

Language Teachers'
Stories from their
Professional
Knowledge
Landscapes

Language Teachers' Stories from their Professional Knowledge Landscapes

Edited by

Lesley Harbon and Robyn Moloney

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PREFACE

GIVING LANGUAGE TEACHERS A VOICE

LESLEY HARBON AND ROBYN MOLONEY

This preface is written to honour the effort and reflective work of our language teaching contributors in this volume. We offer here our own reflection and understanding of our personal professional stories. We embed our work in a key framing paper by Clandinin and Connelly (1996) that speaks about the teacher's professional knowledge landscape characterised by the 'secret, sacred and cover' stories told about schools and classrooms.

Essentially Clandinin and Connelly (1996, p. 24) conceptualized a teacher's professional knowledge landscape "positioned at the interface of theory and practice in teachers' lives", rather like a map. Clandinin and Connelly (1996, p. 25) outlined how teachers tell stories to make sense of their roles: "part of their time in classrooms and part of their time in other professional, communal places". The stories told by teachers outside the classroom where they interface with "researchers, policy makers, senior administrators and others" are termed "sacred" stories by Clandinin and Connelly (1996, p 25), as the view of teaching conveyed in these stories is theory-driven.

By contrast, teachers also live their lives through what Clandinin and Connelly (1996, p. 25) term "secret" and "cover" stories. They elaborate:

Classrooms are, for the most part, safe places, generally free from scrutiny, where teachers are free to live stories of practice. These lived stories are essentially secret ones. Furthermore, when these secret lived stories are told, they are, for the most part, told to other teachers in other secret places. When teachers move out of their classrooms into the out-of-classroom place on the landscape, they often live and tell cover stories, stories in which they portray themselves as experts, certain characters whose teacher stories fit within the acceptable range of the story of school being lived in the school. Cover stories enable teachers whose teacher stories are marginalized by whatever the current story of school is to

continue to practice and to sustain their teacher stories.

Readers will meet not only Australian language teachers' "secret" stories of practice in this book, but also "cover" stories, as they grapple with the "sacred" stories they feel obliged to recount. In permitting us to uncover and make public their stories, we are humbled by these 15 language teachers, brave enough to share and be exposed on a more open stage.

In this preface we have used a form of oral auto-ethnography known as 'interactive interviewing' (Ellis, Kiesinger, & Tillman-Healy, 1997) to access a deeper level of reflection. Ellis et al. (1997, p. 122) believe that interactive interviewing 'makes it possible to reveal more of ourselves'. Essentially with this strategy we are examining and comparing stories of experiences that have shaped our professional lives.

Lesley: The story that I recounted in our 2013 volume, *Language Teachers' Narratives of Practice* (Harbon & Moloney, 2013), deconstructs a young girl growing up on a summer fruit orchard on the outskirts of Sydney, Australia. Yet even in the early 1960s in semi-rural Sydney, there was evidence of a world of other languages. There was the Italian community who owned the market gardens in the area. There were new-sounding words in the Australian Broadcasting Commission school radio program and fun songs from other languages. I can clearly see that even in my primary school years, I started to understand that there are other 'codes' and ways of making meaning. That has been one key notion in my personal narrative that has fed the 'language-is-meaning-making' part of my languages education vision for language learners in school classrooms and pre-service teachers who will teach those learners.

Then of course there are other stories of early overseas travel. Having had the opportunity to travel and meet other people's ways, I know there is a place for silence and pausing, and rules of body language. I know that is another part of my secret story. My story has been driven by the notion that you only really see your own ways when you step outside and look back from another vantage point. As well, my story has been driven by the notion of 'passion for learning'. When you see a learner's countenance and there is passion for what they are doing in your classroom, then you have got to nurture and encourage that passion. That would be my other secret story: language learning for all, and finding the 'how' for each learner. Do you have other parts of your secret story that you know exist?

Robyn: I was a little girl from a monolingual family in Sydney. In my secret stories, my first transforming experience was my first trip to France in my second year of teaching. In the late 1970s, it wasn't common to travel so frequently, thus travelling was a 'big deal'. We lived in Paris for

nearly a year, and that gave me an identity, both as a French speaker and as someone who had a blueprint in their head of what France was like. Importantly, after I returned to Sydney, I had a reasonably good French accent, and first-hand stories of personal knowledge to share in the classroom, the many incidents and moments of learning I had encountered. This wealth of stories gave me extra confidence to engage my students.

The second transformation for me was learning Japanese as an adult and developing a passion for everything Japanese. I travelled to Japan many times and every single time it was exciting, with more to learn. I really only learned about good pedagogy from the Japanese teaching community here in Sydney.

Lesley: As a young language-learner, infatuated by what I must have considered was the 'magic' of foreign language learning, I am sure that I was not aware of any of the key issues of foreign language education at all. I could see how busy and how hard my language teacher worked. I suspected that school politics sometimes intervened because we held some senior classes before school in order to fit it into the timetable, but other than that, I was not aware of the multi-faceted and multi-dimensional nature of the foreign language education landscape until I entered the profession in my pre-service years.

Robyn: Indeed, school-age language learners are unaware of the sacred stories and the official policies and guidelines that underpin their teacher's daily routine. Perhaps there were fewer obligations and learning models, and maybe there were simpler syllabuses and mandates.

I learned my first foreign language in a school that supported languages, and we loved our grammar and translation. Although I knew a lot about French and German literature, I had very poor oral skills by today's standards. But one French teacher shared her secret stories with us. The sharing of a secret story makes a big difference to a learner, just as it is now recognised as part of the student-teacher relationship that underpins quality learning. My teacher had grown up in Lithuania, and had been a post-World War II refugee. She was highly educated, and to us, she was the embodiment of imagined European wisdom, literature, knowledge and culture. I remember her reading a Victor Hugo poem about the dawn: the reader presumes Hugo is going out to meet his lover but actually he is going to visit his daughter's grave. Her love of literature was a major influence on us. It's an important memory for me of how the teacher's secret story plays a role in student learning.

But it's only really when you go to the other side of the teacher's desk, and enter the professional landscape yourself, that you have to start grappling with an increasing multitude of sacred stories of the policy documents, learning models and methodologies. When I started teaching,

this same Lithuanian French teacher was my Head of Department, and to my surprise, she had become an expert in the audio-lingual method, with figures and the felt board.

Lesley: I can look back to the 1970s when I was learning an additional language in school. Forty years later, I can see that there was a shift in the sacred story: the sacred story that perpetuated the notion of language-for-grammatical-accuracy. I started my foreign language learning with a textbook based on the grammar translation approach. As I finished school and in my first years at university, the textbooks had changed to be based on the audio-lingual method and the resultant stimulus response aspects of language teaching and learning. This was the changing landscape at the time for language teachers. As the sacred story was changing, based on what researchers in the field had learned about language learning and the brain, language teachers were on the receiving end, working with new types of textbooks and media, such as reel-to-reel tape recordings (followed by audio cassettes) that trained the brain in patterns of language. By the time I had graduated with my undergraduate degree, classrooms had moved to emphasise communicative ideas. Looking back, I can see how the matriculation language test perpetuated the sacred story of the grammar translation method, yet our fun achievements in class included the rewarding nature of real communication. The takeover points, as sacred stories morphed into new ones as policies changed, created tenuous professional landscapes.

Robyn: You and I have reflected on this historical perspective. We are both teachers of some years' experience and thus we have developed a sense of overview, as do some of this volume's authors. They recount their critical perspective about teachers being 'captive slaves' to whatever the sacred story happens to be at a particular time. That's just part of being a language teacher who lives through various evolutions of sacred stories and pedagogies. Language teachers have embraced with enthusiasm each successive development on the language professional scene. We are willing to change because we see that the new approaches always try to move us ahead and offer something better to student learning experiences.

Lesley: We cannot help but react emotionally to those sacred stories as the official policies reflect the trends and changes in the landscape. Individual language teachers react and respond in their own way, and amend their secret stories in response to how they teach. From the enclosures of our own classrooms we might share our secret stories and understandings of changing realities with a colleague teacher and a confidant. Sometimes we modify those secret stories to create cover stories. It is the cover stories which become the public versions of the

realities of language learning in our classrooms.

Like your stories of overseas travels, Robyn, I'd like to reemphasise the perceived benefits of language teachers, adding short- or long-term international experience to their professional learning. If a language teacher is lucky enough to experience an in-country program at any stage of their career, there is potential to extend the professional knowledge landscape that underpins their work. The opportunity for language users to have real experience in listening, speaking, reading and writing while in-country, can only enrich and confirm the kinds of language they learn and use. Language teachers can develop their intercultural literacy as a result of an in-country experience. Speaking with native- and non-native speakers, learning and understanding the strategic competences not covered in textbooks and dictionaries, I believe it is the chance for teachers to consciously nurture their professional knowledge landscapes. There is almost an enabling aspect of the international experience itself.

Robyn: The impact of working out differences and commonalities also brings me to comment on our mutual interest in the biggest change in language education in the last 10 years: the curriculum movement towards an intercultural approach to language teaching. It is one more sacred story that has impacted language teachers' professional knowledge landscapes. But I believe this also operates as a personal secret story, because we have to respond to the reflexive nature of intercultural learning, from our own life experiences. We have to understand it individually before we can really figure out how to teach from an intercultural stance, or work with intercultural notions with our students.

My own story warns how language teachers need to learn for themselves first, so they can guide their students through this deep type of reflection. I recounted in our 2013 volume how, even though a world traveller, I found it challenging to travel to Aboriginal communities within Australia for the first time. I am now very pleased to have Aboriginal grandchildren. In this learning experience, while I had knowledge of others (many international experiences), I still had a limited knowledge of myself (my Australian self). I make a point of engaging my pre-service teachers with the need for personal enquiry about language and culture in themselves and in their pedagogy. There are emerging approaches to stimulate critical thinking about culture in teachers (Dervin, 2015).

Lesley: Pre-service language teachers will meet a variety of terrains in their professional knowledge landscapes. Change will continue to be a constant feature of a language teacher's professional working life, and new trends and policies will come and go. As language teachers meet the new sacred stories as they advance in their career, they will hopefully be

guided by understandings in this volume and find a place for their stories. Allowing language teachers to acknowledge the cover stories they create will confirm their practice.

Robyn: The language teachers who have contributed to this volume have understood that we all operate and deal with three levels of stories. Many have been generous in sharing snippets of private secret stories, and many have placed great consideration into writing important cover stories of their practice within their school contexts and broader communities, all of which are models of good practice. Some chapters show the third level, the frame in which the teachers operate, embedded in the sacred stories of political and policy contexts that impact, enable and sometimes constrain their work. Enabling teachers to recognise the function of these levels of stories through their careers can be an empowering process: exactly what is hoped for from the publication of this book.

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FOREWORD

TEACHERS' STORIES FROM THEIR PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE LANDSCAPES

F. MICHAEL CONNELLY

Dear Michael,
With our very best wishes
and thanks for assisting with
our next volume-manuscript
to follow early 2016
Lesley and Robyn 15/10/15

With this brief note penned across the cover page of their gift to me of their 2013 book *Language Teachers' Narratives of Practice*, Lesley Harbon & Robyn Moloney signalled that the book I was to review, *Language Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes*, was part of a larger inquiry. Their basic commitments to the educational power of teacher voice, and of the uses of narrative inquiry theory and research practice for the expression of voice, were to be found in both books. Their acknowledgement of the complexities and dilemmas of being a teacher in an environment mostly focused on student outcomes and the implementation and execution of policy and best practice underpins both books.

Throughout both books language, language teaching and language learning transcend language as a discipline and become expressions of the changing global world, multiculturalism and self-identity. Likewise, matters de-emphasized and perhaps overlooked in one book show up and are foregrounded in the other. Their new book, the second in the series, moves from generalized language teaching matters discussed in the first book, to language teaching in context in the second. This book is concerned with what John Dewey might have called the existential

dimension of teaching and which Harbon and Moloney call the landscape of language teaching. This two-book, two-phase, structure to Harbon and Moloney's work caught my attention. My own work on narrative inquiry and teacher development followed a similar path. Let me explain in the hope that doing so might contribute insight into the importance and strength of this second book.

Jean Clandinin and I published a 1988 book, *Teachers As Curriculum Planners: Narratives of Experience*, on the centrality of teachers and teacher voice in the school curriculum. We followed this up with a 1990 article, *Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry*, in which we coined the term 'narrative inquiry' and argued that narrative was both the phenomenon under study and was the method by which study proceeded. By this we meant that life was experienced narratively and that narrative inquiry was both the identification and naming of life experience as well as a cluster of methodologies for the study of such experiential phenomena.

Harbon and Moloney's book beautifully illustrates these general points. Authoring language teachers were given general guidelines and, it would appear, some basic instructional material on narrative. But they were not boxed in with boundaries and definitional limits of what was to be contained in the inquiry box. Rather, teachers were invited to write in the first person and to articulate matters and events that influenced their teaching and how they thought about their work. In consequence the narratives differ in focus, passion, scope and purpose. But they also share noticeably common features.

One of the first things that readers notice with these narratives is a sense of reality: this is how I experience language teaching. We cannot know how representative the experiences may be, nor do we have anything statistical by way of norms or averages. But, as it is with fictional literature, readers are drawn into life experience in strongly human ways that create empathy, understanding and reflection on the part of the reader. A reader cannot help but respond intellectually, emotionally, morally when reading any one of the narratives in the two books.

Reading more than a dozen such narratives in each book provides a reader a landscape rich with diverse expression. Some forms of social science research aim at the Platonic simplification given by dialectic overarching generalizations, ideas and findings. But these books reveal the rich diversity, complexity and ambiguity that exist on any practical landscape, not only the Australian language teaching landscape. Readers of these books will frustrate themselves if they are looking, as one often does when reading social science research, for the one or two grand

insights and generalizations lurking in the data. Rather, readers need to ask “how did this teacher experience her language teaching?” and “what does the general landscape of language teaching in Australia look and feel like in these books?”

But the narratives reveal much more about the Australian language teaching landscape than may be seen by only asking these two experiential questions of the narratives. The narratives are woven with material threads. None of the narratives are what one might call therapeutic narrative, one of the strands in therapy theory and practice. These are not narratives woven merely from emotions and internal responses but are in response to the environment, to landscape features that impact the teaching and learning setting. Thoughtful readers learn a great deal, for example, about a changing Australian society.

We learn about educational language teaching practices, education policy changes, resource allocations, emerging Asian neighbour markets, the impact and characteristics of social movement and human migration. These various learnings, and more, are not, it would appear, intended by either the editors or the authors. But the nature of the narratives constructed in these books gives rise to these understandings as inevitable correlates of the narrative constructions.

Well-constructed narratives are inevitably landscape narratives because the landscape provides the raw material. Every teacher narrative in these books is crafted out of raw teaching and learning landscape material revealing thereby often hidden ecological niches, actors, factors and forces on the landscape.

Still, this is not quite what Harbon and Moloney had in mind with their second book, *Language Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes*. Earlier I said that my own path to the concept of landscapes was similar in some respects to the two-part structure in these two books. Following the deliberately narrative inquiry-oriented work noted above, which focused on teachers' personal practical knowledge, we wrote a book on teachers' professional knowledge landscapes. Among other things, we saw this work as part of a conversation with critics who viewed teacher-based narrative work of the sort found in Harbon and Moloney's *Language Teachers' Narratives of Practice* as overly focused on teacher autonomy to the point of solipsism. The landscape metaphor shifted the emphasis to the teacher context and to an understanding of stories told not only out of the self but simultaneously out of the environment.

There is little doubt, though I have not discussed this matter directly with either author, that their hopes for the second book have similarities with our own. But they are rather braver than were we. Their hopes are

made clear in their fascinating *Preface* which they title *Giving Language Teachers a Voice*. The conversation between the two authors crafted in the Preface discusses the secret, sacred, and cover stories teachers adopt and create as they narrate their teaching lives on a landscape of others. This is a fascinating discussion because it raises important questions both for the teacher teller and the listener reader. The teacher teller, reflecting thoughtfully on what she says may discover and construct important self-insight. For the listener reader, one is led to wonder if they are hearing a descriptive secret story or a wash-over cover story. Harbon and Moloney's hearts, and hopes for the book, strongly, and I think bravely, rest with the possibility of teacher self-insight. They conclude their preface with these words, enabling teachers to recognise the function of these levels of stories through their careers can be an empowering process: exactly what is hoped for from the publication of this book.

There are many corroborating insights in this second book when read in the context of the first. It is not so much that landscape is missing in the first book but, that, landscape is the direct focus of the second book. More specific attention is given to the environment in which language teachers work and how that impacts language teaching. Thus, while it is clear that language reform is underway in the first book, some of the direct features and qualities and sources of language teaching change are brought forward in this *Language Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes* book.

Harbon and Moloney's second book is, to my knowledge, the only extended inquiry into language teaching in the context of an active policy initiative environment. And it is most certainly the only one that addresses the language education landscape through the voices of active language teachers.

It is important to conclude these remarks by returning to the *Preface*. The *Preface* is deceptively rich, somewhat in the same way that the teacher narratives are deceptively rich, by revealing a great deal about language education and Australian education in general. The *Preface* consists of the two editors in conversation. Each reveals much about their own narrative histories embedded in the origins of both books. Together they artfully craft a theoretical frame for reading the book's teacher narratives and, indeed, for reading both books. I urge readers to study the *Preface* by way of preparation for reading the book's teacher narratives.

CHAPTER ONE

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE LANDSCAPES: LANGUAGE TEACHERS' STORIES

LESLEY HARBON AND ROBYN MOLONEY

Background

It is 20 years since the publication of Clandinin and Connelly's (1996) journal article, 'Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes: Teacher Stories – Stories of Teachers – School Stories – Stories of Schools', that offered and interpreted stories from teachers and schools. Their concern was for a continued emphasis on the 'narrative context for the ongoing development and expression of teacher knowledge in schools' (1996, p. 24).

Although not focusing on language teachers specifically, Clandinin and Connelly asked about teacher knowledge being shaped by the professional context in which they worked, arguing that the 'professional knowledge context shapes effective teaching, what teachers know, what knowledge is seen as essential for teaching, and who is warranted to produce knowledge about teaching' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p. 24). The influence of their writing has influenced the works of scholars interested in what teachers' stories tell us (Anderson, 1997; Geelan, 2007) and contextualizing teacher knowledge (Craig, 1999).

Clandinin and Connelly (1996, p. 24) use the term 'professional knowledge landscape' and explain how it can assist teachers to situate their work, and thereby understand it better. They describe the various aspects of the landscape as 'individual teacher knowledge, the working landscape, and the ways in which this landscape relates to public policy and theory'. The claim made by Clandinin and Connelly (1996) was that different types of stories are told about teachers and classrooms in schools. Clandinin and Connelly call these 'secret, sacred and cover stories' (1996, p. 25): stories that teachers might tell privately about their practice in the secrecy of their own classroom and with other teachers, the more official

cover stories about schools and policies told in more out-of-classroom places, and sacred stories teachers might tell more publicly beyond the classroom among the formality and officialdom of research, policy, and school community.

Within the notion of “secret, cover and sacred” stories there is also a hint of Barkhuizen’s (2009) “small story” and “big story”. Barkhuizen (2009, p. 283) cites Watson (2007), explaining on the one hand, there are “small stories ... the ephemeral narratives emerging in ... everyday, mundane contexts”. “Big stories” on the other hand, are the “bigger narratives we tell about ourselves, the stories about our lives that we have reflected on and present as the polished accounts of who we are” (Barkhuizen, 2009, p. 283). It may not be too far a stretch to consider “big stories” as Clandinin and Connelly’s “cover stories”, and “small stories” as the other “secret” stories. Mapping these stories, according to Clandinin and Connelly, is a way to fully understand the nexus between teachers’ personal, practical and professional knowledge.

It is also around 10 years since the publication of the Australian Federation of Modern Languages Teachers’ Association’s *Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of Languages and Cultures* (AFMLTA, 2005) (henceforth Professional Standards). Language teacher professionalism is expressed solidly within their framework of eight dimensions: (i) educational theory and practice; (ii) language and culture; (iii) language pedagogy; (iv) ethics and responsibility; (v) professional relationships; (vi) awareness of a wider context; (vii) advocacy; and (xiii) personal characteristics. Through teacher professional learning programs across Australian states and territories, language teachers have gained a fuller understanding of these diverse dimensions of their teaching roles (Morgan, 2013).

The Professional Standards document also importantly sets out Program Standards, identifying clearly for the first time the issues and factors within schools that impact the success of language teaching. Only when there is support from the schooling system can language teachers feel and act in an accomplished manner. We have chosen to connect the AFMLTA’s (2005) Program Standards with the concept of Clandinin and Connelly’s (1996) professional knowledge landscapes in an attempt to highlight what language teachers believe makes a language program run well. School stories – the stories that perpetuate how the school values and supports accomplished teaching and learning of languages and cultures, we believe, are embodied in the AFMLTA’s Program Standards. Thus, assembling this collection of narratives represents a form of social research in providing critical illustrations of the issues identified in the Professional Standards.

Landscape of schooling

According to their background and experience, teachers will have encountered different issues and obstacles in their professional knowledge landscape. Any group of language teachers will be at 'different places on the landscape' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p. 25): 'behind the classroom door with students ... [and] in professional places with others', as well as dealing with the 'sacred' stories from their employers – the schooling systems wherein the policies for languages education lie. We consider that language teachers are on what we call a 'multi-terrain landscape', in clear evidence of their sacred and cover stories. The language teachers in this volume variously report a 'rocky landscape' as the minutiae of the 'daily grind' as they complete their many language teaching tasks that get in the way of their delivery of their aspirational quality programs.

Language teachers report their responses and actions as they attempt to smooth out the bumps, and 'pave the roads' with quick fixes or long-term solid solutions. The landscapes can be considered metaphorically desert-like, with a dearth of resources, or even conversely like a busy highway. Languages in some schools, according to the language teachers in this volume, are subject to 'top-down' decision-making, as decisions about class sizes, subject choices and staffing are made quickly without proper consultation, reflection or stakeholder dialogue. Sometimes language program development occurs in the 'slow lane' as other curriculum priorities speed past with full 'top-down' support. We therefore note chaos and complexity theories involved in the curriculum theory (Gough, 1999, p. 59). This indicates that we should not be surprised when the terrain is fast or rocky, because these theories reject the linear and homeostatic views of curriculum development. In essence, the school curriculum is simply not straightforward.

Geelan (2007, p. 1) also uses 'chaos theory as a metaphor for discussing what happens in classrooms', and identifies how Clandinin and Connelly describe stories as existing within a 'three dimensional narrative space' with axes of time (past, present and future), place (culture, climate and context) and personal/social concern' (Geelan, 2007, p. 9). We have gathered this set of language teachers' narratives that occurred in this three dimensional space on all those axes. We agree with Gough (1999, p. 59) that although teachers desire to work 'in a state of stability and equilibrium', there will always be a 'punctuated legitimacy' due to the impacting factors of curriculum implementation. The 'peaks and troughs' in the implementation stage make a linear model impossible (Gold, 1999, p. 210). Over time, patterns of 'construction, erosion, loss, reconstruction

and maintenance' (Gold, 1999, p. 210) can be seen in curriculum innovation/implementation. The professional knowledge landscape of language teachers in this volume is punctuated with construction, erosion, loss and reconstruction, resulting in different speeds of change and a less-than-smooth experience.

Narrative enquiry

We consciously framed our invitation to write chapters, in full belief that language teachers would be happy to share the 'secret' and 'cover' stories of their professional knowledge landscapes, including the opportunity to discuss the positive and negative impacts of the 'sacred' stories around their work. Sixteen language teachers referred to the sacred stories, shared aspects of their secret stories, and referred mostly to their cover stories based on the key issues, perhaps, we believe, because the secret stories became too rocky a landscape. In this volume, language teachers and one school principal narrate their personal and professional stories from primary and secondary school landscapes. There are sacred stories of the public place, policy and official view of language education that indicates all is well. The secret stories – lived stories of practice, real stories inside classrooms and between teachers – are also evident. Mostly we have found the teachers were happiest to share their 'cover' stories: the ones they share outside the four walls of their classrooms. We have brought together a volume of stories from the professional knowledge landscape of language teachers' knowing and intuiting through personal narratives and the rationale for language learning.

In our first volume of language teacher narratives, *Language Teachers' Narratives of Practice* (Harbon & Moloney, 2013), our aim was simply to collect a number of narratives which celebrated the diversity of language teachers and their teaching contexts across Australia, with some predetermined focus on particular interests of the teachers. A major focus for us also was to explore the nature of narrative enquiry, and our process of engaging and mentoring the teachers (Moloney & Harbon, 2015). The volume has been well received and used (Coffey, 2014).

Barkhuizen, Benson and Chik (2014) tell us that there is no single correct way of carrying out a narrative enquiry study, but the narratives resulting from gathering the stories are the important part of such enquiry. As Barkhuizen et al. (2014, p. 112) say, the narratives will engage an audience, provide opportunities to share experiences, emotions and ideas, and make possible a subsequent collaborative construction. The narratives we have assisted the teacher-writers to craft (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p.

113) are not trivial or light; rather, they stand solidly as representing contemporary language classrooms in Australia. In fact, as Barkhuizen et al. (2014, p. 115) predict, the narratives published here may 'suggest to readers ways of actually doing their own narrative inquiry'.

In this second book of Australian language teachers' narratives, we set out to collect, not only language teaching stories and stories of language teachers, but also more political stories of the problems associated with school programs and contexts. These problems lie at the heart of our generally low rates of success nationally in students participating in language study, or in reaching the matriculation standard in a language study (Slaughter, 2009). We believe that highlighted through these stories are some of the major political issues in schools that impact language teachers and their students.

We looked for 'lived' stories of teaching languages in classrooms, that is, public versions of language teaching as understood by practitioners, researchers, policymakers and senior administrators, as well as stories shared by teachers with each other outside their classrooms that support their professionalism. We do not judge these stories as good or bad, but rather acknowledge that they exist, and more importantly, are instrumental in shaping the landscape of language teaching in Australia.

We invited teachers to consider telling stories of their personal and professional landscape. The teachers, quite rightly, responded individually and independently to the invitation. Some seized the 'three stories' model with enthusiasm, perhaps because it offered a welcome conceptualisation of something already evident to them in their multi-layered story. Others appeared to find it less relevant to their telling. Yet, as readers, we can observe the different levels of stories emerging in their narratives, sometimes causing them grief and frustration. Some narratives focus on the individual personal experience, some on the classroom level, some on the broader school level, and others even more broadly on 'the system'. Both commonalities and differences emerge in their landscapes. There are narratives of isolation and those of collaboration and community. There are narratives dealing with powerlessness, and those about leadership. There are narratives of anger, and those communicating passion and joy. There are narratives where the levels of stories overlap and support, and those where the stories collide and disrupt.

An overview of the landscapes

To recognize the great significance of learning in the foundational years of primary school, we have chosen to 'bookend' the collection of

narratives with two equally inspirational narratives of primary school language educators. We start with Justine Holmes with her primary school German and French Program, and conclude with Gemma Haigh with her complex primary school languages program, which includes her engagement with the Korean language and culture. Both teachers show a fundamental core sense of responsibility for the education of the whole child within their schools. If one asks the question, ‘What do you teach?’ some language teachers may answer with the name of a language, often due, rightly, to the extreme effort and long commitment they have made to strengthen the base of that particular language. But we feel that Justine Holmes and Gemma Haigh would answer this question with the word ‘children’.

In Chapter 2, from her early imaginative dreams of a multilingual life, Justine Holmes emerges as a committed leader in language programming at the primary school where she teaches. Bringing her knowledge of the cognitive benefits of language learning, she has moved from an initial small German program for a selection of students only. Working with the new school leadership that supported a whole school program, Justine and her colleagues have developed a remarkable whole school understanding of the benefits of a strong and impressive integrated languages program. Justine asked the deep critical questions of what language learning could represent in the curriculum, what goals were appropriate and achievable, and what cooperation was possible in achieving the outcomes.

A similar school focus is taken by Andrew Jeppesen in Chapter 3, in a secondary school and with Japanese at the centre. Andrew, as a self-described ‘third culture kid’, claims an ability to be a great adaptor. He describes three circles of effective advocacy that he has created for languages at the school where he teaches: (i) classroom; (ii) corridors; and (iii) community. He created his own coherent ‘sacred story’ for languages within his school, in building a coherent and strong rationale at each level, and in his students, an imaginative mindset of language as part of their future lives.

This concern for impacting student thinking, mindset and attitudes is also clearly evident in Mercurius Goldstein’s narrative (Chapter 4). Mercurius teaches Japanese in a rural school in New South Wales (Goldstein, 2013) but in this chapter, he narrates the story of mixed success with a program that introduces the teaching of the local Aboriginal language (Ngarrabul) and associated cultural activities. The program achieved many things, among which is positive collaboration with Elders, innovative learning experiences, breakthroughs in students’ enjoyment and new understandings. However, there is a counterbalancing power of a

systemic structural issue, such as timetabling, which has resulted in the current removal of the program. The program retains a powerless 'fragile' (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2010) status.

If Mercurius Goldstein communicates frustration with a school system, Louise Robert-Smith (Chapter 5) communicates anger with the level of policy. In her narrative, the failure of the sacred story is forefront. Alongside her own trajectory, she cites ongoing failures in Australian language education policy, in particular, to support the learning of Asian languages. In her role as a school principal, she has fought to protect language options within her school, but is deeply disappointed at the collapse of systemic policy and support. Like a number of other narrators, she stands at a critical distance from the system in which she works, and asks confronting questions as to what blocks language learning in Australia. She offers a number of strategies that she believes will make a difference.

Shaun Kemp (Chapter 6) offers a revealing in-depth personal investigation of a language issue within the school where he teaches. Shaun added to his teaching subjects (Chemistry, Physics) by retraining in Japanese, and later, Chinese. While Japanese was introduced and became established, the school deliberations as to whether to introduce Chinese were fraught, and continued for six years. Using the 'three stories' model to effect, Shaun uncovers the many stories at play in the deliberations, power, contested motives and self-interest, all of which determined the problematic outcome.

Andrew Miles' narrative (Chapter 7) offers an autoethnographic tracking of his career as a teacher of Latin and Classics. He catalogues the vigorous and consistent efforts exerted by himself and his colleagues in Classics over many years, to build and maintain strong practice and advocacy in their classrooms and through their strong professional networks. Despite this, he has felt his work to be constantly 'at risk' and threatened by the power of principals and of policy. Andrew recognises the isolation of a Latin teacher in his/her school, and stresses the absolute necessity of participating in the wider professional circle and taking up opportunities for leadership to support others.

Chapters 8 and 9 offer narratives with different perspectives on the possibilities of an intercultural approach to language learning. Maria Lobytyna (Chapter 8) narrates her own 'transformation' from the exposure of books in different languages in her family apartment in Moscow to teaching Russian in the United States of America. Maria understands the particular identity needs of heritage learners of Russian in Australia, and the opportunities that an intercultural approach can offer. The comments

she collected from her students are moving, and show students' hunger to explore their responses to diverse texts. Maria has brought her understanding of her students and insight into the principles of the intercultural approach (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, & Kohler, 2003) into her detailed planning and creation of appropriate and sustainable curricula.

Juliette Bates (Chapter 9) delights in portraying her personal 'hybrid' identity and travel experiences, including the use she makes of them in her classroom teaching. She is particularly drawn to the notion of self-knowledge which is made possible for both teacher and students in an intercultural learning approach. She communicates her 'bigger picture' understanding of what she is contributing to student development within her particular urban school environment. With some critical distance from her broader society, as a multilingual citizen, Juliette shares with other narrators the puzzlement of why languages have to struggle for broader acceptance in Australia.

In this struggle, the need for personal resilience and adaptation features in a number of narratives. It is a particular theme of Joanne Downing's narrative (Chapter 10). Joanne brings the resilience developed in family global moves and her own travels into her approach to teaching. Language teaching is not for the faint-hearted, and there is a need to keep moving, keep learning and keep exploring. This means, for her, postgraduate study and in particular, the exploration of the affordance of new technologies to expand the relevance and motivation for language learning in students. As a teacher, she has seen the inequities in language learning situations in different schools and believes that there are new opportunities through technologies to expand all students' experiences.

Chapters 11 and 12 are stories of two teachers in isolated situations, who are conducting personal crusades in amongst the 'chaos of the everyday' to establish French language learning in those contexts. Marion Bennett, a teacher of secondary French in a rural town, offers us the wonderful line that her 'teaching is more of a crusade than a career'. In Chapter 11, her narrative spans her indefatigable efforts to overcome the isolation factor by establishing regional teacher networks, running camps and concerts and establishing an Alliance Francaise office in her town and a branch of the Modern Language Teachers Association. Despite this, in her school, she is faced with frustrating internal realities of counteracting factors such as timetabling. She offers powerful advice and tips as to strategies she has developed over the years to 'make a difference'. Marion's narrative is perhaps the most passionate expression in the volume. It explains the need to take up an individual responsibility, but

supported by community: 'It is us' who makes the difference, she concludes.

In Chapter 12, Ans Van Heijster narrates her years in a school with many students of socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. She describes her connection with the students, due to circumstances in her own childhood background in the Netherlands. Despite the positive support of her school staff, she faced apathy and lack of interest in language learning in students and their parents. Showing great care and concern for student learning, she worked with 'heroic optimism', using different strategies to motivate and engage. Her years in this school were the most challenging, but satisfying, of her career. She positions the concept of 'third place' (Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat, 2008) as central to her teaching 'life-world' (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009), as it means, for her, the goal of creating an environment that is conducive for all to interact, to negotiate meaning and to explore relationships between our languages and cultures.

Moving from Mexico to Australia as a child remains for Vanessa Furlong Alexanderson (Chapter 13) 'the hardest thing I have ever done'. Her chapter offers a vivid portrait of the difficulties of emigration, language and culture shock. It was only when Vanessa started to learn Italian in her early secondary years that she found her linguistic comfort, and saw herself 'not as an outsider but as a person enriched by two languages and cultures, who had come from a different and beautiful culture'. This vignette offers insight into what it can mean to a child learning English, positioned as deficit, to learn an additional language. Vanessa writes that learning Italian 'made me stronger in my speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in English, and it made me open my eyes to Australians and their perspectives of the world'. The principles of an intercultural approach are in perfect alignment with her sense of self and the way she wants to communicate with students in the classroom.

In her trajectory, Ans Van Heijster mentions her brief experience with teacher education at the University of Tasmania. Often neglected in policy considerations, funding and language education research, teacher education is placed as the focus of Chapter 14. This chapter offers three short narratives by two pre-service teachers and one language teacher educator. Kelly Bourke and Madelene Wicht narrate a little of their background and identity, and how they shaped their perceptions of their challenging school practicum teaching experience. Language teacher educator, Robyn Moloney, offers her perception of being Kelly's and Madelene's lecturer at Macquarie University, trying to create the learning environment within which they can

best develop and acquire necessary skills. From her own 'stories', she offers her students three essential core messages for their development: (i) the necessity of spending time in the target language country; (ii) the necessity of participating in one's teacher network community; and (iii) the relevance and necessity of an intercultural approach for critically understanding language and culture for the teacher and students. These messages appear to be in alignment with other narrators' discoveries.

We conclude with the final 'bookend' narrative of Gemma Haigh (Chapter 15), returning to primary school language education. In this outstanding narrative, Gemma covers much ground. She tracks her own mostly unsuccessful efforts at learning an additional language, prior to taking the opportunity to learn Korean. Put simply, she says, 'This has changed my life.' She then examines the establishment of a Bilingual Korean Program at Campsie Primary School where she teaches and where she subsequently became the leader of the increasingly complex language program. At this extraordinary school, Gemma and others managed to get the whole staff on board with an integrated and holistic understanding of the place and potential of languages in the primary curriculum. The immersion-style CLIL/bilingual Program (Fielding & Harbon, 2014) has a time allocation of five hours per week which enables the teaching of selected parts of the curriculum in Korean, necessitating creative collaboration and cooperation amongst all staff. Further, recognising that many children have heritage family languages, the school decided to offer every child a smaller scaled program in 10 additional languages: Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Indonesian, Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali, Maori, Tongan and Fijian. These languages were offered to students for two to three hours per week, taught partly through curriculum content and partly through specific language content.

We are reminded of the vision of Kate Reizenstein who concluded our 2013 collected volume (Reizenstein, 2013) in her inspirational narrative of how to achieve resilient sustainability in her Indonesian language program. Gemma Haigh is equally inspirational and practical in bringing valuable, critical analysis to her prescription for sustainability in language programming: working on broader school culture, advocacy, planning, resources, engagement and school unity. They are themes that have been evident in other narratives in this volume, but to see them placed together in action, and achieving remarkable outcomes in one context, is a powerful model for all levels of language education.

Conclusion: Future directions

The diverse language teachers' stories have unfolded and shifted on the changing Australian landscape, and these examples are just 14 of the many thousands in existence. They provide powerful illustrations of the capacity of a single teacher to effect change, and of the critical need for that teacher to be supported by the institution and the government. This was the intention of the Professional Standards (AFMLTA, 2005). Language teachers of Australia are individually and collectively engaged in strategic planning in their schools and communities and must all, to some extent, negotiate non-linear, chaotic and 'non-rational' curriculum contexts, as described by language teachers in this volume. Patterson, Purkey and Parker (1986) suggest that such strategic planning must take into account any external factors and internal organizational conditions. The planning should be medium or short range rather than long range, and should utilise qualitative and quantitative data. We suggest that the stories in this volume, adding to the stories in our first volume, represent a comprehensive data collection – a corpus – for subsequent reflection. As language educators, we return to our conviction and sense of purpose for the volume, that narrative enquiry may be considered a methodology, an 'alternative paradigm for social research' (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998).

As in our first volume (Harbon & Moloney 2013), the contributing teachers have told us of the new understandings of their practice and language education which they have developed as a result of their reflection and writing. A number of contributors provided us with feedback that the act of written reflection attached value, for the first time, to their development, and to their story as a language teacher. One of those teachers, Marion Bennett, wrote to us:

I have twiddled a little with expressions here and there. I hope it is at least reasonable. I can't thank you enough for the secret, sacred and cover stories reference which pulled it all together, and for the light which the various articles shone on my own experiences. I may have to do some further study – this has been too much fun to just drop!

By encouraging language teachers to tell their secret and cover stories, mapping the relationship between language teachers and the professional knowledge landscape, we hope to map the 'plot outlines' of the larger picture of language education in Australia. While there is great application, commitment and joy, it is clear there is much work to be done at all levels to progressively build a secure and diversely flourishing landscape of language learning in Australia. We hope the collection will

act as a stimulus to raise new questions and initiatives in the support of accomplished teaching of languages and cultures in Australian schools.

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