THE VALUE OF COMPARATIVE RESEARCH IN AN ERA OF STANDARDS-BASED REFORMS:

Sustaining a critically reflexive professional praxis. An Australian case study

BRENTON DOECKE[*], GRAHAM PARR[**], AND CERIDWEN OWEN[*]

[*]School of Education, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, Burwood, VIC, Australia; [**]School of Curriculum, Teaching and Inclusive Education, Faculty of Education, Monash University, Clayton, VIC, Australia

Abstract

The impact of standards-based reforms on the professional practice of English teachers in Anglophone settings has been well documented. Such reforms typically foreground the importance of a particular form of English and standardised formulations of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment, which facilitate easy measurement and comparisons between educational settings. In Australia, the impact has intensified to such an extent that traditional framings of English teacher practice, which emphasize responsiveness to the cultural and linguistic diversity of students, begin to look like a discourse of a bygone era. From an historical perspective, how has this come about? And what does English teacher practice look like in the current policy environment? Can comparative inquiry into language education, such as has been conducted under the auspices of the International Mother Tongue Education Network (IMEN) over the past four decades, provide intellectual resources to resist relentless pressures towards standardisation and measurement? The collaborative inquiry into the professional practice of one author at the heart of this essay arises out of our attempts to explore the potential of IMEN protocols to render the familiar strange and to see her practice with new eyes. In this way we seek to resist the ways standards-based reforms are radically reshaping the praxis of English educators in Australia.

Keywords: Australian English teaching, postcolonial, comparative research, Australian literary history, professional praxis

Doecke, B., Parr, G., & Owen, C. (2024). The value of comparative research in an era of standards-based reforms: Sustaining a critically reflexive professional praxis. An Australian case study. L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature, 24, 1-21. https://doi.org/10.21248/l1esll.2024.24.2.613

Corresponding author: Graham Parr, School of Curriculum, Teaching and Inclusive Education, Faculty of Education, Monash University, 19 Ancora Imparo Way, Clayton, VIC, 3800, Australia. Email: graham.parr@monash.edu

© 2024 International Association for Research in L1-Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

> ***Ceridwen****: I'm an English teacher at a State Secondary College in Melbourne, and, yeah, I only have one Year 12 class…. And my other role is as a Site Director for a regional alliance with a Melbourne university, where it really is about supporting pre-service teachers while they're on placement, but also bridging the gap between universities and schools.*
>
> ***Brenton:*** *Okay, well in straddling those different institutional settings, you're crossing boundaries … it's a pretty tricky game I should imagine.*
>
> ***Ceridwen****: Yes, yes. Definitely … And I think I'm struggling with an identity shift between those two spaces. I think I find when I rock up to school to teach and then I have to go and do work for the University, yeah, there's a bit of a disconnect or a tension as I move between those spaces. So, it's definitely an interesting place to be at the moment.*
>
> ***Graham****: How does that crossing of boundaries work for you?*
>
> ***Ceridwen****: It's making the familiar strange, stepping back out of the immediate context of classrooms and staffrooms and being able to reflect on my practice and identity.*

This essay emerges out of a three-way conversation between the authors that began in the lead-up to a meeting in Tilburg of language educators who conducted research as part of the International Mother Tongue Education Network (IMEN). The purpose of our conversation was to consider how the professional practice of one English teacher in Australia, Ceridwen, might be usefully 'compared' with the practices of 'mother tongue' education in diverse national settings such as those to be discussed in the Tilburg meeting. IMEN has a well-documented history of focused research conversations like this, where researchers and teachers work together to draw international comparisons and in so doing make the familiar strange (Herrlitz & van de Ven, 2007).

In our conversation, Brenton and Graham were keen to avoid positioning themselves as 'outsiders' (Herrlitz & van de Ven, 2007, p. 31) investigating Ceridwen's English teaching. They did not believe that, as some kind of 'outsider' researchers, they had access to 'objective' or 'scientific' knowledge that was unavailable to Ceridwen as a teacher immersed in the day-to-day immediacy of her work. The aim, rather, was to collaborate in an inquiry that would produce new knowledge arising out of jointly reflecting on Ceridwen's teaching. With this in mind, we felt that the conversation at the heart of our inquiry would be enhanced by the relationships that already existed between us. Graham had been Ceridwen's PhD supervisor some years earlier, and Brenton had interacted with her in several academic networks in recent years. We were envisaging a dynamic in which we would all play active parts in attempting to understand Ceridwen's teaching through a comparative lens, in a spirit that was congruent with Herrlitz and van de Ven's account of IMEN's history and methodology (Herrlitz & van de Ven, 2007).

This approach necessitated cultivating a reflexive awareness of how we were each positioned within our three-way relationship. For starters, Ceridwen had just started a new job and therefore was no longer working full-time as an English

teacher. She had been appointed to a part-time position as a teacher educator in a university with special responsibility for coordinating and providing support to student teachers completing their placements as part of an initial teaching degree. She was combining this fractional appointment with her English teaching at a state secondary school. As the snippet above from our three-way conversation shows, this experience of straddling two institutional settings was already rendering the familiar 'strange' for Ceridwen, enabling her to step back from the 'immediate context of classrooms and staff rooms' in order to reflect on her 'practice'.

There were generational differences between us, too, that prompted us to clarify what we were trying to achieve through conducting our conversation. As a mid-career English teacher, Ceridwen was operating in a policy and curriculum landscape that was radically different from the ones that Brenton and Graham had known when they first began English teaching in Melbourne (Brenton in the 1970s and Graham in the 1990s). Ceridwen had stepped into an entirely different professional world from the worlds in which Brenton and Graham had each started teaching. This gave rise to the paradoxical realisation that, for all their years of teaching experience, Brenton and Graham were the ones lacking knowledge, as Ceridwen's experiences were unique to her historical moment. In addition to immersing ourselves in the rich particularities of Ceridwen's practice, we were therefore prompted to frame our joint account of her teaching by locating it within the multiple contexts (historical and contemporary) that mediated it, as distinct from previous moments in history.

But it should also be apparent that we did not wish to take the explanatory value of IMEN protocols for comparative research as a given. IMEN's legacy can only be of continuing salience for inquiring into language education if researchers critically engage with assumptions underpinning its approach to inquiry, even as they go about applying its protocols in order to make the familiar strange and thus gain a perspective on their policy landscapes. The reflexivity that we tried to cultivate in our three-way conversation with one another also involved critically engaging with key concepts that have figured within IMEN research. What follows should be read as an 'essay', an attempt to reflexively engage with IMEN protocols from the standpoint of an English educator in Australia (i.e., Ceridwen's standpoint), as she reflects on her professional practice. In the conversation around writing the essay, we became convinced that we could only begin to understand the specificities of Ceridwen's practice—in Australia in the current moment—by situating that practice within the historical generational changes to which we have just alluded (see also Parr et al., 2020). We will return to the specificities of Ceridwen's current circumstances in the concluding part of this essay. First, though, we feel obliged to sketch a larger perspective on Australia's cultural and educational history that provides a context for understanding her professional practice.

2. IMEN RESEARCH IN THE ANTIPODES

There has always been a strong emphasis in IMEN-framed research on what teachers and researchers can learn when they engage in conversations about the complexities of their professional practice. A few years ago, Brenton and Graham were involved with Piet-Hein van de Ven in a project involving dialogue between Australian and Dutch educators under the auspices of IMEN, which centred on the question of the meaning that literature teachers might make of their practice as they grappled with the contingencies of the educational settings in which they worked. An edited collection documenting that dialogue was subsequently published, called *Literary praxis: A conversational inquiry into the teaching of literature* (van de Ven & Doecke, 2011).

In that project, Prue Gill (an experienced Australian English teacher) allowed Bella Illesca (a critical friend) to observe her teaching a group of students who were studying the short stories of a well-known Australian writer over several lessons. Each of them then wrote reflective accounts of the classroom exchanges that occurred as they interpreted them from their different standpoints: one as a teacher, the other as an observer. Their dialogue and reflections were then juxtaposed with a critical dialogue between Ramon Groenendijk and Mies Pols (as teachers) and Piet-Hein van de Ven (as observer) in the Netherlands. The resulting expanded reflective dialogue brought to the surface the values and assumptions that shaped the professional praxis of Australian English teachers and Dutch teachers at that time, as they supported their students to engage with literary texts within classroom settings (see van de Ven & Doecke, 2011; Doecke & van de Ven, 2012; Parr, 2011). In this way, all who participated in the project attempted to approach an understanding of what it meant to engage in a 'literary praxis' in each setting. Their praxis was presented as an aspect of the larger cultural practices of schooling and socialisation being enacted in Australia and the Netherlands.

Comparative research on language education within different national settings can obviously select a different starting point for analysis. Researchers might choose, for example, to explore language education with respect to the history of the formation of nation states, or the consolidation of a national language, or the education systems that have been developed to realise the goals of national unity and the achievement of a national identity. In such studies, the analysis tends to stay at the level of large abstractions like 'culture', 'power', and 'history', as is the case with the opening chapter to a comparative study edited by Bill Green and Per-Olof Erixon (2020). But for all the value there is in such comparative work, we would argue that so many questions go begging when researchers adopt such a vantage point. For instance, we wonder whether the analytical categories they employ (including fundamental categories like 'language', 'literature' and 'literacy') can legitimately be generalised across national settings in order to make meaningful comparisons between them.

By contrast, the inquiry into literature teaching in Australia and the Netherlands to which we have just referred shows the value of beginning where teachers are, with the rich specificities of classroom settings as they experience them. This kind of 'concreteness' in representing the professional practice of teachers is more than a matter of combining colour with movement, of attentively detailing the immediacy of day-to-day life at the expense of any recognition of the larger socio-cultural contexts that shape what occurs within classrooms. To the contrary, the reflective accounts given by the teachers involved in that inquiry prompt further reflection on the contrasting histories and policy settings that produced the differences (and similarities) in how these teachers experienced their professional practice in Australia and the Netherlands.

The meaning of classroom conversations and activities, as Doecke and van de Ven argue in an essay in which they reflect on the methodological assumptions underpinning *Literary praxis* (Doecke & van de Ven, 2012), can only be grasped when the 'here and now' is understood as the product of relationships that stretch beyond their immediate circumstances as teachers and their students experience them from day to day. The negotiated and provisional nature of any attempt to interpret what is going on in classrooms involves trying to grasp those larger determinants that produce the 'concrete' (cf. Marx, 1973, p. 101), including the school systems in which those classrooms are located and the traditions of curriculum and pedagogy that teachers invoke in order to explain their praxis. A key methodological difference here, in contrast to the way Green and Erixon generalise about L-1 across national settings, revolves around recognising a dialectical play between the particular and the general that affirms the irreducible quality of the particular. This means acknowledging the way the rich particularities of classroom settings resist being comprehended by the generalisations that researchers might make about them. Dorothy Smith references these particularities when she critiques the work of some sociologists, who 'import' their categories in an effort to explain everyday phenomena (Smith, 1999/2004, p. 5), as though they can situate themselves outside the situation they are investigating and view what is going on from a 'scientific' perspective.

Rather than supposing that scientific inquiry should aspire to achieve some kind of 'objective' representation of classrooms that effaces the presence of the researcher, our approach values the insights arising from reflexively engaging with the particularities of ordinary life, as we create our lives anew each day. Any attempt to understand our work as educators must begin by positing reality as a social process, for it is within the extensive network of social relationships that constitute the everyday that our work is located. This means that the 'truth' (to borrow from Marx) must be understood as 'human sensuous activity', as 'practice', 'subjectively', not as an 'object' or 'thing' that exists apart from us, which we can only describe from a contemplative or 'scientific' distance (Marx, 1970, p. 13).

Another way to characterise our approach is by drawing on Bakhtin's equally powerful critique of the generalisations of neo-Kantian 'science'. 'What is important

for us,' writes Bakhtin, 'is to relate a given lived-experience to me as the one who is actively experiencing it'. Through this relating, we can free ourselves from the 'legacy of rationalism' and avoid thinking that 'truth [*Pravda*] can only be the truth [*istina*] that is composed of universal moments; that the truth of a situation is precisely that which is repeatable and constant in it' (Bakhtin, 1993, pp. 36-37). As Ken Hirschkop (1999/2002) argues, this vision of a world as a product of human activity is shared by both Marx and Bakhtin, both of whom conceive of cognition as integral to human activity, and thus inextricably bound up with human desire and our responsibility towards others.

The starting point for the inquiry presented in the *Literary praxis* project was the intersubjectivity or relationality enacted through the conversations between the Dutch and Australian educators involved. So too with this essay. But in seeking to understand Ceridwen's practice and how IMEN might help us all to better understand her teaching, we need to reflect on certain assumptions that appear to underpin IMEN, most notably the notion of 'mother tongue' education. In the introduction to this special issue, Kroon and Spotti explain how IMEN participants first chose to use the term 'mother tongue' because they believed it conveyed an emancipatory stance, focusing on the students' own language in school classrooms (instead of only the language of books). In recent years, aware of the problematic connotations of the term 'mother tongue' such as we are raising in this essay, IMEN moved to use discourses of 'official' or 'national' or 'standard' language teaching rather than 'mother tongue education'. The concept of 'mother tongue' crucially mediates the way we have subjectively engaged in this inquiry and the insights arising from our three-way conversation. Can the concept of mother tongue have any legitimacy in a former settler colony like Australia, where for example hundreds of Indigenous languages pre-existed the arrival of European colonisers and their languages? We shall discuss this question in the next two sections.

3. THE COLONIAL LEGACY OF 'MOTHER TONGUE' EDUCATION

Our context as English language educators working in Australia inevitably shapes how we engage with the research that has been conducted under the auspices of IMEN. According to Herrlitz and van de Ven (2007), the impetus for establishing the IMEN network was Herrlitz's personal experience of 'crossing borders', when he moved from a German university to a Dutch university and discovered that many of the beliefs about language education he had developed in Germany no longer applied. Herrlitz characterises what he learnt from working in these two countries in the following way: 'Teaching Dutch ('*Nederlands'*) in the Netherlands, and German ('*Deutsch*') in Germany is not at all the 'same' process, only related to two different languages: it belongs to two different cultures of education' (Herrlitz & van de Ven, 2007, p. 13). The same might be said about the ways in which language education is conducted in other national settings, including English in Australia. 'Doing' English in Australia is a culturally embedded activity that does not in any straightforward

way lend itself to comparative analysis with respect to the content of language education. This is especially evident when one considers the way subject English in Australia is compartmentalised and its various domains are named, or the ways in which it is taught around the country.

We have already observed the need to cultivate a reflexive awareness of categories that at first sight might seem unproblematically to apply across national boundaries. The word 'literature', for example, might appear to lend itself easily to translation, as though it names the same thing in Dutch, German, French, English, Italian, and other languages. But this would be to ignore how the meanings invested in this word reflect specific literary histories that in turn need to be interpreted as responses to socio-historical conditions that are specific to a particular country. Likewise with the question of how 'literature' might be understood in relation to the domains of 'language' and 'literacy', words which each have their own particular histories. The relationship between these domains, as they are perceived by L-1 educators, is again something that can only be explored through a sensitive analysis of the culture of education in any particular national setting. When it comes to understanding specifically the role that a literary education might play within the educational system of any country, we need to take into account the complex processes by which culture and education are enacted in each setting. We need to appreciate how different peoples live their cultures in response to the circumstances in which they find themselves, the values they might ascribe to a body of writing they deem to be especially significant, and how that writing might in turn figure within a school curriculum (cf. Dove, 2022).

Such reflexivity is a hallmark of the essay by Herrlitz and van de Ven to which we have just referred (and to IMEN research more widely). We are particularly drawn to their handling of the term chosen to name the focus of the research network they established: the International *Mother Tongue* Education Network. As Herrlitz and van de Ven (2007) point out, the term 'mother tongue' can be interpreted in many ways, raising questions about the scope of its application within the field of language education. Even the apparently innocent notion of mother tongue as referring to 'the language of primary socialisation, the language developed by a child from early childhood' (p. 15) has its limitations when it neglects to acknowledge bilingualism or multilingualism as shaping the way children experience the world around them. Mindful of such issues, Herrlitz and van de Ven (2007) propose the term 'home language' as an alternative. In turn, this raises the vitally important challenge for language educators of how the language taught at school might intersect with the languages that children speak in their home. And this raises further questions about why schooling should privilege a certain language over the languages children use in their everyday lives, a privileging that typically assumes the form of explicit instruction in that language, such as the teaching of a standard grammar.

It is, however, arguably when the notion of 'mother tongue' education is employed to conjure up an ideal of an intrinsic connection between a national language and its people—English for the English, French for the French, German for

Germans, and so on—that the term takes on an ideological function that renders it problematic. As Herrlitz and van de Ven remark (2007), this understanding of 'mother tongue' is a 'cultural political one', which is 'closely related to the formation of regional or national identity, and the formation of nation states' (p. 15).

The notion of 'mother tongue', of course, is widely used to invoke the relationship between language and a sense of national identity or one's heritage. But this association becomes problematic when it is co-opted to promote a certain view of national unity that includes some people while excluding others, and the primary role of schooling is directed towards achieving that unity. We know how much is invested in words like 'mother tongue' and 'home language' when they name the language(s) of primary socialisation, as children actively participate in the world around them (Britton, 1970; Halliday, 2004). Conceived thus, one's 'mother tongue' is implicated in a deeply personal sense in the relationship between 'self' or 'identity' and the world around one. Indeed, our 'mother tongue' has an ineffable quality that should be the starting point for all our thinking about language and language education. As Wittgenstein remarks, a child's entry into language cannot be understood as though it is a matter of formal instruction, as if the child has come into 'a strange country', and does not understand the language, as if 'it already had a language, only not this one' (Wittgenstein, 2001/1953, pp. 13-14). Socialisation into a language is a matter of stepping into 'a life-form' (p. 7), a way of life in which we participate without fully understanding the foundations of our actions, or why we do what we do (cf. Carvell, 1999/1979, p. 177).

Yet although some of us might be able to connect our socialisation into language with a sense of national identity or heritage, our capacity to make this link obviously depends on whether we actually speak the national language as our 'mother tongue'. This is the conundrum that runs through all attempts to affirm the role that education might play in promoting a 'mother tongue', no matter how positive such an affirmation might otherwise sound. Leavis and Thompson (1933/1977) argue in their book, *Culture and environment,* 'at the centre of our culture is language' (p. 80). They describe how a language education enables you to access 'the experience of centuries […] the national culture […] the time-honoured ways of living and the inherited wisdom of the folk' (pp. 80-81). This is not to say that such a feeling of heritage can be reduced to nostalgia for an 'organic community' (p. 93) of the past. Rather, they seem to be arguing that the primary goal of language teachers is to ensure that the kind of sensibility reflected in earlier times is kept 'alive' through cultivating a sensitivity towards language and experience. For English teachers, it follows, this comes through a close reading of the great works of the English literary canon.

These kinds of claims can be traced back to what is arguably the most influential work in the history of English curriculum and pedagogy, *The Teaching of English in England* (Newbolt, 1921). In *The Newbolt Report,* as it is popularly known, English literature (the literature of Shakespeare and Wordsworth) is celebrated as embodying national unity at a time when social divisions were emerging in England

at the end of the First World War (cf. Eagleton, 1983). *The Report* repeatedly characterises English as the heritage or birth right of English people, though this argument is also nuanced by a recognition that not all sectors of society are in a position to claim that heritage as their own. The purpose of a national education system is to support students in their efforts to acquire 'a certain command of the native language' (Newbolt, 1921, p. 10) and to cultivate a sensitivity towards literary works that might open up the possibility of belonging to a community that transcends class divisions. School children must be taught to be English by inducting them into the language and literary tradition that is their heritage. This is not something that happens naturally but is the product of complex processes enacted through schooling that might well conflict with the sense of identity and language with which people otherwise identify.

The work of English teachers in Australia continues to be shaped by this story of English and Englishness, even though (as we will show later in this essay) Australian English teachers are now beginning to show a degree of self-awareness with respect to their colonial past that is prompting them to understand their work differently (see Davies & Bulfin, 2023; Delphine, 2023; Dove, 2022). We are, however, in the midst of this history rather than at the end of it. Australian cultural history comprises many significant moments when writers and critics have struggled to use the English language in their efforts to name and give form to their experiences. We're thinking, for example, of writers like Adam Lindsay Gordon, a flamboyant colonial poet, who wrote of a land 'where bright blossoms are scentless/And songless bright birds' (Phillips, 1958, p. 83)—i.e., where the natural world can only be described in terms of what it *lacks* in comparison with the flora and fauna of the 'mother country', rather than be experienced for what it is.

The critic who cites Gordon's work, namely A. A. Philips (1958) in *The Australian tradition: Studies in a colonial culture*, does so as part of a familiar story about how over the decades since the arrival of the First Fleet Australian writers have eventually been able to move beyond a sense of working in a language that is not quite their 'own' (Phillips, 1958, p. 108) to make the language serve their purposes. Phillips celebrates the work of writers at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century for whom 'to be Australian is no longer a self-consciously rebellious gesture', where 'to be an Australian had at last become almost a natural achievement' (p. 107). But for Phillips this appropriation of English is primarily a sign that 'the content of an educated Australian's mind—including the language which gives it form—differs very little from that of any other comparable Anglo-Saxon's' (p. 101). Phillips's book is a landmark study that (along with other critical studies published in the post-World War Two period) announces a period of cultural revaluation. And it affirms the achievement of writers working in Australia beyond any sense of 'cringe' towards the so-called 'mother country' (p. 112). His study was published at a time when English Departments in Australian universities were still struggling to give any recognition to Australian writers. Instead, they required students to study Chaucer, Shakespeare, Donne, and Wordsworth, as though there

was no literary culture in Australia that was worthy of the name, or at least nothing that matched the standards embodied in the English literary canon. Yet one has to acknowledge that Phillips's revaluation is still conducted within the framework of a 'family relationship', and the notion of English as the 'mother tongue' is still doing significant ideological work here. In that respect, we might see Phillips as unable to cast off the burden of our colonial past, even while he is signalling a moment when Australian writers had made the English language their 'own'.

4. LEAVIS AND THE 'FAMILY RELATIONSHIP' OF ENGLISH

The idea of a 'family relationship' was how the project of an English education was typically presented to university students in Australia during the decades after World War Two. Lecturers treated their students as though the English language was their mother tongue, encouraging them to think of themselves as being inducted into a community or tradition with which they could identify as part of the elite—such were the practices of discrimination integral to a literary culture (cf. Hilliard, 2012). In an essay that resonated with many of his contemporaries (Brenton included), John Docker tells the story of his induction into the 'secrets and rituals of the mysterious activity called literary criticism', which he wittily characterises as a matter of becoming 'a teenage Leavisite' and living 'to tell the tale' (Docker, 1984, p. 1).

According to Christopher Hilliard (2012), in the post-war years Leavis's project (as exemplified by the journal *Scrutiny*) was 'pressed into colonial service', enabling writers and critics to conceptualise 'the relationship between literature and colonial culture in terms other than those of national identity' (p. 217). We might note in passing that for Docker surviving 'to tell the tale' of his years as a 'teenage Leavisite' involved an increasingly critical (if not hostile) stance towards the work of writers and critics in Australia who had disavowed Australian nationalism as a salient frame of reference for criticising literature. He saw their attempts to invoke the 'mature and discriminating standards which are characteristic of the best criticism anywhere' (Hope, 1962, p. 7) as failing to recognise Australia's history as a British colony and the exploitation that this had involved. For Docker, standards that characterised 'the best criticism anywhere' reflected Australia's continuing dependence on Britain and the United States. Yet for our purposes the crucial development in the post-war years is not the struggle over 'canons and canonOzities', as Bird et al. (1997) characterise it, but the creation of a generation of English teachers imbued with the spirit to civilize the masses, as Leavis (1943/1948) had framed it. This is possibly one way to explain why certain canonical texts, such as Shakespeare's plays, continue to occupy a prominent place in school curricula around Australia, despite attempts to introduce a more diverse and culturally inclusive selection of texts that might speak to a wider range of students. To this very day, there are English teachers in Australia for whom it is simply inconceivable for an English curriculum not to include a Shakespeare play.

But it is precisely the lack of fit between the cultural baggage that English teachers bring into the classroom and the cultural and linguistic diversity of the students they encounter that has inspired the most innovative curriculum development and pedagogy within the field of English education in Australia. The story is similar to that told by Peter Medway and his co-authors about the emergence of so-called 'Growth pedagogy' in England, when English teachers like Harold Rosen, John Dixon, and Douglas Barnes were prompted to scrutinise their knowledge and values as English teachers in response to the diversity of the students who congregated within comprehensive schools in the post-war era (Medway et al., 2014). The challenge, as these English teachers saw it, was to enable their pupils to use language in personally authentic ways, ways that would enable them to represent their experiences and to reflect on what they had learned about themselves and the world by rendering their experiences into words (Medway et al., 2014; see also Dixon, 1967). Douglas Barnes, who had studied under Leavis, describes the change in his preconceptions when he became an English teacher in a comprehensive school as switching 'from a reified version of culture to a culture that inhered in interpersonal and social interaction' (Barnes, 2000, p. 47).

Half a century ago in Australia, English teachers like Tony Delves and Gerry Tickell (and later Bill Hannan and David McRae) were engaged in similar curriculum development that affirmed the value of students appropriating the linguistic and cultural resources available to them in order to make their own meanings (see e.g., Delves, 1966/2000; Delves, 1972; Delves & Tickell, 1971; Hannan & McRae, 1982). It is not surprising that these teachers drew on the work of Rosen, Dixon and their collaborators in their efforts to gain a better understanding of the challenges involved in teaching students who spoke languages other than English. The students in the technical schools where Delves taught in the 1960s were typically the children of migrants who had been brought into Australia to do low skilled jobs in the factories that were part of Australia's burgeoning manufacturing industry.

The challenge of using English to give form to the experience of life in Australia has not only been a matter of finding the words to represent the cycle of the seasons in an Antipodean world (where it is summer in December and winter in July), as A. A. Phillips appears to suggest in the essay cited earlier. The role that English has played in Australia has been bound up with its development as a capitalist society. The notion of English as 'mother tongue', as a language that somehow unites people across the country, has always been in tension with the diversity of English dialects around Australia, as well as the languages and cultures that people have brought with them into this country, especially during the period of post-war reconstruction in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet rather than embracing this diversity, so many aspects of life in Australia continue to be dominated by a relentlessly Anglophone culture that is characterised by the marginalisation of the languages and cultures that people have brought with them to this country. And the hegemony of Standard Australian English (SAE) is even more stark when it comes to the history of the treatment of First Nations peoples, right up to the present day, when children in Indigenous

communities are subjected to testing that measures their acquisition of Standard Australian English, constructing them in a deficit position (cf. Auld et al., 2022), and refusing to acknowledge the complexity of their own languages and cultures.

But to recognise how the economy has shaped schooling in Australia is to step back from treating the curriculum development in which educators like Delves, Tickell, Hannan and McRae (to stop with just those names) were engaged as some kind of lost opportunity, as a road that might have led to a more inclusive educational provision than the one that currently exists in Australia. The wheels of the economy have kept turning, even as people have gone on making their own history, struggling to understand what is happening around them and attempting to bring about social change through providing a more democratic educational provision. The journal of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English began with a flourish in the 1960s when it published an address by A. D. Hope, an Australian poet, professor of English, and first President of the Association. In that address, Hope explored the possibility of Australian English teachers gaining professional recognition for their knowledge and expertise (AATE Association History, 2023). This was followed in subsequent issues by a flurry of articles by practising English teachers, such as Tony Delves and John McLaren, reflecting on their efforts to engage students within mixed ability classrooms in state schools (see Doecke et al., 2011b). But there is no idealising this period as some kind of golden age in Australian education: for Hope, the prospect of English teachers gaining professional recognition remained a remote one, and the material conditions under which teachers in state schools worked were hardly conducive to achieving the kind of autonomy associated with the kind of professionalism that he was espousing. When you revisit the articles written by Australian English educators at this time, it is also apparent that their writing involves a play between blindness and insight—they were certainly experiencing professional learning that was prompting them to reconsider the values and beliefs at the heart of their teaching, but they were, after all, creatures of their time. They were still struggling to envision how the culture of schooling could be otherwise. A close reading of the essays they produced shows that, like A. A. Philips, they were still struggling with the notion of the 'family relationship' of English for the English.

5. SPELLING C-A-T AND D-O-G

For some time now, it has been widely acknowledged that Australian education serves a neoliberal economic agenda (Connell, 2013; Reid, 2019). This is a result of bi-partisan educational reforms over the past four decades that have reduced education to meeting a set of performance indicators designed to show the 'productivity' of the school sector, which will help ensure the 'economic prosperity' of the nation (see Education Council Australia, 2019). Those performance indicators include nationwide standardised testing in literacy and numeracy, with the test results being published on a website known as 'My School', supposedly allowing parents to exercise their democratic rights by choosing the right school for their

children. Initially flagged by a conservative Federal government (see Kemp, 1999), this policy was enthusiastically embraced by the Prime Minister and Education Minister in a new Labor government. As a way of justifying these reforms, the new Labor Prime Minister recounted a salutary moment when he began sounding out words while he was reading a story to a 'littlie'—'C-A-T' and 'D-O-G'—and the child didn't know what he was talking about (AustralianPolitics.com, 2010). Not to be outdone, the Education Minister, who was herself later to become Prime Minister, invoked the tired rhetoric of getting 'back to basics'. 'Our aim,' she declared with the assurance of a neoliberal ideologue dreaming of a world where everything can be measured and predicted, was to avoid having schools 'full of happy, illiterate, innumerate children' (see Australianpolitics.com, 2010 https://australianpolitics.com/2010/03/01/rudd-gillard-national-curriculum.html).

To revisit the rhetoric surrounding what was touted in Australia in 2008 as an 'Education Revolution' (Gillard & Rudd, 2008) is to be confronted by a juggernaut of reforms that have radically transformed this country's educational landscape. Littlies who can't spell C-A-T, happy illiterate children…. The politicians who told these stories were merely ventriloquizing a larger discourse geared towards producing the kind of citizenry required by a neoliberal economy. That discourse recasts schools in the form of businesses competing for clients, constructing those clients as individuals competing to secure a place in the economy (Kostogriz, 2012). Crucial to these reforms was a crudely engineered historical amnesia that consigned the knowledge and experience that educators like those we have just been considering to the dust bin of history. A key result of the 'Education Revolution' was a national curriculum, where the subject of English could be neatly carved up into three so-called 'Strands': 'Language', 'Literature' and 'Literacy'. Each strand could be dissected into mutually exclusive indicators so that they could be accurately measured, and then the measurements could be used to chart the growth of students across the years of schooling.

A frenzy of debates greeted the introduction of the first *Australian Curriculum: English* and subsequent versions (see Doecke et al., 2011a; Doecke et al., 2018). While querying the seeming measurability of each discrete indicator, some critiques drew attention to the bizarrely eclectic traditions populating the new curriculum, looking in vain for coherence. Others argued that beyond the recurring claims about the importance of Standard Australian English in Australian life, there was no theoretical through line or vision of how the production and reception of Australian English language or literacy or literature might figure as part of a student's personal engagement with literature or texts or words, or how their English education would help them make sense of their own experiences and the world around them. Australian literature academics noted that the literature strand, for example, was dominated by references to 'classic' or 'canonical' texts, in response to advocacy from a group of conservative academics who perceived a decline in the teaching of so-called 'classic' Australian literary works in Australian schools (see Doecke, 2007). Thus, the *Australian Curriculum: English* (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and

Reporting Authority, ACARA, n.d.) saw, and still sees, the teaching of Australian literature as 'a key way to preserve, promote and develop our national identity', thereby conveniently ignoring the burgeoning field of postcolonial literary studies that had problematised the 'family relationship' with Britain and other assumptions underpinning the work of scholars within the field of Australian literary studies (e.g., Ashcroft et al., 1989). And yet the curriculum authors had no problem invoking 'world literature', which might include 'texts from and about Asia', thereby acknowledging Australia's status as a post-colonial country that is geographically closer to Asia than Europe. On the other hand, they listed 'the oral narrative traditions and literature of First Nations Australian', alongside 'classic and contemporary literature from wide-ranging Australian authors', as resources on which English teachers might draw, thereby diminishing any recognition of the critique by Indigenous authors about Australia's colonial past and the continuation of that history into the present.

A key issue in these critiques is not which texts are included in the new national English curriculum. John Guillory (1993) argued 30 years ago that the inclusivity of an English curriculum cannot simply be gauged by choosing texts that might speak to or for diverse communities. He identified that mechanisms were in place—most notably the machinery of standardised literacy testing—that systematically constructed minority groups as being in a deficit position, ultimately robbing them of a voice and excluding them from mainstream schooling. Although text selection is undoubtedly an important way to make connections with the experiences that students bring to school, such decision making cannot be conceived in isolation from the ideological work of promoting Standard Australian English and the cluster of institutional practices directed towards maintaining the machinery of assessment used to enforce SAE.

Throughout this essay we have been reflecting on the problematical status of 'mother tongue' (or 'native speaker') English as reflected in the notion of a 'family relationship' between Australia and England. Although the *Australian Curriculum: English* gestures towards the possibilities opened up by an emerging awareness of Australia's history as a former British colony, the prospect of such cultural renewal (including the listing of Indigenous literature as a resource that teachers might use in the classroom) is completely blunted by the way it conceives the role of Standard Australian English within Australian society and within the curriculum. Again, it is ideological work that delegitimises the languages and experiences of communities of students in Australian schools in much the same way that English as a 'mother tongue' or 'native language' has historically been invoked to exclude students from schooling. The difference is that the rhetoric surrounding education has changed significantly. The relationship that matters now is not a 'family relationship', not English for the English, and it's barely even a relationship to a mother tongue. Instead, appropriately for a neoliberal economy, the *Australian Curriculum: English* requires a wholesale subscription to the notion of Standard Australian English, taught in standardised ways, where it is more important for language that is being

taught to be *measurable* than it is for that language to be connected to an individual's emerging sense of self or to the multiple languages and cultures within which that self is emerging.

6. DECENTERING THE SELF

We return now to the three-way conversation in which we were collaboratively inquiring into the concrete circumstances of Ceridwen's professional praxis as an English teacher in Australia.

> ***Graham (to Ceridwen)****: Would you like to tell us how you experienced the transition from being a student of English at school to a teacher of English?*
>
> ***Ceridwen****: At school, it was very much about English enabling me to engage in the world. Although it wasn't just about me, it was about engaging with others. When I was learning to be an English teacher, I was … I had a much stronger sense of thinking about my relationships with others. I felt that I was moving between spaces, and I wasn't the centre of the world … although I was part of it.*
>
> ***Brenton****: How does that translate into your pedagogy as an English teacher?*
>
> ***Ceridwen****: Yes, picture my English classroom. I'd like to think that it's a very good classroom in many ways, but I am not at the centre of everything. Teaching enabled me to understand those different movements of self and decentering. As a teacher you are not the centre in any way. But neither are the students at the centre. What you do as a teacher is create spaces where they also experience a feeling of decentering. There's the text that is being taught—though that's not the centre either!—but everyone is gathering around it, asking not only what it means to 'me' personally but what together we can make of it.*

In the snippet quoted here, Ceridwen is contrasting the everyday pressures she feels to standardise her practice and to teach 'Standard Australian English' with what she describes as 'different movements of self and decentring' in her English classroom. So how does this snippet from our conversation resonate within the larger story we have told about English in Australia?

The first thing to remark is that this story, like so many of the stories that Ceridwen tells about her English teaching, is a critically reflexive response to the standards-based reforms that have radically altered the landscape of Australian education over the past three decades. To further illustrate this, we outline below some of the conundrums she faces in her everyday professional life, symptoms of a policy environment dominated by measurement and a desire to pin everything down in advance of instruction. We shall present these conundrums as Ceridwen described them in dot point form simply to break from the discursive mode in which this essay has been cast so far.

- *There's no movement away from the examinable parts of teaching English. It's frustrating. Everything is about text response and argument analysis. And when we focus on anything creative, it's peripheral, it's not examinable. Everything is narrowed down to the testable.*

- *The text choices that are being made for senior English are being driven by, I guess, a slightly older generation of teachers—in my school anyway. … We don't do anything that's not part of the canon and not part of what they classify as quality texts. And there's a generational divide at my school, where younger teachers like me are pushing for different texts, and winning sometimes, but not always.*
- *We're really seeing a difference in engagement with students, depending on the text that has been chosen for study. I work at a school where the kids aren't strong, they're not readers. And giving them texts like David Malouf's* Ransom*, supposedly to expose them to high quality literary texts, simply doesn't work. I love* Ransom *personally, but the students are like, 'We don't understand it'. So, yeah.*
- *And then we have meetings where we discuss the writing that students have produced under exam conditions in preparation for the big Year 12 English exam at the end of the year. Teachers are complaining that the students are still writing TEAL paragraphs, that is, paragraphs structured around the formula: state the Topic of the paragraph, provide Evidence on that topic, and Analyse it, then tuck in a sentence that Links to the next paragraph. TEAL! And they're like: 'Yeah, and they should be letting TEAL go. It's boring, and it doesn't allow them to write an essay at the required level of sophistication to get good marks in Year 12. They should be letting TEAL go!' And I'm like, 'Yeah, but you've been hitting them with TEAL for a number of years, right from Year 7, and you can't just expect them to let it go and learn a completely different structure!' But then the discussion swings around to talking about another structure that might be more suitable to Year 12. It is as though the whole course of a student's education has been reduced to a series of structures that they are meant to uncritically emulate and then throw away in order to apply a new structure.*

You can sense that these stories amount to more than a litany of teaching woes. In telling these stories Ceridwen is also 'speaking back' to standards-based reforms (cf. Owen, 2019; Parr, 2010). She is viewing them with a critical eye, even as she is obliged to implement them—and yet she still feels some agency in the process. This is perhaps where Ceridwen's stories paradoxically find their place within a larger story about English teaching in Australia—about the creativity of teachers to facilitate meaningful exchanges with their students in classroom settings despite the constraints under which they are obliged to operate (Owen, 2020; see also Delphine, 2023; Doecke et al., 2014; Dove, 2022; Illesca, 2023).

Ceridwen's is a story of an English teacher seeking to enact a curriculum, rather than just mechanically deliver one that is imposed on her. For whatever the designs of Australian governments, whatever bureaucrats see as the primary purpose of language or assessment or schooling, Australian schools remain places where teachers and students are so often (to borrow Ceridwen's words) '*gathering around, asking not only what it means to 'me' personally but what together we can make of it'*. The value of English might, indeed, be said to lie in its capacity to provide a focus

in which teachers and their students learn how to negotiate the social relationships and how they are 'part' of the world around them.

These were some of the reflections prompted by our conversation. But we don't want this to be a romanticised good news story, as though Ceridwen miraculously transcends the constraints of the policy environment in which she operates. As it has been for the last 50 years of English teaching in Australia, so it remains a continuing process of teachers negotiating their way through a range of constraining options, and seizing opportunities as they arise. It's like the choice of texts in Ceridwen's English staffroom, with she and her younger colleagues '*pushing for different texts, and winning sometimes, but not always'.*

In passing, Ceridwen mentioned that her experience of primary school was not a very happy one: '*at primary school, I didn't connect at all with English';* in fact, it was *'a pretty dangerous place*'. A hearing impairment in these primary years had prompted Ceridwen's school to withdraw her from a number of English classes every week, in order to give her 'remedial' help. This help, focused on vocabulary and grammar, was directed towards instilling in her a version of English shorn from its social dynamism, and she is sure this contributed to her feelings of disconnection. On the other hand, it also developed in her a capacity to negotiate her way through constraints, to find alternatives, creative ways to generate meaning and meaningful experiences. It may also explain her critically reflexive stance with respect to the importance of English classrooms as social spaces for working with a language that is as much their own as the standardised version being imposed on them.

7. CODA: 'MOTHER TONGUE' ENGLISH VERSUS SAE

Wolfgang Herrlitz and Piet-Hein van de Ven (2007) point out that so-called 'mother-tongue' education has a rigid character when it is 'more or less inflexibly oriented to the standard language' of a society, rather than taking seriously 'the linguistic background of the pupils as well as the phenomenon of multiculturalism' (p. 23). The term 'mother tongue' can obviously have positive connotations when it is used to name the language(s) into which a child is born, especially the language(s) spoken in a relationship between mother and child (cf. Halliday, 1977). When, however, 'mother tongue' takes on the identity of a singular linguistic 'straitjacket' that ignores the variety of other languages, including mother tongue languages of Indigenous communities and other linguistic minorities, it becomes an instrument of oppression. There are many instances in the history of English education when the term 'mother tongue' (as with the notion of so-called 'native speakers' of English) has been used to marginalise students, so that populations have been classified as requiring remediation in order to speak the version of English that the government deems acceptable (see Leung et al., 1997; Thomas, 2021).

We have argued that the status of English as 'mother tongue' in Australia has been integral to the myth of England as the 'mother country', despite the fact that England has hardly played a benign role in the history of colonisation. The positive

connotations attached to English as 'mother tongue' are belied by the history of the settlement of Australia and its development as a capitalist society—we have mentioned the fate of the languages and cultures of First Nations peoples and the migration of people to Australia in the post-war period who spoke languages other than English. But the story of the gradual shifts and adjustments that Australians have made since the arrival of the First Fleet to make the English language serve their needs and experiences has nonetheless been an important one. The linguistic challenge might be characterised (to borrow from Stuart Hall (1996)) as using the English language 'without guarantees'—or speaking English without equating it with Englishness.

There is obviously a positive story to be told here, one that might be related to the attempts of people in other postcolonial societies to make the English language their 'own'. It is similar to James Baldwin's story in the US about realising his task as a writer was to cease treating the English language as though it simply embodied a set of rules he had to obey, and to find ways to use a version of English that would give expression to his experience (Baldwin, 2010; see also Doecke & Mirhosseini, 2023; Doecke et al., 2019). And yet, in the third decade of the twenty first century, the *Australian Curriculum: English* and associated standards-based reforms seem determined to frame English as a set of rules to obey. These reforms contribute to ideological attempts to standardise ways of teaching, speaking and writing English using those rules. Meanwhile, English teachers are left to negotiate their own way through the sorts of conundrums that Ceridwen has articulated.

We have surely reached an historical moment when it is no longer possible to ignore the other story about British colonialism and Australia's evolution as a capitalist society. It is a story of suppressing other languages in order to develop a relentlessly Anglophone country that struggles to imagine how the world might be experienced and understood differently depending on the language(s) you are speaking. This darker side figures in Australian Curriculum statements justifying standards-based reforms in Australia, despite the slick corporate character of websites produced to explain the reforms being proposed. We feel obliged to acknowledge a possible redeeming feature of the discourse of 'mother tongue': it *can* foreground a nexus between language and experience; it *can* affirm language as something that is personally significant to 'me' as a means of giving an account of myself in relation to others, and not simply something that performs a functional role in keeping the wheels of the economy turning. And yet we believe it is precisely this feeling of a personal connection with language that Standard Australian English (SAE) severs, even when (as in the *Australian Curriculum: English*) it claims to value 'world literature' or 'oral narrative traditions and literature of First Nations Australians' as resources on which English teachers might draw. In the end, the neoliberal imperative for standardised and therefore measurable language education comprehensively trumps any nascent potential for valuing linguistic diversity and difference.

Our three-way conversation has reaffirmed for us the importance of drawing on IMEN related traditions in language research—its international-comparative perspective and its position that research on L1 education should start where that education is enacted, i.e. in classrooms with teachers and students—to enable rich conversations between researchers and teachers. Such conversations are important in articulating and reflecting on what is familiar in a particular national setting.

Crucial to our conversation has been a desire to find a language to convey the concrete details of Ceridwen's praxis in all its cultural, professional, curriculum and even institutional specificity. And just as importantly, we have sought to render the familiar strange, through comparisons and connections with other places (e.g., national contexts) and other times (e.g., historical moments), and through cultivating a reflexive awareness of the ways each of us is positioned vis-a-vis these comparisons and connections. The whole experience of our conversation, including spoken and written dimensions, has reaffirmed for us that comparative inquiry into language education can indeed provide valuable intellectual resources for teachers and researchers to critically reflect upon their practice. And, in some small way, we trust it can resist the seemingly unstoppable shift to standardisation and measurement of English teaching in Australia.

REFERENCES

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (1989). *The empire writes back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures*. Routledge.

Auld, G., O'Mara, J., Cloonan, A., Delphine, T., Eyers, A., Nicholas, M., et al. (2022). Examining the paradoxes children experience in language and literacy learning. *Australian Journal of Language and Literature, 45,* 183-198. https://doi.org/10.1007/s44020-022-00011-5

Australian Association for the Teaching of English. (AATE). (2023). Association history. https://www.aate.org.au/about-us/association-history

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. (ACARA). (n.d.). Australian Curriculum: English. https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/

AustralianPolitics.com. (2010, March 1). Rudd and Gillard promote national education curriculum. Blog. https://australianpolitics.com/2010/03/01/rudd-gillard-national-curriculum.html

Baldwin, J. (2010). Why I stopped hating Shakespeare. In J. Baldwin, *The cross of redemption: Uncollected writings* (pp. 65-69). Vintage.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1993). *The philosophy of the act.* (V. Liapunov, Trans.). University of Texas Press.

Barnes, D. (2000). *Becoming an English teacher*. NATE.

Bird, D., Dixon, R., & Lever, S. (Eds.). (1997). https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/C386035 CanonOZities: The making of literary reputations in Australia. Special Issue. *Southerly, 57*(3).

Britton, J. (1970). *Language and learning*. Penguin.

Carvell, S. (1999/1979). *The claim of reason: Wittgenstein, skepticism, morality, and tragedy*. Oxford University Press.

Connell, R. (2013). The neoliberal cascade and education: An essay on the market agenda and its consequences. *Critical Studies in Education*, *54*(2), 99-112. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2013.776990

Davies, T., & Bulfin, S. (2023). English education in Australia and restore(y)ing the nation: Cultivating postcolonial possibilities through placestory. *English in Australia, 57*(2), 53-63.

Delphine, T. (2023). Balanda talk: My ideological becoming as an English literacy teacher of culturally and linguistically diverse First Nations Australian students. *Changing English, 30*(3), 183-194.

https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2022.2151418

Delves, T. (1966/2000). English as she is not. *English in Australia, 127-128* (republished from *English in Australia, 3),* 103-107.

Delves, T. (1972). *Issues in teaching English*. Melbourne University Press.

Delves, A., & Tickell, W. (1971). *Taller by half a head: Themes and responses two.* Cassell Australia.

Dixon, J. (1967/1972). *Growth through English: A report based on the Dartmouth Seminar 1966*. National Association for the Teaching of English/Oxford University Press.

Docker, J. (1984). How I became a teenage Leavisite and lived to tell the tale. In J. Docker, *In a critical condition: Reading Australian literature* (pp. 1-14). Penguin.

Doecke, B., & Mirhosseini, S-A. (2023). Multiple Englishes: Multiple ways of being in the world (A conversational inquiry). *English in Education, 57*(2), 76-90. https://doi.org/10.1080/04250494.2023.2189910

Doecke, B., & van de Ven, P-H. (2012). Literary praxis: Engaging with texts in classroom settings. *L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature, 12*, 85-105.

Doecke, B., Auld, G., & Wells, M. (2014). *Becoming a teacher of language and literacy.* Deakin University. https://hdl.handle.net/10536/DRO/DU:30066217

Doecke, B., McLean Davies, L., & Sawyer, W. (2018). Blowing and blundering in space: English in the Australian Curriculum. In A. Reid & D. Price (Eds.), *The Australian Curriculum: Promises, problems and possibilities* (pp. 33-42). Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA).

Doecke, B., McClenaghan, D., & Petris, L. (2011a). Teaching small 'l' literature: Lessons from *English in Australia*. In B. Doecke, L. McLean-Davies & P. Mead (Eds.), *Teaching Australian literature: From classroom conversations to national imaginings* (pp. 266-292). Wakefield Press, AATE.

Doecke, B., Mirhosseini, S-A., Ali-Issa, A., & Yandell, J. (2019). The ideological work of English teaching. Editorial. *Changing English, 26*(3), 217-221. https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2019.1614334

Doecke, B., Parr, G., & Sawyer, W. (Eds.). (2011b). *Creating a national English curriculum: National agendas, local needs*. Phoenix Education.

Dove, J. (2022). The place and art of writing alongside secondary English students in rural communities: An ethnographic case story of writerly identities [Doctoral thesis. Western Sydney University]. https://researchdirect.westernsydney.edu.au/islandora/object/uws:69130/datastream/PDF/view

Eagleton, T. (1983). *Literary theory: An introduction*. Basil Blackwell.

Education Council Australia. (2019). Alice Springs (Mparntwe) education declaration. https://www.education.gov.au/alice-springs-mpartnwe-education-declaration/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration Alice Springs (Mparntwe) education declaration. https://www.education.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration

Gillard, J., & Rudd, K. (2008, August 29). Education revolution in our schools. Media Release. https://ministers.dese.gov.au/gillard/education-revolution-our-schools

Green, B., & Erixon, P.-O. (2020). Understanding the (post-)national L1 subjects: Three problematics. In B. Green & P.-O. Erixon (Eds.), *Rethinking L1 education in a global era* (pp. 259-285). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-55997-7_12

Guillory, J. (1993). *Cultural capital: The problem of literary canon formation*. University of Chicago Press.

Hall, S. (1996). The problem ideology: Marxism without guarantees. In D. Morley & K.-H. Chen (Eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies* (pp. 25-46). Routledge.

Halliday, M. (1977). How children learn language. In K. Watson & R. Eagleson (Eds.), *English in secondary schools: Today and tomorrow* (pp. 176-225). English Teachers' Association of New South Wales.

Halliday, M. (2003). *The language of early childhood*. In J. Webster (Ed.) *The collected works of M.A.K. Halliday* (Vol. 4). Continuum.

Hannan, B., & McRae, D. (1982). *English 7-10: A Draft*. Australasian Education Press.

Herrlitz, W., & van de Ven, P-H. (2007). Comparative research on mother tongue education: IMEN's aims, points of departure, history and methodology. In W. Herrlitz, S. Ongstad & P.-H. van de Ven (Eds.), *Research on mother tongue education in a comparative international perspective: Theoretical and methodological issues* (pp. 13-42). Rodopi.

Hilliard, C. (2012). *English as a vocation: The 'Scrutiny' movement*. Oxford University Press.

Hirschkop, K. (1999/2002). *Mikhail Bakhtin: An aesthetic for democracy.* Oxford University Press.

Hope, A. (1962). Standards in Australian literature. In G. Johnston (Ed.), *Australian literary criticism* (pp. 1-15). Oxford University Press.

Illesca, B. (2023). Beyond measure: The potential of storytelling to challenge standardised English. *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education.* https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2023.2233083

Kemp, D. (1999). Choice and equality: Funding arrangements for non-government schools 2001-2004. Ministerial Statement.

Kostogriz, A. (2012). Accountability and the affective labour of teachers: A Marxist–Vygotskian perspective. *The Australian Educational Researcher, 39*, 397-412. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-012-0072-x

Kroon, S., & Spotti, M. (2022). L1 education in times of globalization, digitalization and diversity: Proposal for an IMEN Expert Meeting 2-4 November 2022. Unpublished paper.

Leavis, F.R. (1943/1948). Mass civilisation and minority culture. In F.R. Leavis, *Education & the university: A sketch for an 'English school'* (pp. 141-171). Cambridge University Press.

Leavis, F.R., & Thompson, D. (1933/1977). *Culture and environment: The training of critical awareness*. Greenwood Press.

Leung, C., Harris, R., & Rampton, B. (1997). The idealised native speaker, reified ethnicities, and classroom realities. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*(3), 543–559. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587837

Medway, P, Hardcastle, J., Brewis, G., & Crook, D. (2014). *English teachers in a postwar democracy: Emerging choice in London schools, 1945-1965.* Palgrave MacMillan.

Newbolt, H. (1921). *The teaching of English in England: Being the report of the departmental committee appointed by the president of the Board of Education to inquire into the position of English in the educational system of England*. HM Stationery Office.

Owen, C. (2019). Early career English teachers' everyday work: Speaking back to standards-based reforms. *English in Australia*, *54*(2), 24.

Owen, C. (2020). *Becoming an English teacher: The shaping of everyday professional experiences in early career teaching*. PhD thesis. Monash University. https://doi.org/10.26180/13210970.v1

Parr, G. (2010). *Inquiry-based professional learning: Speaking back to standards-based reforms.* PostPressed.

Parr, G. (2011). Toward an understanding of Literature teaching in Australia: Hanging on and letting go. In P.-H. van de Ven & B. Doecke (Eds.), *Literary praxis: A conversational inquiry into the teaching of literature* (pp. 69-87). Sense.

Parr, G., Bulfin, S., Diamond, F., Wood, N., & Owen, C. (2020). The becoming of English teacher educators in Australia: A cross-generational reflexive inquiry. *Oxford Review of Education, 46*(2), 238-256. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2019.1667319

Phillips, A. A. (1958). *The Australian tradition: Studies in a colonial culture.* Lansdowne Press.

Reid, A. (2019). *Changing Australian education: How policy is taking us backwards and what can be done about it*. Routledge.

Smith, D. E. (1999/2004), *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Thomas, D. (2021). Beyond disciplinary drama: Federal dollars, ESL instruction for African Americans, and public memory. *College Composition and Communication, 73*(1), 52-79.

van de Ven, P.-H., & Doecke, B. (Eds.). (2011). *Literary praxis: A conversational inquiry into the teaching of literature*. *S*ense.

White, J. (2014). Experimenting with education: Spaces of freedom and alternative schooling in the 1970s. *History of Education Review*, *43*(2), 172-89.

Wittgenstein, L. (2001/1953). *Philosophical Investigations: The German text, with a revised English translation*. Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. Wiley-Blackwell.