Introduction

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Over the last several decades, educational research in Australia has experienced a number of the so-called turns—linguistic, cultural, postmodern, spatial and, more recently, affective. To turn, in a more general sense, means to consolidate, extend, and often change research directions or trends by reassessing their history and role in particular disciplines. It is a way of problematizing the disciplinary closedness, parochiality, and the dominance of certain paradigms. Any turn in research therefore involves a paradigm shift, contributing to the development of interdisciplinary depth and destabilizing the foundations of disciplinary knowledge. Educational research is one of such fields that rely on the interdisciplinary to promote and sustain a socially critical agenda, generate innovative perspectives on teaching and learning, and productively engage with the changing political environment of schooling and professional practice.

Any turn in educational research therefore can be driven by a need to use new intellectual tools in addressing old questions or extending previous research and casting it in a new light; or turning to a new framework can signal a consolidation of one's political commitment to justice, democracy, equality, and other social projects in and through education. Whatever the reason, the history of 'turns' in educational research has been a response to various forms of Cartesianism—its epistemological and ideological varieties—that have attempted to divide the lived experiences of teaching and learning into binary oppositions between mind and body, cognitive and emotional, abstract and particular, natural and cultural, normal and abnormal, to name just a few, and to reduce the social, relational and cultural to a set of factors that may influence the functioning of the mind. Turns challenge a positive–negative

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value hierarchy in the logic of binarism, whether it is implied or explicitly stated. They signal the rise of political awareness in research, and re-engagement with socially critical projects in education.

This special issue can be situated in the 'affective turn' in education. It responds to the increasing significance of affect, emotions and creativity as the foci of contemporary educational research. The resurgence of interest in these issues is symptomatic of current educational reforms and their impact on how educators should think about, and practise, teaching and what students need to know and how they should learn. It is not to say that the current reforms are radically dissimilar from the previous ones in terms of their general intention to bring about change. What is different, though, is the weight they put on standards, accountability, efficiency, performativity and value-addedness. As a result, the economic, market-driven principles of reforms have subsumed all other dimensions of education, such as its socio-cultural and relational aspects. The turn to affect is driven by a recognition that the economic rationalisation of education is at odds with its emotional and creative dimensions. The turn is registering a change in how education is managed and, indeed, what counts as education today.

Like the other 'turns' in educational research, the affective turn builds upon critical perspectives and consolidates major strands in Marxist theory, cultural studies, sociology of education and feminist theory. It contests the binary logic that has been instrumental in prioritizing mind over body, rational over emotional and positivism over social constructionism. The deconstruction of the binary logic has exposed the workings of political technologies in controlling and rationalising teaching and learning so that teachers and students are obliged to act according to the affective regime of schooling, expressing only certain emotions and disciplining or managing others (Zembylas 2005). For instance, research into 'emotional labour' has denaturalised the regime of rules by refocussing on the experiences and subjectivities of teachers and students (Hargreaves 2004; Kelchtermans 2005; Nias 1999). This research has enabled educational researchers not only to highlight the centrality of affect and emotion in education, but also to show what emotions do, how they are intimately associated with the work of teachers, and the engagement of students in learning as well as with their identity work in various contexts of education (Hargreaves 2005; Linnenbrink 2006).

A focus on affects in education has invited researchers to enter the domain of causality, rather than simply describing how emotions and feelings are displayed from the point of view of either psychological or social processes. The challenge of exploring the role of affects in education lies precisely in the synthesis of these two processes. This is required because affects refer equally to the body and to the mind as well as to the materiality of social and psychological processes (Hardt 2007). In particular, this challenge has been addressed in research into emotionality and educational reforms (Schmidt and Datnow 2005; Van Veen and Slegers 2006). For instance, studies into the impact of educational reforms on the emotional responses of teachers have illustrated that causality cannot be reduced to either the private or the public realm of affects; causality has a bidirectional nature (Hargreaves 2004, 2005). Discourses, and relations of power that they signify, play a key mediating role in joining both sides of causal relationships. The interplay of policy discourses and the 'emotional talk' of teachers is they experience reforms which illuminate both the

power to affect and the power to be affected, resulting in spaces of performance and spaces of resistance, along with the relationship between these two spaces. Blackmore (1996, 1998), for example, stresses the interplay between collective and individual strategies for coping with educational changes, as well as the role of commitment to particular types of social relations and values, in understanding the emotional impact of reforms on teachers. Affects in the work of teachers constitute a relational complexity out of which emotional narratives and, indeed, emotions are subtracted.

Following this anti-dualistic line of thought, this journal issue engages with the realm of affective causality in education by drawing on Vygotsky's work and contemporary Vygotskian approaches. It is widely recognised that Vygotsky's work on emotion, imagination and creativity was influenced by philosophy of Baruch Spinoza. Similar to the Spinozian line of argument, Vygotsky maintained a holistic (monistic) perspective on the role of affects in the intellectual development of people. In doing so, Vygotsky was able to bring together two correspondences—the power of mind to think and the power of body to act. The relationship between the mind and the body is not a direct one, but rather is mediated by a third category. Vygotsky is widely known for his concept of cultural-semiotic mediation as a third category that links the mind (thinking) and the body (acting). He then referred to language, texts, signs and other cultural systems of meaning-making as instrumental in psychological and conceptual development but also, and importantly, in becoming human. What he is less known for is how he conceived the role of affect in understanding relationships between the mind and the body, and between the individual and the social.

Again, informed by Spinoza, Vygotsky was interested in a correspondence between the power to think and act and the power to be affected. *The Psychology of Art* is probably the most important of his works in this regard. In this book he focused on a number of issues, including the aesthetics, history, understanding, perception and psychoanalysis of art and the analysis of literary texts. One of the key ideas in this work for our purposes is art as catharsis. Works of art were perceived by Vygotsky as a social technique of emotions. Readers, for example, do not just perceive and respond to the form and the content of the text but rather they are affected by the very creative process of the author who mobilises or 'assembles' feelings, imagination and semiotic resources to produce affect. Vygotsky observed that the more the form of the artwork dominates its content, the more this content becomes prominent, seductive and affective. Feelings, emotions and passions are constitutive of the content and, yet, they are also transformed in it. In this regard, the reader is not simply 'infected' by emotions in the text, but rather these emotions become elevated to a higher, public level of experiences, thereby opening up new perspectives on the social sphere of being. This kind of emotional metamorphosis is experienced, according to Vygotsky, as a form of dialectical tension between what has been communicated in the text (i.e. its power to affect) and the reader's emotional experience. By perceiving and responding to the work of art, the reader recreates it every time. However, in doing so, the reader experiences counter-emotionality—that is, when the affective unfolding of the text occurs in two opposite directions, and yet these two directions are orientated towards one meeting point. As Vygotsky (1971, p. 232) puts it, 'the reader's feelings of anger, horror,

regret, or grief as they witness the struggle of the plot are transformed into hope, enthusiasm, and happiness at the moment of the protagonist's destruction'. Vygotsky defines the moment of discharging one's emotional contradictions as catharsis. Importantly, this understanding of catharsis captures the social, ethical and political dimensions of action—that is, an increased power to be affected corresponds to an increased power to act.

That is why emotional experience, for Vygotsky (1994, p. 338), is a key in understanding the affect of social environment on the psychological developmental of the child—'the emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] arising from any situation or from any aspect of his environment, determines what kind of influences this situation or this environment will have on the child'. In this regard, intellectual development and learning are social in their nature not only because they occur in a social environment, but because the child experiences this environment emotionally; she experiences first and foremost its affect that, in turn, can increase or decrease her power to act (i.e. affect translates into how one participates in a social and corporeal activity of learning). This explains therefore the emphasis of Vygotsky on the sociality of learning and psychological development in his other works. It is not to say that affect just increases one's individual agency or autonomy—it also increases one's receptivity to the social, more generally, and to others, more specifically. The emotional experience of an individual triggers her imagination and creativity and 'the richer the experience, the richer the act of imagination' (Vygotsky 2004, p. 15). But because any individual experience is always already social, it invites us to respond to others; my emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] increases my power to respond to the experiences of others and, in turn, to co-experience, co-imagine and co-create. Significantly, there is vast ethical-political potential in Vygotsky's understanding of the role of affect and emotional experience in education, which reaches far beyond his existing better-known, more familiar constructs within pedagogical theory, such as the ZPD. This challenges us to reflect on our present educational environments and to explore further the problem of relationship between emotion, thinking and action, as well as between affect, imagination and creativity. Vygotsky posed a research agenda, and this special issue of the *Australian Educational Researcher* is responding to it by addressing some of our current challenges and issues.

Alex Kostogriz in his article on accountability and the affective labour of teachers addresses the impact of standards-based reforms and high-stakes testing on the work of literacy teachers. This article, while recognising the importance of 'emotional labour' in education, uses an alternative in the concept of 'affective labour' to engage with the effects of neoliberal political technologies of rationalisation, standards and performativity measures that are threatening to subsume the everyday work practices and professional lives of teachers. Over the last two decades, the focus on the emotional labour of teachers has enabled researchers to illuminate and problematize the display of socially desired emotions in schooling and work related encounters, and its affect on teachers' alienation, identity work, gender stereotypes, cynicism, moral distress, dissatisfaction and so on. The term 'affective labour', as it is used in this article, enables a critical analysis of changes in the work of teachers and in the production of labour power through schooling. Kostogriz brings the elements of the emotional and the affective labour of teachers in endeavouring to grasp the effects of

standards-based reforms, as well as a possibility of resistance to social pathologies that accountability measures bring to education. By drawing on Marxist sociology and Vygotsky's work, the article argues the importance of understanding the affective labour of teachers as a dialectical relation between its corporeal and rational sides, recognising that teachers' labour is both intellectual and affective/relational activity. Identifying teachers' work as a form of affective labour suggests new political possibilities. This form of labour has an expansive power of ontological freedom that cannot be measured by performance indicators or numbers, and hence cannot be controlled.

Fleer and Peers continue this line of thought in reference to the context of early childhood education and the current emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy outcomes. They argue that this agenda is driven by the 'cognitivisation' of early childhood learning environments at odds with the idea of developing creativity and imagination as the key characteristics of education in early years. The article reports on research into the relationship between children's play and the pedagogical technique of building a collective imaginary situation to cultivate the creativity and conceptual development of children. The article provides ample evidence for the continued use of play as a pedagogical approach for supporting development and learning in the preschool years. It also highlights the important role of the teacher in creating and maintaining imaginary situations that provide a foundation for higher mental functioning. Fleer and Peers see the role of teachers, first, as an interested observer of children's play and, second, as an active participant in children's play who provides conceptual depth to the construction of collective imaginary situations. The article argues that this perspective on the teacher's role broadens pedagogical strategies in children's play, as well as highlighting a dynamic relation between imagination, emotions and cognition. Fleer and Peers argue that this form of pedagogy is instrumental in broadening rather than narrowing the potential of children to develop both their cognition *and* imagination. This article demonstrates that it is possible for educators to resist the current cognitive push for increased literacy and numeracy outcomes, and to reposition play as the key pedagogical practice in supporting the cognitive and imaginative foundations, resulting in later school success.

Next article, written by Russell Cross, focuses on the issue of creativity in language education and, in particular, in the context of content and language integrated learning. Setting the context for arguing the role of creativity in learning languages other than English, Cross traces the origin of why creativity and learning is often perceived separately—that is, the dichotomy between learning and creativity. He argues that the segregation of 'learning' and 'creativity' is due to the heavy emphasis on learning outcomes, leading to a tokenistic perception of 'creativity' as the 'icing' on the cake of real knowledge. This perception continues to be readily visible within the most recent approaches to educational practice and curriculum, including the new Australian Curriculum. Hence, recognising the negative effect of such segregation on teaching and learning, this paper argues the need for a greater appreciation of the emotional as a driver of creativity in learning. The article brings to the fore Vygotsky's concept of emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] to argue its central role in classroom language learning. Cross operates with a non-elitist notion of creativity and

uses, after Luis Holzman, the phrase ‘mundane creativity’ to capture the everyday learning experiences as necessary emotional and creative. The article draws on an empirical analysis of the significance of such creativity within a setting that has no overt focus on ‘teaching creativity’ as such. Yet, by examining how language is used within a content and integrated learning (CLIL) programme to teach Geography through Japanese, the paper reveals the critical place of creativity in promoting higher levels of student engagement as the foundation for developing new skills and knowledge.

The article written by Helen Harper takes us to remote schools in the Northern Territory. Many students in these schools are perceived as at risk of educational failure, and teachers are continuously under pressure to use new pedagogical tools to improve learning outcomes. Harper develops the notion of emotional landscape, drawing on the case study of four remote schools in which the push towards educational innovation and change is a common experience of teachers. This article raises an issue of teachers’ emotional response to mastering and using web-based technological tools to improve literacy. Harper’s article demonstrates the centrality of emotions in teachers’ work when trying to negotiate their sense of responsibility to students and their accountability for closing the gap in students’ educational achievement. In a context where learners are constructed as educationally challenging and problematic, the teachers already know that sociocultural and educational disadvantage cannot be resolved by any new pedagogical tools. Yet, they are committed to mastering new approaches and tools that mediate learning. The article focuses, among other things, on the teacher-tool relationships that present themselves as interplay of developing techno-pedagogical skills and affective responses to taking on new practices. This brings about a mixture of emotions and feelings, including positive ones, such as confidence, and negative ones, such as stress, frustration and cynicism. This study highlights the challenges of implementing pedagogical innovations, particularly in the context of educational disadvantage.

Cripps Clarke and Groves discuss the interplay of the rational, emotional and teacher identity work in professional practice. They focus, in particular, on the interaction between the choices primary teachers make in the use of practical activities in their teaching of science and the purposes (scientific and social) they attribute to these. Importantly, the paper illuminates the role of their emotions, background and beliefs, as well as how their identities as teachers of science are constructed. For teachers of primary school science, as Cripps Clarke and Groves argue, change will not occur through a series of directives about the roles and purposes of practical activities. Rather, the change can only occur effectively if attention is paid to the emotions of teachers and how they perceive and negotiate their identities in pedagogical practice. Effective primary science teachers draw on multiple resources that include a set of beliefs, professional experiences and the classroom community to shape the learning environment. This article provides an explanation why sustained change in primary science education has proven so difficult. It also articulates some implications for pre-service teacher education that, in particular, should harness teachers’ emotional and intellectual commitment to pedagogical practice.

The final article of this issue reports on a self-study undertaken by its author, Verenikina, to better understand the educational practices of scaffolding in pre-service teachers' collaborative group work. The study enabled the researcher to review and refine her understanding of the notion of the ZPD and conceptual scaffolding. Specifically, and somewhat unexpectedly, the study has also revealed the key role of 'emotional scaffolding' that emerged as a major theme in students' interviews. While advancing their knowledge was mentioned as an important outcome of the group discussions with the lecturer, the feeling of confidence that they gained in such discussions was just as important for students. Furthermore, the article highlights that the socio-emotional needs of mature age students are different to those of high school graduates, and this has been initially overlooked by the researcher. The study demonstrated that the application of the researcher's theoretical knowledge of the ZPD to a particular context of teaching required a great deal of self-reflection, discussion and listening to the students. The article argues the importance of paying closer attention to the socio-emotional aspect of collaborative learning in pre-service teacher education.

Together, the contributing authors of this special issue not only infuse Vygotskian scholarship into our understanding of affect and emotion in students' and teachers' experiences in educational settings, but also provide insight into future directions for the field. In doing so, they redress the traditional dichotomy of reason and emotion, presenting the manner in which cognition and emotions are inextricably linked in social activity; specifically, they emphasise the importance of affect in generating and sustaining the sociality of teaching and learning. By drawing on Vygotsky's tradition in educational research and its subsequent development, this special issue places affect in the centre of all intersubjective experiences, arguing that emotions are the driving force of all social activity. It is for this reason that educational research should focus more centrally on the emotional and embodied experiences of teachers and students, rather than opposing them or simply adding emotions to teaching and learning practices so that they become merely a matter of managing emotional states. Emotions in education tell us a lot about conditions in which teachers and students currently find themselves. They show us how social relations in teaching and learning can stay alive, even though the present climate of educational reforms dehumanizes education by putting emphasis on performance data, numbers and rational-calculative ways of acting. The focus on affect, emotion and creativity in educational research also opens up futures, in the way that they involve different orientations to pedagogical practice—orientations to democratic and socially just education. Democracy and justice in education involve affect and emotions, which move the very idea and practice of what and how to teach, relate and live. Being moved by affect is being moved to such forms of affective and emotional labour that open up social and political possibilities in education, in part through the recognition of such labour and its centrality in the life of educators.

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