Curriculum to the Classroom: Investigating the Spatial Practices of Curriculum Implementation in Queensland Schools and its Implications for Teacher Education

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Abstract: Change is something that both pre-service and practising teachers face regularly throughout their professional lives. Curriculum change and consequential implementation is a case in point. This paper investigates the perspectives of a number of school-based stakeholders in regard to the implementation of the C2C materials in Queensland schools and how this has potential consequences for teacher education programs. It shows that often contradictory spaces emerge in regard to curriculum enactment and argues that a 'one size fits all' approach is not the most effective way to implement new curriculum. A transformative third space is offered whereby teachers are accorded with a voice in the way in which implementation occurs; ultimately allowing pre-service teachers to learn important skills required to be effective teachers.

Introduction

Change is something that both pre-service and practising teachers face regularly throughout their professional lives (Fullan, 2001; Lovat & Smith, 2003) whether at the school level or from external influences. It has been noted that education is in a 'constant state of flux' (Stoker, 2000) and the extent to which change occurs is increasingly placing more pressure on educators. Within the past few years in Australia, a national curriculum has been introduced across the country. Previously, each state and territory has been operating, and responsible for, its own curriculum and assessment programs however, the federal government instigated a national education program arguing that a consistent approach to curriculum, assessment, data collection and reporting supports 21st century learning for all Australian students (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, ACARA, 2010). Ironically, it is in the enactment of this curriculum that contradictory spaces emerge in relation to expectations of key stakeholders as the curriculum is implemented in schools.

The implementation of the Australian national curriculum has taken a staggered roll out approach of particular curriculum areas introduced in different phases. Each state and territory's education department is responsible for this implementation and consequently has developed distinct strategies and approaches to the introduction of the new curriculum. In Queensland for example, Education Queensland has developed teaching and learning materials called *Curriculum into the Classroom* or C2C. 2012 was the first year of implementation of these materials. This paper investigates the perspectives of a number of key stakeholders in regard to the implementation of the C2C materials in schools and how this might impact on teacher

education programs in universities. This investigation highlights these perspectives through the lens of spatial theory.

Curriculum Change and Implementation

The introduction of the new Australian Curriculum brings with it many ramifications for all stakeholders involved in its implementation. This includes school administration, teachers, parents, students and those involved in teacher education programs in higher education contexts. While the curriculum is federally funded and developed it is the responsibility of the states to ascertain how to implement it into schools. Some states have announced a delay in implementing the curriculum (Media release, Piccoli, August 2011) while others have embraced the curriculum entirely. Queensland's Education department for example, has developed complete teaching materials called *Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C)* for the initial four curriculum areas of English, Mathematics, Science and History. The C2C materials were encouraged to be used by all state education schools in Queensland and are copyrighted to Education Queensland. This resulted in access being granted only to Education Queensland employees, however recently these have been made available to the public. The expectation that teachers use this material was particularly evident in ongoing publicity and information sessions prior to implementation.

The initial protection of such materials denoted an inherent secrecy and lack of transparency about what schools were teaching to children in the Phase 1 and 2 curriculum areas. Indeed this approach appeared to contradict the new national curriculum's rationale that "centres on improving the quality, equity and transparency of Australia's education system" (p. 5) by allowing for consistent practice across the country. The aim of the Australian Curriculum is to provide:

> "..what all young people should be taught through the specification of curriculum content and the learning expected at points in their schooling through the specification of achievement standards".
> (Retrieved from: http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Curriculum/Overview)

Whenever curriculum change, such as the Australian national curriculum and further the C2C materials, is imposed on people a number of responses are likely to occur (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995). Pinar and Bowers (1992) for example, explain that reproduction and resistance have both been historically linked to curriculum design, practice and implementation. They argue that Willis' work introduced this concept in the 1980s. Further, according to Evans (2000) imposed change "engenders negative job-related attitudes because it reduces or removes aspects of the work that are satisfactory" (p.173). This may not be the case with all those involved in educational contexts however, when choice is taken away, people feel less input and responsibility towards the intended goal. Any reform agenda must account for these relationships between teachers, curriculum and official institutions during implementation. These are highly contested spaces, particularly when a national curriculum is introduced within a State based education system.

Ewing (2010) for example, states that "a teacher's conceptualisation of curriculum…will impact directly on how they decide to implement and structure the curriculum and the learning experiences in their classroom" (p. 40). This means that within one school context each teacher may perceive new curriculum very differently as their prior experiences, preferred pedagogical approaches and philosophy towards their students may vary quite differently. School management may also have differing views about the extent to which recommended approaches such as C2C, should be adhered.

Further, diverse experiences of staff in schools "can make it difficult to make changes quickly or even to conceive of completely new structures and practices" (Ewing, 2010, p. 147).

Similarly, Harris and Marsh (2005) posit the 'competing discourse of curriculum change' where those involved may have "different understandings of, or orientations to, change" (p. 16). This implies that use of language determines the real meaning behind curriculum change and conception. They provide an example of the notion of 'curriculum reform' and how this implies some kind of need for complete curriculum change and power rather than an approach that is inherently collaborative in which existing curriculum processes and structures may be explored for what is working well and what is not.

Historically curriculum change in Australia has been enacted from 'top down' directives, that is, developed by government education departments or authorities that then expect administration and teachers in schools to 'take up' the new approach (Reid, 2005, p. 39). From 2000, Queensland for example, saw a new curriculum in which teachers applied an outcomes approach to teaching and learning. Cooper (2007) clearly highlights the intent and impact of the introduction of this curriculum stating that:

> "Educators [were] left with a sense of being overwhelmed by change. Add the collective of complex, often competing dynamics within the social context of schools and successful implementation of educational change can become very problematic. It becomes obvious that receptivity to change depends on i) what is to be changed, ii) the evidence establishing a need for that change, iii) the process for implementing change, and iv) the support mechanisms for the implementation of change" (Pogrow, 1996; Fullan, 2000 as cited in Cooper, 2007, p. 8).

There is a tendency for teachers to feel confused and unsure about what is expected of them, particularly when the 'top down' approach is taken. Teachers also feel distanced from the development and overall philosophical approach to new curriculum when they have not been involved in this process from the outset and feel that they have little power to influence these official discourses. Similarly, those that have researched the approaches to, and effectiveness of, professional development based on new initiatives have noted that much support provided is a reactive approach and is often not evaluated effectively usually due to high costs, lack of time and fear of lack of skill in implementing programs (Guskey, 1999).

If we are to take Ewing's (2010) notion that curriculum represents multiple stories or storylines then the processes to date in implementing the Australian curriculum fail to take into account competing spaces of institutional and personal beliefs and practices inherent in curriculum change processes. The literature overview identifies that curriculum development and implementation is an extremely complex process. People come to the idea of a new curriculum with varying experiences and perceptions on what it entails. Unless a carefully planned approach to developing, introducing and implementing new curriculum is undertaken then there will be a risk that this will be rushed, reactive and meaningless for teachers. It also could cause unnecessary stress, which in turn impacts on students. As Marsh and Willis (1995) note "making decisions about curriculum, therefore is understood better as an exercise in exploring and understanding alternative possibilities, rather than as an exercise in reaching consensus by excluding alternatives" (p. 4).

Further, these expectations and changes have the potential to impact on higher education contexts; particularly teacher education programs and the practicum component where pre-service teachers have experience in schools. Much work done by university staff in these courses or units focusses on developing understanding of and skills in planning teaching and learning experiences including lesson plans. With the introduction of the Curriculum to the Classroom materials many pre-service teachers were then able to focus more on actual teaching strategies, including behaviour management, rather than spend the majority of their time planning as was previously the case. This therefore has implications for teacher education programs and the content that is usually covered in the practicum component of these programs.

What is evident from the literature is that curriculum enactment can be a transformative process if all those involved have a significant role to play in making decisions about

implementation. To date, there appears to be limited reported discussion between the higher education sector and government in regard to how best to address the introduction of the *Curriculum to the Classroom* materials. A perceived continuing problem is that the political focus of curriculum, that is a government's agenda, may impede real curriculum growth and development despite rhetoric around potential change and transformation (Yates, 2009). As previously stated there are consistent contradictory spaces when we consider implementation of curriculum particularly if a 'one size fits all' approach is taken.

Theorising 'Spaces' in Curriculum Change

"Social geographies involve the study of physical space and human constructions, perceptions and representations of spatiality as contexts for and consequences of human interaction". (Hargreaves, 2002, p. 194)

There have been many theorists who contend that any analysis of discourse and/or discursive practice through spatial and strategic metaphors enables one to view certain occurrences where discourses are transformed in, through, and on the basis of power relations (Foucault, 1980; Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996). Foucault (1977) for example, highlights that the disciplining of bodies creates complex, 'mixed' spaces that are both 'real' in how they govern the disposition of buildings, rooms, furniture; but also 'ideal' as they are projected over the characterisations, assessments and created hierarchies of individuals (p. 148). It makes sense then that such views can be applied to the implementation of curriculum in schools. Curriculum can be seen as a document that has intended purposes usually with philosophical underpinnings, for every school and therefore every child. However, contextual differences imply that not all curriculum is 'realised' in the same way despite key stakeholders holding 'idealised' views on what the curriculum's potential might be.

Lefebvre's theory on historicality, sociality and spatiality which produce perceived, conceived and lived spaces of representation are important to consider here. While curriculum developers and school administration have certain ideas on how a new curriculum might 'look' in the classroom, teachers may see this quite differently. In this sense Foucault's (1977) 'real' and 'ideal' spaces of institutionalised bodies have parallels with Lefebvre's 'perceived' and 'conceived' spaces respectively. As already shown in our discussion above, curriculum change brings with it many concerns and issues, particularly for teachers. What Soja (1996) offers in respect to these spaces of possibility is that there is opportunity for a 'thirdspace' that can act as an open, critical spatial imagination of how things can be different.

Perceived or Real Spaces

Perceived or real spaces can be considered to be the space of daily practices, routines, locations, infrastructure, and relationships that are established and reproduced (Lefebvre, 1991). Also known as 'firstspace' by Soja (1996), it is a space where everyday things and practices are 'perceived' as normal. Lefebvre suggests that this type of spatial practice ensures continuity and some level of cohesion. In schools, 'perceived' space can be signified by what students, staff and community members do, where they do it, who they relate to (or not), and the nature of their established routines and practices. In terms of curriculum implementation or at least change 'perceived' spaces includes what has been done in the past and what has been considered to have been done well. Teachers tend to take certain elements on board but protect what they know works with their students. Therefore the relationship

between teacher and student is viewed as critical in this process for teachers. It is important to understand what constitutes 'firstspace' practices if we want to change space in a strategic way (Sheehy, 2009).

Conceived or Ideal Spaces

'Conceived' spaces are representations of power and ideology, of control and surveillance (Soja, 1996). They are the 'ideal' of how society should be, and thus they influence what happens in 'perceived' everyday space, while at the same time being influenced by such spatial practice (Authors, In press). Foucault (1977) suggests that institutions such as prisons and schools were developed to create discipline and order and useful space to achieve the ideals of a well-structured society that protects its citizens from physical or moral harm. Thus the design of such institutions was deliberate and ordered so that the space itself could discipline docile bodies. Artifacts and architecture laid down in history are elements of this 'conceived' or 'secondspace' (Soja, 1996). Similarly, government policy is instigated to regulate everyday practice to achieve an 'ideal' society. Curriculum development is no different.

Lived or Thirdspace

Lived space is a space to resist, subvert and re-imagine the 'real-and-imagined' spaces (Soja, 1996) of everyday realities and hegemonic ideologies. It offers the potential for space to be made and remade with generative possibilities for critical transformation and civic participation. It is a space for new possibilities and imaginings of how things could be, a space of transgression and symbolism (Lefebvre, 1991). This space is ultimately the space where teachers can make choices or at least become more aware about 'firstspace' and/or 'secondspace' practices and/or ideologies. It enables teachers to see critically what may interrupt or resist their teaching and learning practice.

Sheehy (2009) shows how 'secondspace' can restrict teachers and students. She argues that even if individual teachers attempt to introduce new ideas based on their 'thirdspace' ideologies, unless they can play along with the ideologies of the institutional space and point in history, they have little chance of take-up or success. Ryan (2011) argues that rigorous reflective practice is necessary to negotiate first and secondspaces, and create thirdspaces of possibility for future practice, which are not simply driven by regulatory agendas.

When considering the introduction of new curriculum it is vital that teachers, students and the community are well versed in what this change might entail. If 'alternative possibilities' (Marsh & Willis, 1995) are considered then 'newness' can be embraced rather than resisted.

Research Design
Background

The aim of this project was to investigate the perspective of key school-based stakeholders in regard to the implementation of the *Curriculum into the Classroom* (C2C) materials in selected schools. The project particularly aimed at understanding the views of principals, deputy principals and teachers about the processes involved in the introduction and use of this material. The implementation of new curriculum and associated materials in schools is often a time of

uncertainty and brings with it both positive and negative implications. As such this projects aims to answer the following questions:

1) To what extent are schools implementing C2C?
2) How do teachers and principals mediate the competing spaces of curriculum implementation?
3) What impact has C2C implementation had on teaching and learning at the school?
4) What implications does this have for teacher education programs?

Method and Participants

This project was designed to gather evidence from both teachers and administrative staff, including Deputy Principals and Principals, at four schools about what they perceived to be the main issues associated with the implementation of C2C materials in their schools. The participants were selected as school staff members who were responsible for leading this implementation – either as school leaders or leaders of teaching teams. The study was interested in the ways in which C2C implementation was spoken about in relation to the perceived and conceived practices at the schools, from the perspectives of these insiders and the degree to which lived or thirdspaces disrupted the expectations that these insiders had of this curriculum package. The participants for this phase of the research were one Principal, one deputy Principal and two primary school teachers, all from different schools. Each participant completed two individual interviews, one during the initial implementation of C2C and the other one year later, which were then transcribed and coded according to thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is used as it enables the research to highlight what aspects are seen as important by the participants when describing the phenomenon (Daly, Kellehear & Gliksman, 1997). Subsequent exploration of the data from the perspective of spatial theory allowed the researchers to identify various levels of both perceived and conceived spatial practices by the respondents.

Results

A number of themes were identified from the interview data. Viewing the interviews as 'individual stories' (Ewing, 2010) about the C2C materials and that the implementation of curriculum aligns with a number of 'spaces' of possibility we show how the data presents *conceived* and *perceived* ideals of the different stakeholders. The numbers 1 or 2 in the brackets after each data quote indicate that it is from the interview at the initial implementation stage (1) or one year later (2).

Spatial Practices of Curriculum Implementation

Apparent in the interview data was that depending on the respondent's role in a school, their view about the implementation and expectations associated with the new curriculum materials, and comments varied. Those that were in administration positions (principal or deputy principal) spoke positively about the potential of C2C to raise expectations of students and insisted that the C2C materials were expected to be used by every teacher in their school.

> *The majority of schools are implementing C2C… Generally the message is to adopt and adapt the units of work.* (Principal, 1)

They were in essence 'car sales' people on the new material and felt that the new approach was essential in the development and growth of their schools, particularly in a time of nationalisation of the curriculum. The administrators' views indicated conceived spaces of one-size-fits-all curriculum and distrust in the capacities of teachers to plan varied tasks for diverse

classrooms. In this sense *conceived* or *ideal* spaces associated with the implementation of the C2C materials greatly impacted on the *perceived* spaces. Originally, the *conceived* practices of the administration staff were those of an ideal approach to curriculum in the form of C2C materials, in that teachers must utilise it completely in their teaching practice. The *perceived* or *real* outcome was that the expertise of teachers was undervalued and their flexibility to cater for individual students was undermined. The 'ideal space' of curriculum implementation in these schools initially denied space for those teaching and learning practices that were already proven to be successful in the classroom. Soja's (1996) notion that *conceived* spaces are representations of power and ideology, of control and surveillance have certainly been highlighted here. While the administration of the schools perceived the C2C material as positive and concrete, in reality it served to deprofessionalise teachers (Thomas, 2011) and limit the range of experiences to which their students were exposed, as acknowledged by a principal after a year of implementation.

> There has been a real change in understanding how it is to be used. Initially it was seen as the 'only way' but now it is seen as a 'resource' to help… I am still worried about teachers no longer being curriculum makers. (Principal, 2)

Despite the initial conviction that the administration had about the benefit of the C2C materials one of the teachers showed confusion as to whether or not it should be implemented as written or whether teachers could adapt or change it. The perceived spaces of these teachers is generally to use any curriculum support materials and resources to the extent that they 'fit' the context and are appropriate for their students. In this case, however, conceived spaces of a prescriptive 'ideal' package meant that teachers began to question their potential 'wriggle room' in the interspaces of curriculum interpretation and enactment.

> Someone said they think, they were talking to someone who knows someone, who seemed to think that our school was the pilot school of C2C maybe they were wanting to see how it goes if you're doing it by the book, but nothing has been said. (Teacher, 1)

While the administration in schools embraced the new teaching materials the teachers talked about the fact that since the conception of the C2C materials stress levels increased greatly amongst staff. They felt that the amount of content to be covered in each of the curriculum areas was unachievable, thus their perceived spaces began to disrupt the ideal of C2C.

> Our school is implementing it by the book. We're meant to do everything as it is in the lessons. Even though our Deputy Principal wants us to do it by the book it's not really something that can be done that way and we're going to use it as a resource – follow the program, follow the lesson and the intent of the lesson but just do what we do. (Teacher, 1)

Despite the influence of the *conceived* or *ideal* practices as required by administration and ultimately departmental policy developers, it is clear that *perceived* or *real* spaces can also shape the conceived spaces of curriculum implementation. The ideals of policy development and implementation can underestimate the power of teachers to disrupt those structures with which they disagree or feel unable to accomplish.

> It has been both good and bad I think. As I said before at the beginning of last year there was a lot of pressure put on everyone to implement all of the C2C materials which is exactly what people tried to do. Unfortunately this wasn't successful as it was very stressful and created a lot of strain on teachers particularly. (Principal, 2)

Despite the administration's desire for teachers to use the materials the teachers admitted that they would only approach the implementation of the curriculum in a way that they could manage. In a way this starts to create a *thirdspace* of pragmatic resistance. While the administration had particular expectations on the teachers to use the C2C materials completely – *conceived space* – the teachers only chose to do this in a way that they felt was achievable. On

the surface, teachers were ostensibly implementing C2C, but their lived space was one of covert cover-up as they were fully aware of the conceived spaces of their school management. This covert *thirdspace* practice created a feeling of resentment and secrecy rather than one of positive change and transparency – which is where potentially transformative practice could occur.

The teachers felt that they ultimately were the ones who should decide on what to do and the approach to be taken in regard to the C2C materials as they knew their students better.

> *Some of the other school teachers have said that their students have been getting quite stressed with the assessments, they've had some kids in tears with the amount of work that has to be covered and the amount of assessment that has to be done.* (Teacher, 1)

One of the positive changes that administration saw was that teachers' 'normalised' practice was being challenged and this often resulted in student performance changing for the better. The description of C2C as 'catalyst' and that expectations needed to be raised, suggests that school administrators were actively promoting this 'ideal' of curriculum as a way to shift perceived practices, rather than necessarily expecting teachers to adhere to it strictly.

> *I think it's been really good that the expectations have been raised, and probably it needed to be done, I mean C2C was a great catalyst, and EQ has always been very big on keeping expectations high because once you lower them the kids will only achieve there, so we do a lot of talking about that and we do a lot of goal setting, so I think the fact that C2C has raised the bar has made the teachers raise their own bar, so I think that's quite significant.* (Deputy Principal, 1)

> *I know that my teachers have been surprised, so while they're worried about the expectations of the standard of work, I've had a lot of teachers say they're surprised how high the children are able to achieve.* (Deputy Principal, 1)

> *The C2C is very prescriptive so now I spend less time on planning. It is, however, long and takes a lot of time to do well. Some of the expectations are also higher than what we have done previously so we have had to do a lot of catch up work. (Teacher, 2)*

Spaces of curriculum implementation are complex and often contradictory. As with any change process, different stakeholders wield power to which they have access, denoting the real-and-imagined space (Soja, 1996) that is shaped and re-shaped. In this case, the administrators' views were contradictory to what some teachers described. For example, in some instances, the teachers felt that the content and assessment was "*pitched too high*" and that the majority of teachers and students were struggling to not only get through the work but achieve good results.

> *We're finding with the reports this semester a lot of kids are getting Ds and Es; but I think that's the Australian Curriculum. Maybe that's where they are. I don't know. But it's a bit of a change* (Teacher, 1).
> *It is too lengthy, it takes a long time to go through all resources, it takes too long to do assessment tasks, the multiage 5-7 units are not very well integrated – the teacher still needs to teach different content in some units, to different year levels. (Teacher, 2)*

Aside from these issues teachers were very concerned about the fact that the materials were so explicit about what they had to teach that they had no room to address diversity in the classroom. In this sense the materials contradicted other policy agendas that were being implemented in schools such as differentiation.

> *We've got a lot of kids that might not… a lot of ESL kids, so I don't think it's catering necessarily to them. I mean, we're meant to differentiate, but how can you differentiate when you're told "no, this is what's got to be done"? Where do you go from there?* (Teacher, 1)

Pedagogical practice was also seen to change from more interactive and engaging classrooms to ones where children were working more at their desks.

Teachers are more involved in using the technology required to access and present units of work. A greater reliance on the interactive white board and lap tops by teachers to present lessons. Visual stimulus has increased in classrooms while hands on materials have decreased. I find the curriculum to be far more passive than previously. Walking around classrooms students are sitting and watching more than doing. (Principal, 1)

There is no time for play any more in the early years classrooms. There seems to be more behaviour problems because of it. I think this is because the children have limited opportunities to move in the classroom and are in a teacher-centred room the entire time. I wonder if any schools still have play-based at all? (Teacher, 2)

Contributing to this was the amount of time that teachers were spending in following the 'script' of C2C word for word. Some teachers liked such prescription and support…

The strengths are... it is very prescriptive, less planning is necessary as units are already prepared, lots of resources are available. (Teacher, 2)

However this same teacher acknowledged that the prescription was problematic as they couldn't get through the material required.

I have realised the multi-age science units contain far too much to get through, so I have become more selective about what I choose to teach. (Teacher, 2)

It was noted that since the conception and initial implementation of the C2C materials both the administration and teaching staff acknowledged that it did not necessarily have to be "followed by the book" and it was to be used more as a resource.

Once we realised that we could use it more as a resource and draw on it as a resource then things got a little better. It is still difficult to do all that is expected, um yeah that's what I still find hard about it but the ideas are good. And as I said as long as we are meeting the objectives and outcomes with kids it is all good. (Principal, 2)

The prescriptive *conceived* space of the C2C curriculum implementation materials as 'the ideal' has now been negotiated and renegotiated in the spaces between the real and imagined to create a thirdspace of curriculum enactment. This thirdspace is one where school administrators feel that teachers have been forced to reimagine their perceived practices, and consequently raise the intellectual bar for students. At the same time, teachers feel that they have maintained some aspects of power in the choices they can make about how to use C2C to cater for diverse students and constraints on their time.

Power has been wielded in different ways, but these data show that despite attempts to undermine teachers' professionality with scripted materials, they are not all docile bodies (Foucault, 1977) in the enactment of curriculum.

I suppose initially the introduction of C2C was difficult. Most people felt that they had to implement it exactly how it was written including using all the resources suggested. Now we realise that actually we can just select some of the resources as long as we address the main outcomes as this relates directly to the Australian Curriculum. Seeing it as a resource rather than doing it word for word is much better and the teachers are now feeling a lot less stressed (.2) so am I actually [laughs]. (Principal, 2)

Now that everyone's kind of a little calmer about it all, and I think all the teachers are managing it quite nicely (Deputy Principal, 2).

Discussion and Implications

Curriculum implementation is a complex issue. The participants in this study have experienced curriculum change in Queensland as a result of the implementation of the C2C materials. School staff have shared their perspectives and experiences on changes within their own contexts, highlighting both perceived advantages and disadvantages.

The two school administrators were highly supportive of the C2C materials in their school, positioning the new curriculum as advantageous for Queensland schools. One deputy principal believed it had allowed teachers to reflect on their current practice and pedagogy and reconsider different approaches for achieving outcomes. This view is consistent with Ryan's (2011) findings that reflective practice can enable negotiation between real-and-imagined spaces. The principal also suggested it has raised expectations of what children can achieve, especially regarding the standard of work.

The teachers interviewed suggested that C2C has created more stress in their jobs due to misunderstandings about its implementation and the expectations of the Department and school administration. However, despite the attempts to deprofessionalise teachers, they maintained some power in the implementation of C2C. When curriculum materials are shrouded in secrecy and are ambiguous in their intended use, a negative *thirdspace* is created, whereby teachers use covert forms of resistance, rather than embracing and negotiating change for positive outcomes.

The implications of these findings point to the importance of both teachers and school administrators maintaining some level of power, with opportunities to negotiate the implementation of curriculum. The C2C materials may well include some excellent ideas and resources, however they must be open to critique and flexible adaptation to suit the variety of contexts in which they may be used. There must be space for alternative approaches to 'ideal' curriculum enactment. It is the job of teachers to make informed decisions about curriculum implementation and they must be trusted to mediate the contextual conditions at their school and the expectations of the Australian Curriculum. If curriculum support materials are accessible and are posited as a resource rather than a prescriptive program, they can act as a catalyst for transformative change.

It is also important to note that the implementation has direct implications for teacher education and staff working in the higher education sector; the current authors are a case in point. Many programs in teacher education would, we believe, include components that prepare pre-service teachers in the areas of planning and effective teaching strategies. In fact, many assessment items in teacher education courses expect students to develop lesson and unit plans that draw on appropriate theory and teaching and learning models. However, if students enter their practicum being told that they are not required to do planning or consider the ways in which they teach content (as outlined in the C2C materials) this could potentially impact on the teaching and assessment practices in teacher education programs.

There of course, would be a number of benefits for pre-service teachers, in using the C2C learning activities as this could give them space to focus on other skills such as classroom and behaviour management strategies. However, it could also mean that a strong reliance on the materials could impact on the development of pre-service teachers' planning abilities and capacities. It is suggested therefore that highlighting the spatial practices of curriculum implementation and enactment has the potential to provide graduating teachers with the capacity to analyse curriculum documents and associated support materials to make reflective decisions about adoption of curriculum in ways that best serve the students and their community.

Conclusion

This study has explored the *ideal* or *conceived* spaces as derived through the impact of the 'top-down' implementation of C2C materials by those directly at the coalface of teaching – in the *real* or *perceived* space. It has shown how different opinions and expectations of school administrators and teachers, can lead to the creation of negative *thirdspaces* unless the curriculum materials are open to discussion and adaptation for each context. We have shown how secrecy and prescription of curriculum materials only leads to mistrust and a devaluing of teachers' expertise.

We have also highlighted how the practicum component in teacher education programs will essentially be altered, that is, head in a different trajectory than previously experienced by pre-service teachers. The practicum has historically required pre-service teachers to prepare and plan lesson and unit plans (depending on their own individual program and place in that program). With pre-service teachers now being told that they are to adhere to C2C materials in Queensland schools, direct implications on their planning skills and capacities could be compromised. It could also mean however, that they have more opportunity to focus on management skills – all aspects that need consideration.

There will always be change in education and specifically in curriculum as it reflects our changing society. Any curriculum is partial but it is through the reflective implementation of curriculum that teachers can ensure that the needs of their students, their school and their communities are being met. Through negotiation, a potentially transformative *thirdspace* can not only raise expectations of students and teachers, but can also accord teachers the professional trust they deserve.

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