

Preface

Although there is a long history of understanding and theorising work, education, and other facets of social life through practice perspectives, recently there has been renewed interest. More specifically, in theorising pedagogy and education that Schatzki, Knorr Cetina, and von Savigny (2001) called for a *practice turn* to contextualise educational practices in grounded and highly transformative ways. This turn has not only launched new developments in practice theory itself, but has been adopted across a range of educational sectors and contexts as an approach to not only understand the practices that constitute their conduct but as an approach to liberate neoliberal tendencies that pervade the work and practices of those sovereign beings within their bounds. For the contemporary educator and researcher what is interesting is that this call to practice has taken place against a background of debate attempting to instrumentalise practices within regimes of accountability and measurement. Furthermore, ‘practice’ (as an enduring concept) has been addressed through a range of academic traditions including philosophy and sociology, and these traditions are reflected in the chapters of this book.

This book was developed alongside an invited symposium where the authors and other interested academics and practitioners from across the globe gathered to discuss practice theory perspectives on pedagogy and education. The premise was that the symposium was to be driven by ideas; ideas that generated rich, genuine dialogues among those present. The symposium was held in June 2015 when the authors, and a few invited discussants, met for two days in Brisbane, Australia. The authors prepared an initial full draft of their chapter prior to the symposium, and these were distributed to the delegates about one month prior to the event. The participants read the draft chapters prior to the symposium and came prepared to discuss the ideas within the draft chapter. At the chapter presentation sessions at the symposium, the authors gave a short presentation (20 minutes) and then there was an extended period for discussion (40 minutes). This structure was designed to provide extended time for dialogue and discussion about the ideas presented in each chapter, and to offer the authors informed and thoughtful feedback. In the light of this feedback, and further feedback from the editors, the authors then revised their chapters. The chapters then underwent an anonymous peer-review process.

The title of the book, *Practice Theory Perspectives on Pedagogy and Education*, captures the central overarching focus that underpins all the chapters in the book. All of the authors have addressed at least one of the key themes outlined below:

- *Practice Theory*: It is acknowledged that there is a plurality of “practice theories”, and in each chapter the author(s) include a theoretical perspective on practice. Through these various perspectives of ‘practice theory’ a richer understanding emerges and the theories are developed and enhanced. These, in turn, provide useful tools for advancing and developing *practice*.
- *Pedagogy*: Pedagogy is a term commonly used in educational contexts, but it can mean different things in different cultural contexts. In this book, the related dual perspectives of pedagogy as a *teaching practice* (as understood in Anglo-Saxon countries) and pedagogy as a *practice of up-bringing* (as understood in continental Europe) are both included and discussed.
- *Education*: The third key theme is *education*; however, this is not seen as synonymous with schooling. Here, we include education in a range of contexts and sectors including VET, tertiary and non-formal settings. Furthermore, education is seen as serving a dual purpose—the development of individuals and the betterment of societies and community—and it is this conceptualisation of education that underpins the chapters in the book.
- *Diversity and Contestation*: As is evident in the previous themes, in this book it is acknowledged that there is a diversity of understandings and perspectives of practice theory, pedagogy and education. This also means that each of these understandings and perspectives are contestable and ripe for further development.

The chapters in this book represent some innovative, and at this time provocative, perspectives on educational and pedagogical practice. We hope that they challenge current understandings and promote further theory and practice development. But more importantly, we hope that the perspectives presented herewith open up possibilities for readers to enter into generative conversations about the practices of pedagogy and education with others around them, thereby initiate changes to enhance practice and praxis.

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Reference

- Schatzki, T. R., Knorr-Cetina, K., & von Savigny, E. (2001). *The practice turn in contemporary social theory*. New York: Routledge.

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Praxis, Diversity and Contestation

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