change depending on how the concept is deployed and the micro-political forces that are subsequently activated.

[2] Here, we leverage off Mol's (2002) concept of the body multiple, understanding the university much like the bodies living with atherosclerosis who were involved in her germinal ethnography of disease.

of every conceptualisation of the university, but to know that "close attention is paid to the intra-actions and to the possibilities for new ideas to evolve" (Ceder, 2019, p. 54). Such an openness to potential emphasises the relationality of the concept, "it is not the individual parts that are of interest, but the relational result" (Ceder, 2019, p. 54). Relationalities of conceptions of the university emerge in the "iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew" (Barad, 2014, p. 168). Our diffractive turning and returning of, and to, a future university is thus:

> ... a multiplicity of processes, such as the kinds earthworms revel in while helping to make compost or otherwise being busy at work and at play: turning the soil over and over – ingesting and excreting it, tunnelling through it, burrowing, all means of aerating the soil, allowing oxygen in, opening it up and breathing new life into it. (Barad, 2014, p. 168)

Our turning and returning of, and to, a future university similarly involves breathing new life into it, opening up to new thought, ideas and expectations, as further provoked throughout this book. Diffraction as a process prompts questions about the multiplicities that emerge as we turn and return conceptions of the university. We ask, in what ways might we aerate, tunnel through and burrow into the notion of the university by diffracting it through texts and things, beings and ideas? A practice of what we have come to think of as *speculative diffraction* helps to re-cast the forces that pulse through the higher education assemblage, enabling us to forecast how technology, financial power, the struggle for earthly survival, dis/satisfaction and the desire for collective wellbeing across other-than-human realms might interact as a cause for revolt and in the aftermath of disruption. But, first, we return to a communication from Sandy of 2041 to Sandy of 2021:

> Sandy's Experience of The Pandemic Years
>
> During those mask-wearing, lockdown-re-entering years, me-you are dreaming of living in Japan, diligently studying Japanese in the hope of pursuing this dream to work in the mountains during the winter snow season. I think it's better that you know now … that is an impossibility as your winters are already threatened.
>
> You were obsessed with future work as a Youtuber but it was so hard to communicate this to parents who were consumed with regulating what they still quaintly refer to as 'screen time' (even now!). As lockdowns dragged on, this obsession could be productive: you have what it takes to make things in creative collaborations with friends, working together over those life-saving gamer adopted communication and collaboration platforms. In retrospect, it took far longer for adults to adapt to the shift in modes of connection as they clung to the analysis of stuffy books missing out on the creative exploration of new literacies and technologies that became increasingly possible during that lurch to online during the pandemic of 2020-21.
>
> Know that you are correct, sim building is so much more than so-called 'screen time'! When the time is right, check out the Bachelor of Digital World-Making at RMIT University, and don't let the lack of a university entrance score (or an unwillingness to engage in learning in 'adult-acceptable' video-conferences or email) hold you back. Keep exhibiting your interests in online world-making platforms such as MineCraft, Roblox and those games accessed through Steam and streamed to a global community through Twitch. That e-portfolio will be your key to entering university and the small amount of money you glean from your creative labour on the platforms will be more than useful even if you are being exploited.

13.3 Diffracting Through the Pandemic Years

Sandy's comments back to their past self may create some windows into educational needs of the future. How is the pandemic changing what the universities of the future can or should do? Taking mask wearing as a metaphor for many current practices, does mask wearing become part of what we do in the future, still a necessary attire, or, as Sandy appears to indicate, will masks, like the pandemic, become relegated to the past and superseded with new matters of concern? The impacts of the pandemic on how we interact socially, materially and pedagogically (with the techno-sociality involved) offer us fresh elements in the diffractive assemblage with a possible artificial intelligent (AI) and natural language processing sociality, with each element of an assemblage (e.g. AI of a future-university-assemblage) having a "certain vital force" (Bennett, 2010, p. 54).

As Sandy has already turned over the notion of the university before us, in readiness for next season's sense-making, what can be learnt from turning and returning, just as the worms, to dig deeper? What do Baradian worms offer by digging into the adaptations made by student activists of the near future, for theorising and aerating, recasting and fertilising, tunnelling through and burrowing into (what were the) monolithic, "world class" sandstone universities (Arndt et al., 2020) of the pre-pandemic years?

Throughout the history of universities, there has been value placed on physical presence in grand buildings and grounds; those sandstone, Ivy League, Redbrick ways in which elite universities describe themselves. Was this physicality productive of a vital force that made them "world class?" Universities were once considered a place for knowledge creation, inquiry, a quest for "truth." They were the sustenance of national culture (Barnett & Peters, 2018), their physical prominence in important towns reinforcing their elitism and status. If connection with a physical university is a diminishing part of the student and educator experience, what kind of new connections will emerge? Sandy's educational experience after a decade of rolling closures of international borders and campuses due to the pandemic meant that many students completed their degrees without regular onsite attendance at university. Yet placemaking and making a place for learning remained important—they were just performed differently from before-times leading to the collapse of once separate spheres of home, university, work, and leisure.

Our speculation suggests that technology advances and ongoing changes to personal expectations about place lead to online and/or virtual spaces becoming primary points of connection and belonging, into which the physical (analogue) is enfolded (or turned). Learning as Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) shifted into mentorships with organic and digital beings, reflecting the rapidly changing nature of teaching and research. The openings created by a speculative decline of sandstone places (a decolonisation of sorts?) make space for (re)turning to Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing. If we take the conception of the university as a constant intra-active becoming, we, earthworms and other things, beings and ideas, are already messily entangled with the visible and invisible, things, matters,

humans, transhumans and non-humans, virtual research connection spaces (ViRCS) and physical learning spaces. The university and its/our/their future become entangled then, "in the making of new temporalities (spacetimematterings), new diffraction patterns" (Barad, 2014, p. 168) as we turn them—the wisdom of elders, the university and future/s—over and over, ingesting and excreting elements, breathing new life into the assemblage, realising, as Sandy did, the complexities bubbling under the surface.

Sandy's career in higher education

Eventually you embarked on your own higher education career, accepting employment at the University of Melbourne. Your job was to design teaching and learning in simulated worlds for a now geographically dispersed campus. The university offered a well-resourced digital infrastructure and a generative community of data creatives, AI experts and online practitioners to work with and through – right up your alley. However, it soon became obvious to you that an undercurrent of malcontent had been simmering for the decade following the pandemic, as university leadership clung to a past of colonialist prestige and privilege, insisting that all would return to the way things were, wilfully ignoring all the evidence to the contrary.

Predominantly, Western-centric notions of wellbeing, wellness and trauma pose increasing challenges in present-future universities—as is discussed further in "Designing Education for Wellbeing and Connection in a COVID Impacted World" chapter in this book. Without a corresponding shift in expectations, combined with social isolation and family trauma the ingestion and excretion occurring amongst worm-like castings, recastings and reconfigurations of ideas about the university might contribute to a further decline in student satisfaction, affected in similar ways to Sandy's shifts evident throughout their letters. Further diffractions of the university occur in present-future/natureculture/spacetimematterings. One such speculative turning is at the intersection of funding and dis/satisfaction, as students lose patience and join a Wellbeing Revolt, a rejection of values and systems that are out of step with a changing world. Revolutionary Indigenous leadership emerges, driven towards a dream of an education system where Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing are just the way things are done (Hogarth, 2020), drawing in idealistic followers like Sandy.

Sandy and the Wellbeing revolts of the 2030s

As your career progresses in the education sector, you may find yourself affected by the student revolts happening at the time. Student dis/satisfaction erupts in a wellbeing revolt which some students helped facilitate by enabling non-sanctioned communications in the simulated worlds hosted by the university. Suspicion of a revolutionary role and high-profile well-being activism does not secure a renewal of a contract at an educational institution. This is not the end of your career in education although it seems so at the time. You move to a regional farming cooperatives where your/our family has made a home and contemplate next steps. Once the dust settles, there are freelance research roles at SoTL ViRCs that can take you back into the city of Melbourne, even if this income needs to supplemented through gig economy roles training AI edu-bots. Through this work you keep a side-hustle alive, creating intelligent simulations whereby human children and young people are shaped by the simulation they enter. Your inspiration from Sal Khan from Khan Academy will help you create intelligent digital learning schematics which educate communities of young people who choose a simulated schooling pathway. This is a risky undertaking because

there is always a possibility that the intelligent sims may over-ride their programming in unpredictable (possibly dangerous) ways. Yet, in time, your intelligent sims become fully credentialed as a school system.

13.3.1 Diffracting Through the Wellbeing Revolts

Once again, Sandy's words provoke our questioning—although, wisely, future Sandy decides to keep some information to themselves, who amongst us needs to know of revolution leadership and infamy if that is in our future? What if there will be a shift in focus, during the 2030s, to wellness? What if higher education assemblages could be expressed through a collective concern for wellbeing? The revolutionaries in Sandy's lifetime were part of the Alpha-pandemic generation, those born between 2010 and 2024. Perhaps, Sandy shows us there should be a greater focus on activism? Nørgård and Bengtsen (2021) affirm this call, as they too challenge the status quo of contemporary higher education, in the face of contemporary and future climate, political and societal catastrophes such as those reflected upon in Sandy's letter. If educators will not, or cannot, enact a pedagogy of care (see Designing Education for Wellbeing and Connection in a COVID Impacted World and Examining Mental health and Wellbeing Policies in Australian Universities) and institute affirming ethics (Healy & Mulcahy, 2021), particularly as a result of a health crisis, student-led systemic change should demand it. It is an intra-active diffractive pattern, occurring and recurring, in a relational and ongoing returning, over time, over, under, through, in and between virtual and physical spaces, with the ripples then amplified over social media. Such ripples would spread out across the entire research, learning and assessment environment.

13.3.2 Diffracting Through Research, Learning and Assessment

As post-pandemic economies are being recalibrated in an increasingly populist political climate, research funding in arts, humanities and social sciences is shrinking (see Chap. 10). Following Sandy's timeline at the beginning of this chapter, their experience of moving out of their chosen field in the late 2020s is the expected result of a trend of increasing problems with equity and capacity building. When we look at the productive leadership and potentialities of power shifts articulated in *Traversing Learning and Leading Collaboration* chapter, we speculate that universities will devolve into collectives of small hyperlocal communities. We imagine a future for these fragmented communities to coalesce into ViRCS incubated hyperlocal, local, national, international and interdisciplinary collaborations that acknowledge the significance and contribution of Indigenous knowledges. Academics might connect through these ViRCS, as well as through traditional collegial networks, with

colleagues, students, practitioners and institutions. There will be academics who survive the disruption by shifting to research-active teaching. For survivor Sandy, this meant shifting their locus out of the once prestigious sandstone institutions, at a possible future time, when generative entanglements between the pedagogical (teaching) and methodological (research) become more widely acknowledged. The growing split between teaching and research (which historically elevated research above teaching) of the 2020s led to an unexpected shrinkage of research capacity and metho-pedagogical skill over time. In response, a new metho-pedagogical model emerged of students as co-designers of research-and-learning-and-assessment.

The radical change in this model can be understood through the lens of past practices of assessment, with their emphasis on accountability over learning as reconceptualised in *Reconceptualising Assessment in Initial Teacher Education from a Relational Lens* chapter. In the future-past, learners were discouraged from collaborative learning through draconian measures of digital and physical surveillance. Learners and educators from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds were burdened with monologic assessments designed by individuals from powerful groups. This presented a pressing need and frustrating challenge for increasing diversity in the university sector at a time of contraction in diversity of international/local students on physical campuses (as discussed in Refocusing the Narrative on the International Higher Education Policy). These needs and challenges, diffracted through earthwormly burrowings, lead to speculative, temporal reimagining of teaching–learning and assessment. Intra-actions and natureculture entanglements, with the complexities of human and other-than-human diversities, illustrate the folding and re-folding over of these diffractive assessment and learning patterns.

13.3.3 Diffracting Through Technology

Sandy's letters affirm how educational technologies are accelerating changes to teaching and learning during the pandemic years (some of these are further outlined in *The Rapidly Changing Teaching and Research Landscape: The Future of SoTL and the Teaching-Research Nexus* Chapter). The forces that drive technology development in education gain impetus in the hunt for the multi-billion-dollar market share in higher education. Young Sandy's explorations in virtual spaces leave them well-placed to benefit from a heavy investment in Mixed Reality[3] from companies like Apple (2021).

However, despite our speculations, we know educational change can be slow and reluctant. As Gurr (in press) notes, "Education broadly, and schools in particular, are aspects of society that change relatively slowly; education has been described as a 'legacy sector, where it takes years—often generations—to bring about large-scale changes of methods, practices and operations'" (CB Insights, 2020, p. 6). So, what if students lose patience? Could this result in revolt, in rejection of systems of education

[3] A blend of physical, augmented and virtual worlds.

and assessment that no longer serve new generations of learners? Would educators be empowered to enact and adapt to systemic change? Would they make the shift to deliver tailored programmes through partnerships with learners scattered across the globe? These are the disruptive overturnings to the adoption of policies and practices such as those recommended in Global Distribution of Students in Higher Education.

Rebelling against our present adult generation's "quaintness," Sandy's notion of student-led wellbeing-revolts lead to wholesale digital revolution and to the unfathomable disbelief of some leaders in higher education. This digital revolution is (was), somewhat paradoxically, underpinned by the 2020s' adoption of personalisation through datafication which is (was) in turn driven by the bigger institutions' early days of learning analytics. The speculated, still to emerge field of Learning Natures is a means to enter the uncharted territory of ethical datafication of human and other-than-human activities and a response to arguments related to the "ownership" of data produced by and involved in AI feedback loops. Perhaps, in a turn and return of the concept of the university, the traditional universities will become undone as future Sandy has seen in their experiences. Perhaps, the realisation of AI-enabled personalisation of learning experience could be delivered at low individual cost, with high flexibility, in an optimistic diffraction of the potential of AI?

13.4 The Flourishing of Universities

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) offer a lens through which the university is, once more, turned diffractively, aerated, returned, again and again. Projecting forward to university education in future, might MOOCs as discussed in the *Global Distribution of Students in Higher Education* chapter, lead us to something akin to Minocha's (2021) recent provocation? Citing Indian philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti, Minocha (2021) propels us to think of a state of university education where teachers and learners are not only removed from each other, but perhaps removed from teaching and learning as we know it. What if …

> … [t]here is no teacher, no pupil; there is no leader; there is no guru; there is no Master, no Saviour. You, yourself, are the teacher and the pupil; you are the Master; you are the guru; you are the leader; you are everything. (Minocha, 2021)

What would SoTL look like when Sandy and their contemporaries, and each of us, simultaneously becomes the teacher, the pupil, the master, and the guru? What would it be when students and teachers are partners—always in care-full relation? Indeed, what do Sandy's retrospective projections offer us about leaders, teachers, university lecturers and their own sense of "outsider-ness." Could SoTL as outlined in The Rapidly Changing Teaching and Research Landscape: The Future of SoTL and the Teaching-Research Nexus, for instance, shift even further to centre on the learners' inquiry and reflection on their own learning practice?

No revolution can claim universal benefit. Virtual spaces might provide rich, targeted, immersive learning experiences, with AI learning guides, but what would

they mean for physical connection to place and people? When students connect in virtual spaces for much of their learning, how are their feet connected to country, and their bodies a conduit for the knowledges of the lands on which they learnt and the wisdom of their elders? Both physical and virtual campuses can be vibrant, local and communal, extending into the surrounding communities and country as they draw people and knowledges in from these communities and local landscapes in diverse ways. Perhaps, there is a bright future where learning that extends and flourishes in virtual spaces is accessible to participants in physical learning, researching and working spaces? This speculated future sees the other side of the disruption of the early 2020s with research flourishing, with industry building university partnerships to replace, complement or parallel their own efforts. It sees students drawn from across the world, just as past decades saw many Australians moving into cities or abroad. In this future, studying at university away from home once again becomes a rite of passage for the young. Diffracting their memories and university experiences, Sandy wonders if perhaps these potentialities are determined by how well universities understand and respond to the changes afoot. When we look to the universities of 2041, what can be preserved and what should be changed?

13.5 Concluding Thoughts: The Future of Universities

Sandy's letter questions the kind of "excellence" that remains dominant for us as academics in the 2020s, and what it means for academia in the future. It takes us to the core of questioning and re-questioning, the ethics, boundaries, depths and relationalities, of world, class and university, and what these offer (Arndt et al., 2020). Perhaps it is when diverse turnings become the norm, when we recognise the human-other-than-human, natureculture assemblages that live, act and engage in ways that may be knowable, and may not be, that new ways of "doing higher education" emerge? This chapter has questioned what has been normalised, by turning and returning, through (hi)stories and intra-actions, by aerating, opening up, oxygenating pasts and presents to speculate on possible and impossible futures of the university.

So, what if we still ask more? As we move to the University of the Future, what is it going to look and feel like? As future Sandy reassures current Sandy of their capacity to deal with and move through adversity, drawing on an endurance that is forming and will continue to be re-formed over the years, an inner trust is called forth. As Sandy writes in a final comment to their future-past:

> Things started out OK for you in higher education, with a smooth start to the year at RMIT. Then the terrible Black Summer of 2026-27 happened. Bushfires across the Southeastern seaboard ravaged multiple communities and livelihoods. It was reminiscent of the bushfires of 2019-2020 that ushered in the pandemic in Australia. Oddly enough you were in Japan on both occasions.

Our diffractive speculations have illuminated entangled forces of technology, the rise of AI, physical and financial power and dominance and a struggle for earthly

survival and wellbeing. Whilst such relationalities may be turned on their heads—much like the earth burrowed, overturned and excreted by the earthworms to "keep idealism alive" (Dunne & Raby, 2013). Positioning the working life of Sandy as our synecdoche, we see Sandy living in an alternate reality that critiques our own present where health and wellbeing are a personal challenge to balance with work and study in the pandemic.

The narrative device of a revolt has drawn out some of the tensions to an extreme but possible denouement, to see a path through the ruins of sandstone universities. This path is made clearer thanks to the breaking and remaking of meaning, as with the work of worms underground. This unsettles the notion of "next practices" with future imaginaries for thought, activisms, mini-revolts, redefining as increasingly uncertain the entanglement of higher education power, beings, places, learning and research. It has eschewed the cliches of ubiquitous adverts and blue-tinged information displays, for an organic vision of the future where we draw on the wisdom of elders, learners and landscape to heal and remake our world after the disruption, with destructive forces of individual responsibility made visible obscuring systemic failures. Turning and returning through histories, presents and futures, Sandy's understandings and experiences of teaching, learning and being the Master, have disrupted the very nature and purpose of university spaces. Sandy's future unknown, where universities perhaps shrink, and perhaps flourish, calls for a final rethinking, of the notion of SoTL itself.

Through many changes and a few challenges, Sandy is sited in a liminal space, somewhere between surviving and thriving as an academic in an alternate 2041. As illustrated in Fig. 13.2, this chapter and this book wants us to consider the future, so we have a better chance of shaping preferred futures. If, taking lessons from Designing Education for Wellbeing and Connection in a COVID Impacted World, we purposefully design education for wellbeing and connection, universities could reshape our futures to emphasise care and concern for the people in our universities, giving Sandy the time, space and permission to develop meaningful connections with students and colleagues. If the pandemic is a K-T extinction event, the future of education needs greater importance for SoTL articulated in *The Rapidly Changing Teaching and Research Landscape: The Future of SoTL and the Teaching-Research Nexus* and throughout the book. As *Transversing Learning and Leading Collaboration: Stepping Towards New Power Values During Turbulent and In-between Times* spells out, and we step towards new power values, leadership at our university could become more fluid, more collaborative, able to reconfigure as needed. The challenges and opportunities of reconceptualising assessment, discussed in the *Reconceptualising Assessment in Initial Teacher Education from a Rational Lens* chapter, could place students as co-constructors and co-designers of an educational experience that meets their diverse needs. Indeed, as the teaching profession changes as we have seen in The Teaching Profession: Where to From Here? the relationships between students and lectures needs fundamental change. Our universities need even wider change as discussed in Reaching for Reconciliation in Digital Spaces, change that reconciles and embeds Indigenous ways of knowing alongside a shift in power relationships between ancient and newer cultures. At the same time, technological and societal

changes that ripple through higher education will refocus on accessibility for local and remote students globally, as seen in Global Distribution of Students in Higher Education, will impact on the choices available to students in higher education. At the same time, government responses and funding changes spelled out in Government Responses to the Pandemic and Their Effects on Universities may mean more limited choices available to young Sandy as they are about to begin further studies. A possible impact of changes to international higher education policy, discussed in Refocusing the Narrative on the International Higher Education Policy, may place limits on the richness of the socio-cultural experience of students in our institutions. Our hope for young Sandy is for a future that systematically supports student mental health and wellbeing through significant and sustainable policy changes, as recommended in *Examining Mental Health and Wellbeing Policies in Australian Universities*, rather than leaving behind the casualties of a revolution. Change is coming. We can see the ripples already. The choices we make now will shape the future of higher education for decades to come.

Codetta Å

After writing the letter, Sandy flicked on the Visicomm to start recording this week's class in preparation for their student Socrabots, models from 38-9 to 40-2. Later in the day, the bots gather and turn their processors towards Sandy's face, processing their questions, their facial expression and body signals into their neural nets as Sandy looks around the classcell with satisfaction. The bots start their Master of Teaching primed with subject matter and human signal reading but guiding the learning of young humans demands an expansion of the bots' empathy modules and creativity incubation skills to facilitate quality learning while supporting student health and

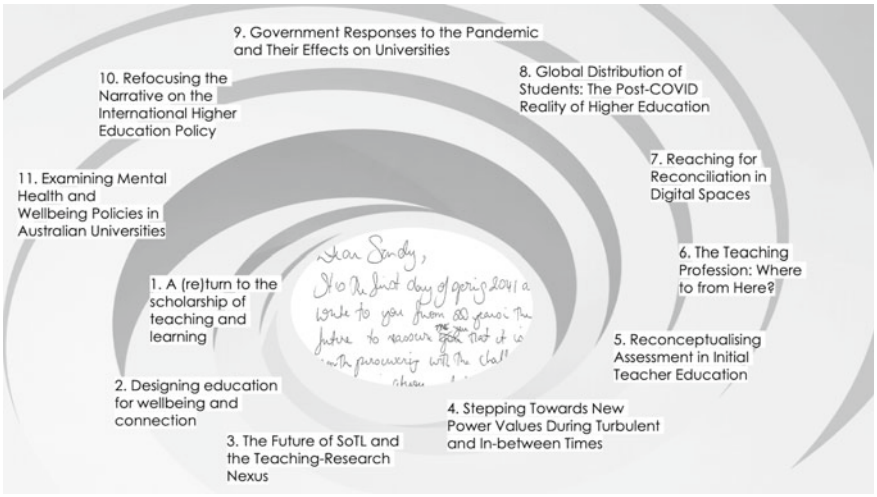

Fig. 13.2 Sandy's letter at the nexus of a return to the scholarship of teaching and learning in a pandemic

wellbeing. Sandy is passionate about lifting standards of education and care through their work with their employer ViRC. Much of the teacher Socrabot's role these days is concerned with place making and connecting to country. This has shown to improve student wellbeing outcomes in schools and, across our planetary home, has begun to reverse the damage inflicted by previous generations. So many students have been displaced again and again in their short lives; they need support to anchor their knowledges and knowing in the first people's knowledge of place and placestories. Sandy is guiding these bots to create safe, knowledge rich classrooms for students to progress through the basics of reading, coding, drawing, and storytelling that will sustain them through the long journey all humans born into the 2040s must take…

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Chapter 14
Computationally Collected and Curated 'What If' Questions to Spark a SoTL Collaboration

Kathryn Coleman and Amanda Belton

Abstract As the project team began this journey at Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne at the start of the pandemic in early 2020, we asked, what collaborations are needed for next practice collaborative thinking to emerge in the academy in the current socio-political climate, and what conditions do we need in place for these collaborations to develop into new and agile educational research partnerships? Our next practices project was co-designed across 2020–2021 through a process of speculative thinking that "thrives on imagination and aims to open up new perspectives on what are sometimes called wicked problems, to create spaces for discussion and debate about alternative ways of being, and to inspire and encourage people's imaginations to flow freely" (Dunne & Raby, 2013, p.2).

Keywords What if · SoTL · Collaboration

The question leading this project began with: *What lessons can we take from the COVID-19 crisis to prepare the educational sector for the future?* Why ask 'what if' questions in precarious times in higher education? The project team found that speculative SoTL is a playful, provocative, and possibility thinking approach to scholarly teaching, learning, and research in times of uncertainty. The speculative idea that underpinned this pandemic project and is found within this edited collection of chapters was a figuring (Grocott, 2012) exercise designed to build on connections, create new opportunities, and generate new SoTL imaginaries for the future. The Scholarship of Teaching of Learning (SoTL) think tank as a thought experiment was underpinned by a design-based research (DBR) method to reimagine educational opportunities in and for these precarious times through iterative and relational ideation and prototyping. This think tank project was designed and developed to create space to reimagine the futures of education, strengthened by collaborative dialogues, innovation and agility to conceive new approaches to inform policy and

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practice in the 'new covid-normal' world of education. As with all think tanks, there is a proposition and an idea that seeks to provoke and spark a new series of concepts, themes, and ideas that will be followed. The premise begins with 'what if,' and then 'what next'? We began: What if as a group we put out an invitation to the faculty? What if these people came together? What might we imagine and reimagine? What might we rethink to be curious and wonder about together for higher education? The think tank series was framed around particular questions at a time none of us had known before—a time when as educational researchers we had to rethink what research we did, who educational research was for, how to reimagine educational research and what the possibilities for researching the present and past to understand preferred futures and next practices might afford.

Our experiment started with co-created visual abstracts of imagined futures as we formed teams around common interests. A speculative design-based research approach was chosen to underpin the educational turn project because it is an iterative and emergent 'figuring' practice that builds from shared propositions and ideas that seek to provoke and spark wonderings, concepts, and ideas that were followed in each collaborative figuring session that followed. The cracks in our colliding worlds of work and home, health and illness, refuge and danger became openings to let light in, and to invite other knowledges and ways of doing into our practices and pedagogies. "As a practice, figuring calls for disturbing the already fragile balance by introducing elements into the process of designing that consciously pull the designer in two directions" (Grocott, 2012, p.3). This design practice and method offered new possibilities for doing relational interdisciplinary SoTL rather than being siloed in one discipline or methodology. What emerged in each chapter as a result of this professional learning community project was a series of 'what if' questions that could be used in other educational sites to provoke speculation and wonder about SoTL in your context. They were extracted using the following Python programming language with its own grammar of 'if's:

```
            # grab sentences with a ?
qs = []
ifs = []
sent_text = nltk.sent_tokenize(justText) # this gives us a list of sentences
# now loop over each sentence and tokenize it separately
for sentence in sent_text:
   if '?' in sentence:
      qs.append(sentence)
      if 'if' in sentence.lower():
          ifs.append(sentence)
qs
with open('questions.txt','w') as f:
     for q in qs:
        f.write("%s\n" % q)
with open('ifquestions.txt','w') as f:
     for q in ifs:
```

```
f.write("%s\n" % q)
```

We knew that these questions could be used for speculative SoTL beyond the project and open opportunities to see this edited collection used for professional learning in a range of other educational sites. To achieve this, we thought of the book and its chapters as a collation of sentences; a model that sees text as a collection of structured, punctuated words without needing to understand the meanings encoded in the text. This model allowed for the code written by Amanda to read the text and extract all the questions and 'ifs' from each chapter. The very human work of data curation is becoming a simpler task after computational extraction. Our computational-extraction-to-human-curation pipeline is now ready for a communal figuring exercise and wondering in thoughtful and relational dialogue using our collective 'what if' questions. These curated 'what ifs' could be used in large or small group conversations about SoTL and the educational turn.

The following questions could be used in a design thinking workshop for teaching teams, provocative discussion protocol with teachers or used as a **writing prompt for SoTL**:

- What might we reimagine if given the chance?
- Can we speculate on the new bodies of evidence that need to be identified and documented about what has worked and what can work through new methods of storying as SoTL? And if we did, what kind of a problem should we consider it to be?
- What if we imagined and reimagined together across our roles and responsibilities what our research could look like during the pandemic?
- If, as we argue, SoTL is central to the academic role, then how is this manifesting in practice?
- How might it be differentiated from discovery scholarship described in Boyers model?
- How do we know if our innovation worked within our discipline, and how generalisable is what works in our discipline to other disciplines?
- Can we communicate the implications of SoTL work in the humanities using a humanities-based methodology to those working in the sciences, and if so, how?
- Are there such fundamental differences in teaching and learning between the humanities and sciences that mean communication is not possible?
- Are there such fundamental differences methodologically that communication is not possible?

This collection of **'What If'** questions can, as Dunne and Raby (2013) suggest, help in "creating an idea of possible futures" through and as SoTL (p. 2):

- What if instead, I had acted courageously, with an ethos of care?
- What if we acknowledged, developed, and resourced educator competencies around wellbeing in the same way that we bolstered technical competencies in online delivery?

- What if we considered that rather than being a distraction from meeting learning outcomes, wellbeing and connection are a crucial part of our pedagogy that brings them to life?
- What if we didn't wait for pandemics (or other disasters) to catalyse a deep embrace of SoTL in our teaching practice?
- What if we committed to using class resources/platforms to discuss collective matters of care and concern?
- What if we allowed these discussions to call out our differences and relatedness rather than play at false universalisms?
- What if care was a core academic capability that infused teaching and learning practices and the ways of being together as educators, researchers, colleagues within the academy (as has been the experience of this group in writing this chapter)?
- What if we embraced the opportunity to make this change in our world?
- What if we had in our possession a letter from a future imagined?
- What if the teens who lived through lockdowns and protests, family ill-health and bushfire-driven displacement, were running higher education in the future?
- What if the current tensions in higher education were to escalate, causing a revolution?
- What if there will be a shift in focus, during the 2030s, to wellness?
- What if higher education assemblages could be expressed through a collective concern for wellbeing?
- What if students lose patience?
- What if we imagined and reimagined together across our roles and responsibilities what our research could look like during the pandemic?

The following questions found within this collation of questions could be used to open spaces of discussion and debate about the educational turn.

Policies and Practices

- How can assessment play a role in changing old notions of homogenous and uniform policies and practices?
- How can preservice teacher programs provide theories and opportunities to critically engage in dominate educational discourse to speak back to policy and pedagogy that silences diversity and difference?
- To what extent does preservice teacher training adequately prepare teachers to apply age specific, applied learning pedagogies to their teaching?
- If higher education is in chaotic flux, and we are simultaneously called upon to do the work that we should not expect oppressed people to do, do we have reason to pause, lest our impatience and sense of certainty does more harm than good?

Higher Education

- What might higher education be twenty years from now?
- What if the grieving work being done by the teenagers of 2021 changes university education systems in the future?

- If connection with a physical university is a diminishing part of the student and educator experience, what kind of new connections will emerge?
- How does online learning differentially impact students from diverse backgrounds? How does that differ based on different individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors?
- What information is/will be available that will help us understand the outcomes for subgroups within our diverse student populations (that differ in terms of equity, access, advantage/disadvantage, disability, language background, gender norms, etc.)?
- Are we modifying and redefining the way we can now teach based on changed affordances and limitations?

These curated 'what if' questions serve as a collection of generative speculative questions drawn from within the educational turn and might be used for professional learning opportunities in range of educational contexts. They have been computationally extracted from the chapters that emerged from our SoTL think tanks and here are curated to problem pose and invite new openings for academics and third space professionals to wonder and wander about the educational turn. The educational turn has reified the need for interdisciplinary and speculative SoTL to emerge as a relational theoretical and methodological inquiry. 'What if' questions are a great tool to explore new fields, make felt things tangible, and to start a discussion about SoTL and what has shifted within the educational turn.

As a product of co-designing faculty professional learning in higher education, these questions are offered as a shared resource and speculative SoTL toolkit to involve faculty participating in the design of their own professional learning as scholarship of teaching and learning. Just as speculative design (Johannessen et al., 2019) is a design method for addressing big societal problems and looking toward the future through complexities and precarities, these 'what if' questions can be used to spark, provoke, or trouble in small teams, generate further questions or speculatively consider future scenarios in which they are redundant. It is not an exhaustive list; it is intended to provide a useful snapshot of what lies within this edited collection ready to be used and adapted to various contexts in which you work. The questions should be emergent, evolving and adapt to new realities and calls for change with the scholarship of teaching and learning as your site needs them. The lessons for next practice speculative work are important contributions to collaborative inquiry as SoTL in the future. This way of being and thinking in the world has provided space for colleagues to connect and transform their personal, professional, and organisational selves. As such, the chapters in this book are products of this project that asked, what if?

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Appendix

Questions Emerging from Early Phases of the Project

Online Teaching and Learning

- How does online learning differentially impact students from diverse backgrounds? How can diversity, inclusion, and equity policies inform online lesson planning?
- How are we going to make remote learning equitable for students who attend diverse educational settings?
- What aspects of higher education students' online learning experience during the COVID-19 pandemic motivated them to self-regulate their learning?
- Is online learning as effective as face to face?
- How do we build stronger communities and how can technology and digital tools be used to support but not replace physical communities?
- What factors need to be considered when deciding the right ratio of asynchronous to synchronous content in subject delivery? Does this vary according to student cohort?
- What are the implications of teaching some content of a political nature for students who are accessing learning from overseas? How vulnerable are the platforms we are using to cyber-attacks, and what measures should be taken to keep our staff and students safe from security breaches, malware, and identity theft?
- How can we develop and utilise embodied learning experiences in an online learning environment? What online learning tools/strategies can be used to support dialogical teaching?
- How can students with complex needs resulting from disability be best supported in online teaching?

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Well being

- What are the impacts on excessive amounts of screen time, video conferencing, and working from home arrangements on mental health, well being, and functioning? How does that differ based on different individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors? What is the immediate and long-term impact on the mental health?
- Creativity, well being, and resilience are all highly correlated with each other (about 0.5). COVID-19 will have a drive towards greater resilience; however, well being and creativity may be a more enjoyable pathway to such resilience for students than resilience programs?
- What can we do to foster student belonging and well being in predominantly online teaching contexts?
- How can we create conglomerates of student and staff virtual well being/care networks and ensure student's rights to emotional duty of care from their host country in times of exceptional circumstances (or host countries and duty of care for internationally enrolled students)? *(Responses to being told 'it's time to go back to where you came from')*
- What well being, self-care, adaptive coping, and regulation skills do staff/students/parents/carers need to prepare for the next disaster/pandemic?

Engagement

- How can online learning be delivered in ways that are cognitively, behaviorally, emotionally, and socially engaging? How can we re-engage the disengaged?
- How can young people stay engaged in their sporting communities when they are unable to train and play?
- How can education be local and connected to community, as well as being globally aware and responsive?

Learning Outcomes

- How can teachers ensure strong learning outcomes when teaching remotely?
- Is online learning affecting students' academic and social-emotional outcomes?
- What information is/will be available that will help us understand the outcomes for subgroups within our diverse student populations (that differ in terms of equity, access, advantage/disadvantage, disability, language background, gender norms, etc.)?

Pedagogy

- How have educators grappled with and adjusted their approaches to teaching, pedagogy, and assessment?
- What can the University of Melbourne learn from the COVID-19 situation about pedagogy that it can continue to use/implement in the future?

- Did schools encourage innovative pedagogies to capitalise on the affordances of online learning, or was the transition characterised by a tendency to maintain existing pedagogies in an online space?
- How are we developing risk-takers and creative problems solvers (& all the other "21st C" skills) for post pandemic?

Policy

- How much do teachers, school decision-makers, policymakers, etc. draw from educational research to inform their practice and decision-making now? Are they more likely to want their practice/decisions to be informed by research during times of crisis?
- How faculty leaders help their faculty to respond to the government and societal expectations; *This is an example of the faculty using its skill and knowledge to help, and to make our knowledge accessible and usable.*
- How are supportive collegial practices developed and supported in pandemic conditions of virtual communication?

Future Research

- What are we learning about online delivery in higher education, schools, and the community? How can this knowledge support other research (existing and underway) regarding engagement, creative education, well being, and resilience?
- In what ways can Indigenous knowledges, histories, and cultures be engaged to rebuild and sustain stronger communities?
- How do we work for and promote accountability without surveillance?
- What skills do staff/students/parents/carers need to recover post-COVID? What resources and/or training can be provided to support student learning of such skills?
- How can we use our experience of remote learning to further improve our teaching in face-to-face context?
- What will we return to in education that we have let go of in the current crisis?
- Are we just substituting and augmenting? Or are we modifying and redefining the way we can now teach based on changed affordances and limitations?
- How has this circumstance impacted understandings of creativity, equity, and sustainability in education contexts?
- What lessons can be learnt from this experience?