Chapter 2
Studying the Effectiveness of Teacher Education

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the complicated political context of contemporary teacher education. Sustained international scrutiny has seen many influential stakeholders (including Government ministers and accreditation bodies) voice concerns about the outcomes that can be linked to teacher education and, more specifically, the extent to which various teacher education programs produce 'quality' teachers who are, in turn, defined by their ability to impact positively upon student achievement. As we acknowledged in Chap. 1, scrutiny of this kind is longstanding and increasingly fuelled by international comparators like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and other OECD country benchmarking reports, as well as cross-country analyses conducted by multinational companies such as McKinsey and Co. (Barber and Mourshed 2007) and domestic organisations such as the Australian Business Council whose publications illustrate the rhetoric of crisis that has come to typify debates about the links between education and economic competitiveness:

> The OECD estimates that 13 per cent of Australian 15-year-olds are performing below the OECD 'baseline' and are at risk of not having the basics required for work and productive citizenship as adults. Australia is not unusual in this regard (the OECD average is 19 per cent), but this remains a serious concern and challenge to Australian schools. Worryingly, the percentage of 'at risk' students is much higher for some sections of the Australian population. Approximately 40 per cent of Indigenous students, 27 per cent of students living in remote parts of Australia and 23 per cent of students from the lowest socioeconomic quartile are considered by the OECD to be 'at risk' (Dinham et al. 2008).

Today it is reasonable to suggest that passionate assertions regarding the inadequacies and failures of teacher preparation are a routine feature of the modern teaching landscape. One need look no further than the documents associated with Australian's Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) which was established 2014 in order to provide advice to the federal government concerning

the effectiveness of the pedagogy; subject content and professional experience offered by teacher education providers. According to TEMAG's own report the review itself grew out of 'two clear propositions: that improving the capability of teachers is crucial to lifting student outcomes; and that the Australian community does not have confidence in the quality and effectiveness of new teachers' (TEMAG 2015, p. 1).

Running alongside these constant assertions that teachers lack quality and the public has lost faith with teacher preparation are equally passionate, but often less public, counterclaims which question both the evidence that underpins claims of crisis and the representations of what 'quality teaching' actually looks like with much media discussion. Analysis of the related debates quickly identifies dramatically different perspectives on how 'quality' in teaching is best defined, and, by extension, how quality can, should, or should not be evidenced. Government ministers, for example, have an apparent preference for data collected within high stakes, 'benchmarking' tests referred to above, such as the international regimes of PISA or TIMMS and the Australian Literacy and Numeracy testing protocol (commonly referred to as NAPLAN). Critics of this position have attempted to demonstrate that conclusions such as these rest upon the problematic belief that there is a direct relationship between the quality of teacher education (including processes regarding selection and assessment of students and the nature of course content), the quality of teachers, the quality of their *teaching* and the assessed performance of their students *on these specific measures*. Thus, if student achievement (at the end of this chain) is regarded as problematic, then improvement needs to be achieved at the various stages further *up* the chain in order to improve the quality of teaching and the quality of teachers.

A similar kind of linear, and fragile logic underpins arguments that 'quality' teachers are 'classroom ready' upon graduation: ready in the sense that beginning teachers can meet the needs of any student, anywhere, and thus ensure they learn (and can identify) what is taught. Here, again, we have a contested term. The Australian TEMAG has repeatedly advocated the importance of 'classroom readiness'. At first reading this appears a difficult position to object to. Most of us expect our doctors to be patient ready and our plumbers to be pipe ready. Yet to take this analogy a little further, is it reasonable to suggest that a newly certified plumber would be suited to respond to every possible challenge that plumbers across the globe could potentially be asked to tackle?

Similarly, the concept of 'classroom readiness' can also be used (unhelpfully) to imply that teachers should enter the full-time work force completely ready to face whatever their school experience might involve. From this perspective the work of teacher preparation is to ensure that graduate teachers are ready for whatever their work will involve…and whereever this work will take place…and whoever this work might involve including very different students, colleagues, and parent/caregiver/community stakeholders.

This is an enormous claim. The workplaces of teachers vary massively. Teachers in Australia, for example, can be employed within cities, towns, or very small and isolated communities. They can work in schools with thousands of students and

have access to a hundred colleagues, or they can be the only teacher for an entire school. Their classrooms might hold students from dramatically different socio-economic, cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Their students will almost certainly vary in academic ability, physical ability, and in social confidence. It is therefore not difficult to imagine that one particular teaching graduate might thrive when introduced to Classroom A (and report confidently that their students have all performed well) but feel completely overwhelmed and inadequate to deal with what 'school' looks like in Classroom B. In other words, teachers make countless complex decisions each day, in often very different contexts, with wildly variable supports for their work with increasingly diverse students. Berry et al. (2010) thus caution policymakers to not be seduced by the prospects of relying solely on standardised test results as a means of determining who teaches effectively but to search for more nuanced, and careful readings of data.

The key points to be made here, as Loughran and Hamilton (2016) have demonstrated, is that 'learning' does not exist in a linear relationship to 'teaching' (p. 3) and that many different factors impact upon how and what students learn and how and when this knowledge is performed. These factors include the diversity of the student population and the diversity of school contexts, a point made by researchers across the globe. Wink (2011), for example, describes demographic changes which are 'evident worldwide' and makes the important point that 'nowhere are those changes experienced more profoundly than in today's class-rooms' (p. 435). Australian educational settings reflect these changes and the resultant diversity. There are just short of 9500 schools Australia-wide, nearly half of which are located in Queensland and Victoria. Australian schools cater for 3,750,973 students, a total enrolment which is predicted to continue to rise until 2020 (ABS 2016). There are three school sectors; government, Catholic and independent, with the non-government sector accounting for up to one-third of all schools (ABS 2016) and accommodating 35% of all students (ABS 2016). Australian schools are staffed by over 380,000 full-time equivalent in-school per-sonnel, 70% of whom are teachers. The 2014–2015 students to teacher ratio was 13.9. In 2015, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students made up 5.3% of all student enrolments (30% were enrolled in Queensland schools, and make up 8% of all enrolments in this state). Students from language background other than English accounted for 14% of all Queensland students (2013) (Queensland Teachers' Union 2013) and 27% of the student population in Victoria (Victoria State Government: Department of Education and Training 2014). The average number of students enrolled in primary schools was 283 and 584 for secondary schools. There were also 448 special schools in 2015.

An understanding of just how complex 'real' classrooms actually can be pro-duces an argument that concepts such as 'quality' and 'readiness' are terms that need to be used in a careful way. Research has shown that just as 'quality' is a contested term, so, too, are concepts of preparedness, capability and 'effectiveness'; all of which can develop and change over time. From this perspective, 'teacher education' continues well after students graduate from university and questions

about the 'quality' and 'outcomes' from teacher preparation must therefore be addressed from multiple standpoints, including stakeholders in universities, schools and the wider educational community. Thus, universities are a major, but nevertheless only one part of a massive, complex educational superstructure within which there are very few 'absolutes' or certainties able to be found.

Questions about the quality of teachers and teacher education are therefore met at every turn with evidence of complexity: teaching is complex. Students are complex. Education is complex. Thus, as Cochran-Smith (2003) argues, while there is 'little debate in the education community about the assertion that quality of teaching and teacher preparation ought to be defined (at least in part) in terms of student learning' (p. 3), it is important to also acknowledge that teaching is '*unforgivingly complex*' (p. 4, emphasis in original).

Insisting on the recognition of complexity, however, does not mean that there is nothing that can be learnt about the relationship between teacher education (in universities and in schools) and teachers' preparedness to recognise and respond to this complexity and, as well, teachers' actual effectiveness in regards to various aspects of their undeniably complex work. Few are likely to suggest that teacher education does not have a responsibility to ensure that graduates enter a teaching position feeling as prepared and capable *as possible*.

This brings us to an important point.

Without wishing to endorse any simplistic, linear or 'value adding' approach to teacher quality we recognise that teachers *do matter*. Educators and commentators from vastly different ideological backgrounds agree that teachers have a real and significant impact upon the educational (and social) experiences of their students and also directly influence the achievements of students in schools (Day et al. 2007; Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD) 2005). This point has been evidenced over and over again within fine-grained research projects and case studies relating to schools, teachers and students showing how powerfully teachers impact upon students' educational experiences and outcomes and, of course, both academic and social success.

In the context of ongoing scrutiny of teacher education, and with a recognition that teachers have a significant and ongoing impact on the experiences and outcomes of students, the question that emerges is: what is it that teacher educators now need to know?

An Emerging Agenda for Teacher Education

As outlined in the previous chapter, Sleeter's analysis of almost 200 articles published in 2014 in leading international teacher education journals, for example, 'did not see evidence of an emerging, shared research program designed to inform policy' (2014, p. 151). Further to this point, the members of the SETE team have argued that questions about the knowledge base necessary to inform teacher education are important not only (or even primarily) because of a growing need for

teacher educators to speak back to ongoing representations of the profession as broken, inadequate or failing. It is important because the work of helping to prepare teachers for their careers and their classrooms is complicated and high stakes and needs ongoing analysis.

The SETE project therefore reflected the belief that regardless of how teacher education is positioned in public discourses and despite the complex range of factors that shape teachers' work, teacher education can *always* benefit from further analysis of the relationship between teacher education and the preparedness and effectiveness of teachers. We argue, moreover, that research into teacher education can usefully be shaped by a commitment to problematising the questions that have (and have not) commonly been asked about teacher quality and exploring with a genuinely open agenda issues regarding effectiveness and preparation.

In addition to this, we believe there is value to be had from research that is able to simultaneously speak back to policy, teachers and teacher educators with new forms of evidence about the quality of teacher education. These data, we suggest, will not only allow us to get beyond the tradition of 'quick fix' policy-driven 'solutions' to fundamentally complex problems, but also allow teacher educators to play an active, outward facing, powerful role in shaping teacher education for a changing world, extending our understanding of what teacher education actually is, and where teacher education takes place, and 'reforming' teacher education where reform is shown to be required.

From this basis the rest of the chapter has three interrelated aims.

First, we outline the potential for a spatial conceptualisation of teacher education to facilitate research that addresses the full range of factors that impact upon teacher preparation and teacher effectiveness; second, we explore the different ways in which both preparedness and effectiveness can be understood within three different spaces of teacher education; and, finally, we outline the specific ways in which our reading of this spatial approach underpinned the conceptualisation of a research project explicitly focused on questions relating to teacher education and its effectiveness that recognises and responds to the current political, policy and social context.

Changing Lenses: A Spatial Approach to Research in Teacher Education

As outlined in the previous chapter, the SETE research project was specifically and carefully designed to investigate questions relating to the effectiveness of teacher preparation for early career teachers who would be employed in diverse settings across Australia. In order to pursue this research agenda the research team first needed to embrace the complexity outlined above, and to acknowledge the multiple stakeholders involved.

Recognising the many contested claims made about what counts as evidence of 'teacher quality' and 'student achievement' we proceeded from the position that 'teacher education' is not a singular construct but a set of representations, practices and experiences that are socio-spatial and relational in their nature. From this basis, we drew upon the work of authors such as (Lefebre 1991) and Soja (1996) to think about the spaces where teacher education is understood differently by different stakeholders: the conceived space; the perceived space; and, the lived space— spaces that are both real and imagined. In each space, 'teacher education' and 'teacher effectiveness' can have different meanings and each of these meanings raise different questions for the design and conduct of research.

The Conceived Space

The conceived space of teacher education is where policy is articulated and where politically motivated ideas about desirable and 'effective' teacher education are constructed. Notions about quality teaching and preparation for teaching are debated, desired standards set, and teachers' and teacher education's performance is monitored. This space is commonly characterised by a focus on global economic competiveness and the imagined necessary neoliberal policies and responses. It is also characterised by accountability rhetoric and surveillance (Soja 1996), including the setting and monitoring of standards with success indicators often including results on standardised tests. Moreover, in recent times, this has involved a 'new professionalism' with notions of teacher professionalism being reconstructed to be more closely aligned with governments' reform agendas. It is important to note that in 2011, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) endorsed new national professional standards [Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) 2011a] and new processes for accrediting initial teacher education programs (AITSL 2011b). Both moves were accompanied by claims that these reforms would improve the quality of teaching.

The conceived space, therefore, is the home of policy and regulations such as those associated with TEMAG and AITSL. It is where teachers and teacher education are officially defined and where indicators of outcomes and 'quality control' are developed. It is where the work of teachers and educators is evaluated. This is the space where questions are asked about program accreditation; entry standards; teacher performance standards; performance reviews. This is also the space that wants to know what we can conclude about the relationship between various aspects of teacher education and various educational outcomes. It is the space that seeks answers to complex question such as the following:

- What features of teacher education programs (length, design, delivery mode):

  - Produce graduates who can meet AITSL professional standards?
  - Produce graduates who will impact upon student achievement in bench-marking tests?

- What features of pre-service teachers (at the point of entry) impact upon their quality as teachers? What is the impact of:

  - Ability to meet changing entry and selection criteria?
  - Previous study?
  - Demographics including age, gender, cultural background, first language?

These are the questions that are regularly found within public debates about teacher education, and which underpin routine calls for teachers to be 'trained' in ways that ensure they 'add value' to their students (for discussion of this concept see Floden 2012). They are questions that many members of the public also have a clear interest in pursuing and they raise issues about which more needs to be known.

A different set of questions is more commonly found within the perceived space: the space of teacher educators themselves.

Perceived Space

The perceived space of teacher education is the space of professional knowledge and its production. It is where teacher educators 'make judgments about the knowledge, skills and dispositions required of future teachers' (Rowan et al. 2015, p. 9). What is valued in this space is, of course, never static, but rather shaped by understandings of what constitutes competent practice and core knowledge in a particular period. These practices and linked understandings (including detailed and growing knowledge about factors that impact upon students' sense of self and academic and social performances) are in turn embedded in teacher education programs, informing what students are asked to study, how they are assessed, how they interact with debates and literature relating to 'quality' in education and 'complexity' in classrooms and, of course, where and when they undertake practical experiences in schools.

The perceived space is informed by a large body of research and relies less on single, 'blunt instrument' measures of student performance, to look at multiple factors that shape outcomes and pathways. Cochran-Smith et al. (2015) suggest that teacher education researchers who are also teacher educators are primarily focused on research that generates knowledge about how to improve the contexts where pre-service teachers learn to teach and, in addition, their 'readiness' and 'suitability' to teach. This includes research that investigates factors that enable or constrain students' ability to engage with essential knowledge; pedagogies associated with teacher education and the identities and needs of teacher educators themselves. The perceived space has provided detailed pictures of the complexity of schooling and

of teaching and learning about teaching and has informed the work of teacher educators who seek to prepare students for this complexity, not by giving checklists and high-stakes testing packages but rather the kinds of critical and reflective mindsets that allow for careful analysis of *what is actually happening* within various teaching contexts and *how they can choose to act in response*.

Like the conceived space, of course, the perceived space is also a politicized, contentious and changing space that reflects various shifts over time with regards to what is considered core professional knowledge and how this knowledge is best 'packaged' and communicated to an increasingly diverse cohort of learners. This is illustrated, for example, by changing emphasis on the extent to which a program should directly address factors such as gender, or disability or cultural diversity, and similarly different emphases on stand-alone, or integrated discipline courses.

Those working within the perceived space are generally keen to identify

- The knowledge, dispositions and skills that graduate teachers need to possess, and the extent to which these are adequately reflected in various professional standard frameworks.
- The way research focused on such areas as curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and the social context of schooling can inform the design, development and delivery of teacher preparation.
- The need to ensure that students are understood as diverse, and to resist and reject any attempt to homogenise or stereotype students.
- The political context within which all teaching, teacher education and teacher education research takes place.
- The ongoing challenge of helping teachers navigates or negotiates between the priorities of conceived, perceived and, finally, the lived spaces of teacher education.

Research about relationships between professional learning and teachers' lives and exploration of theory–practice interactions occur in this space (Rowan et al. 2015).

The Lived Space

The lived space of teacher education is where knowledge is acquired and developed in the diverse contexts of schools and related educational settings. It is also where knowledge or perspectives developed or experienced in the perceived and conceived spaces may be revisited, validated, re-interpreted or rejected: and where teachers transition from pre-service to in-service educators. In this space, teachers' perceptions of teacher education both before and after graduation are the foci. The enactment of academic or 'theoretical' knowledge occurs in the lived space (Rowan et al. 2015) as does the oft-cited experience of a disconnect between the 'ideal' world of teaching advocated in the conceived and perceived spaces, and the 'realities' of classrooms.

The lived space frames 'quality' and 'readiness' as contested concepts and recognises that professional identity is fluid as teachers are constantly in a state of development: teacher education does not finish when graduates are employed. This space attends to action and reflection, and is concerned with the influence of emotions and relationality on practice.

As noted above, understandings of the theory–practice divide are also interrogated in this space (Rowan et al. 2015).

> … although people perceive, conceive and live in all three spaces simultaneously—they are not discrete, separate 'realities'—the tactical differentiation of spaces enables us to distinguish dominant and more specific ways of graduates' engagement with teacher education across time and across space (Rowan et al. 2015, p. 286).

The lived space of teacher education has been the site of an enormous amount of research. What factors influence teachers' transition into the workforce? What influences teachers to stay or leave the profession? What issues do teachers find challenging? What pedagogical innovations impact upon student learning? How is student diversity shaping/re-shaping teachers? How does teachers' sense of self or self-efficacy influence their decision to teach various subjects or concepts? What forms of professional learning support the transition from beginning to accomplished teacher? These are just a sample of the many questions that are investigated by those working in the lived space of teacher education. While enormously varied in topic and methodology, research in this field is organised around a focus on 'what is happening' in 'real world' schools, and how teacher education is connected to, or disconnected from, these developments.

It is the lived space that reveals the complexity of teaching, the power (and powerlessness) of teachers and the complex interplay of factors that shape who teachers 'are' and what teachers become within, through, during and beyond their university-based education.

The resultant research explores questions such as

- Who are teachers? Why do they teach? Why do they stay/leave?
- How effective do teachers believe they are? What influences this belief?
- How does induction/transition impact upon teacher practice, teacher identity and teacher effectiveness?
- How has teacher education shaped effectiveness in regards to the multiple dimensions of education?
- What is the impact of context: school, administration, students and colleagues, on effectiveness?
- What enables or constrains a transition into teaching, and a growing sense of confidence and effectiveness?
- How do teachers and principals view graduates' preparedness and effectiveness?
- What is the 'real world' of teaching like for graduate teachers?

When brought together consideration of the conceived, perceived and lived spaces of teacher education provides opportunities for researchers to develop and respond to the various understandings of 'effectiveness' that permeate teacher

education. It invites examination of the layers of factors that influence teachers' effectiveness and is sensitive to dynamics between the teacher education program, the individual, and the workplace.

The question that emerges, then, is how does the spatial approach inform the conceptualisation of a research agenda that is relevant to all those working across the three spaces, and which has potential to improve the work of all educators. In the final section of this chapter, we outline some research 'touchstones' that informed the design of the SETE project.

## A Spatial Approach to Research Design: Touchstones for Researchers

We have argued throughout the book so far a need for teacher educators to be at the forefront of research into this relatively new discipline area, and further, have argued for a direct response to public anxiety about the quality of teaching and the resultant questions that may be directed at our work, rather than attempting to avoid these concerns. Drawing upon the spatial metaphors introduced above enabled the research team to think differently about what research into the effectiveness of teacher education could look like into the future, and to ask questions about who it could/should involve and what data it would need to collect in order to have maximum credibility. While the following chapter, Chap. 3, will provide specific detail about the design and operation of the project, our goal in this conclusion to Chap. 2 is to indicate the way the spatial approach to teacher education provided guidance for—or touchstones to evaluate—each stage of our decision-making.

First, it was clear that our research questions (introduced in Chap. 1) needed to reflect the specific and particular concerns of people working within all three spaces and allow teacher education to speak directly to the construction of teacher education as both failing and complex. Thus the project was organised around three main questions:

1. How well-equipped are graduates to meet the requirements of the diverse settings in which they are employed?
2. What characteristics of teacher education programs are most effective in preparing teachers to work in a variety of school settings?
3. How does the teacher education course attended impact on graduate employment destination, pathways and retention within the profession?

Second, a spatial approach to research demands that these questions are investigated using techniques that allow the voices of those working in the conceived, perceived and lived spaces to be heard. In other words, all research questions need to be considered from the representations and meanings offered by each of the three spaces. This is illustrated in Fig. 2.1.

Fig. 2.1 Spatial
representation for each
research question
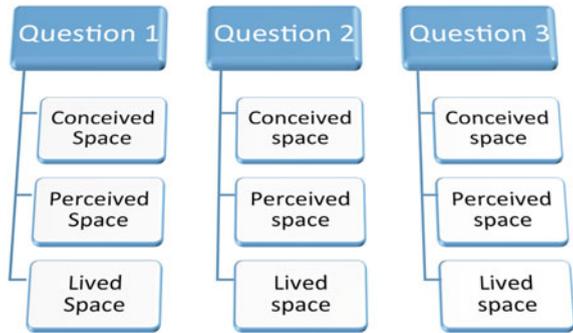
Third, the research needed to involve creation of data sets that would be valued and seen as credible by those in diverse spaces. These would include, ideally, large-scale quantitative data sets tracking graduates over time, as well as rich, and detailed case studies providing texture and nuance to representations of teachers as 'prepared' and 'effective' or otherwise. These data sets would also need to provide different stakeholders with opportunities to reflect upon what preparedness and effectiveness would look like at different times. In addition to this, the data needed to recognise that diverse school contexts are a feature of Australia's vibrant school sector and as such graduate teachers' experiences and perceptions are embedded within a range of school settings. Mapping school characteristics against teachers' perceptions about preparedness and effectiveness is necessary to enable meaningful exploration of the impact of context on teaching knowledge and practice, and attitudes towards the profession and initial teacher education.

Fourth, in recognition of the complexity of teacher preparation and the spatial approach to mapping this complexity, the research clearly needed to involve stakeholders from the various spaces and to allow different opportunities (at different times) for their input to be received. This is reflected in the composition of the research team, and the data collection opportunities that were provided. Our goal was to ensure that the loudest voices in teacher education—those in the perceived and conceived spaces—were joined with those of teachers within the lived space. This was made possible thanks to a strong partnership involving the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), the Queensland Department of Education Training and Employment (QDETE), and the relevant universities of each of the Chief Investigators (Deakin University, Griffith University, Victoria University and Monash University). This combination of partners has allowed the team—at all stages of the research—to reflect upon the extent to which the project is recognising and responding to current debates and concerns across the three spaces. It also facilitated the selection of research questions that were sufficiently open to the voices associated with these sites of analysis. It is therefore important to acknowledge that all of the members of

the research team had an impact upon the research questions, and the research design and data analysis.

Fifth, to adequately investigate the complexity of the various spaces (and the ways they do and do not interact) data collection logically extended over time, and made connections with multiple spaces. This commitment recognised that the lived space of teacher education relates directly to graduates' career destinations and pathways. This, in turn, necessitated a focus on the retention or attrition of graduate teachers, as well as their geographic and school sector mobility within the profession. To be valued by all three spaces of teacher education, data generated in this study provided a complex picture of the various ways in which graduate teachers negotiated the career pathways available to them within the education sector.

Finally, a spatial framing reminds us that research must look beyond representations of teacher education that depend primarily on the voices of teacher educators or policy makers, and to attend closely to the voices of the graduates themselves and the principals who employ them. Thus it is essential that questions about the effectiveness of teacher education are directed specifically to graduates and principals and not confined to analysis of student outcomes or other 'neutral' indicators. In other words, we seek to emphasise participants' perceptions of effectiveness, as opposed to statewide data systems linking teachers, students and preparation (as recognised by Edwards 2010). We therefore think of effectiveness in terms of teachers' attitudes and beliefs (Klieme and Vieluf 2009; Löfström and Poom-Valickis 2013) about their own effectiveness in relation to their context (Alton-Lee 2003), a perspective which allows teachers to also acknowledge their personal qualities and takes into consideration contextual factors, which include the system, school, teacher and students. Effectiveness in this research therefore differs from the understanding of the term used in improvement frameworks. Effectiveness here is determined through the graduates' and principals' perceptions of the relational (Day et al. 2006) coupled with the notion that ITE is 'initial' and that learning about teaching is ongoing and is continued in schools (Mockler 2013).

Conclusion

Florio-Ruane (2002) reminds us that studies of teaching and teacher education are

> responsive to problems of practice. However, when these problems are framed rhetorically as crises, we are apt to respond to their urgency by seeking simplicity, authority, and order in our research. … We should resist (a) pitting approaches to research against one another, (b) privileging approaches merely because they are compatible with the language of policy, (c) accepting uncritically any approach to research, and (d) disregarding research emphasising local knowledge (p. 205)

It is possible to argue that there is a significant gap within the teacher education research regarding the kind of large-scale research into teacher education and its effectiveness (for example Cochran-Smith et al. 2012; Cochran-Smith and

Zeichner 2005) that might allow us to make an active contribution to public and highly political debates about the extent to which teacher education—as a vast field of activity—can, or cannot, be considered 'effective'. Recognition that 'teacher education' and 'teacher preparation' mean different things to different people depending upon the spaces they interact within necessitates an approach to researching teacher effectiveness that examines notions of preparedness and effectiveness in different spaces and at different terms, and from different points of view.

Consideration of the conceived, perceived and lived space of teacher education provided us with the opportunity to develop and respond to the various understandings of 'effectiveness' that permeate teacher education. It invites examination of the layers of factors that influence teachers' effectiveness and allows us to be sensitive to the dynamics between the teacher education program, the individual, and the workplace. The touchstones used to guide the development of the SETE research also work to problematize the 'crisis' discourse noted in Chap. 1 as well as challenge the notion that there are essential 'truths' or best practice models suitable for every circumstance. They provide a basis for decision-making regarding the specific methodologies and methods embraced by the team and, as well, a platform for conceptualising and enacting data analysis. The details of these decisions are outlined in Chap. 3.

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