There is growing interest in the professional development of teacher educators as the demands, expectations, and requirements of teacher education increasingly come under scrutiny. The manner in which teacher educators learn to traverse their world of work in the development of their knowledge, skills, and ability is important. Provocatively, the demands and expectations on teacher education can be viewed as myths. Addressing the myths can lead to a better understanding of what it might mean to professionally develop as a teacher educator and inform what it means to develop scholarship in teaching and teacher education.¹

Introduction

The work of teacher education consistently attracts attention and not necessarily for the right reasons, as a consequence of the demands and expectations placed on it by the many interested stakeholders (e.g., policy makers, education bureaucrats, politicians, teachers, schools, principals, etc.). In so doing, many of the ‘teaching associated stakeholders’ find it easier to ascribe some of the challenges inherent in their sector to ‘issues’ with teacher education. In that way, the implicit expectation is that a reason for the issues they face requires a teacher education solution which would then resolve their current concern(s) or alternatively, shift responsibility for the situation to teacher education (e.g., quality of beginning teachers, teacher supply, lack of specific curriculum expertise, etc.).

This paper adopts the view that there are a number of myths² that encapsulate many of the common (and recurring) issues ascribed to teacher education. In understanding the nature of those myths, the work of teacher education and the expertise of teacher educators themselves comes into sharp focus; responding to them offers insights into the demands teacher educators face in developing as scholars of teaching teaching.

The myths are:

1. Teaching looks easy.
2. Teacher education is just teaching in a different context.
3. Theory is only in the ivory tower, practice is only in the swampy lowlands.
4. The ‘practicum’ is the only place where you learn to teach.
5. The job of teacher education is to produce ‘classroom ready’ teachers.

Each of the myths is explored in detail on the following pages.

¹ Invited by the editors, John Loughran has turned his keynote, held at the Conference for Teacher Educators in Arnhem - the Netherlands March 2015 into words.

² A myth can be defined as a legend or traditional story usually lacking discernible evidence or basis of facts and as such is a made-up story to explain natural phenomena.
Myth 1
Teaching looks easy

Despite all that we know about teaching and learning, 'telling as teaching' and 'listening as learning' still pervades public perceptions of practice. It is not difficult to see why this situation persist:

While teaching is definitely not easy, every member of a society who attends school is inadvertently and unintentionally taught several things about teaching:

1. Teaching is relatively easy
2. Teaching involves a great deal of talk by the teacher.
3. Management of students has nothing to do with how they are being taught.

Schools must ensure that children meet standards, but how schools operate should be the same as one's own schooling; innovation and change are too risky. (Russell, 2007b, p. 32)

So although to many it may look as though teaching is easy, such a perception is really borne through casual observation that involves seeing teaching as doing. As a consequence, it is far too easy to assume that a teaching routine is all that is needed to do teaching because the knowledge, skills and ability that underpin and shape that doing, are neither seen, nor understood, by those who are not intimately familiar with what teaching truly entails. Further to this, although a routine may be founded on a skill base, expertise is much more than skills alone and it is expertise in teaching that is crucial to enhancing student learning. I would argue that such expertise requires an ability to frame practice - expertise is not just having a range of 'activities that work' (Appleton, 2002) on hand, it demands much more.

As explained in detail elsewhere (see, Loughran, 2010), pedagogical expertise is evident when teachers frame their practice in terms of the reasons that underpin their actions. For example framing practice drawn on pedagogical purposes can lead to the development of procedures that link teaching and learning in powerful ways and therefore demonstrate the importance and value of such things as: 1) prior knowledge; 2) processing; 3) linking; 4) translation; 5) synthesis; and, 6) metacognition. There are of course many ways that practice might be framed. What is important here is not a search for, or validation of, the 'correct model' of framing, rather the point is that practice is framed - in contrast to practice simply being seen as the application of an activity or idea pulled out of a 'bag of tricks' in order to break up the normal (perhaps staid or monotonous) delivery routine. Framing is about developing purpose, deep engagement in learning and meaningful pedagogy in order to ensure that teaching and learning are interlinked and responsive to one another. If that is the case for teaching, then clearly what it means to be a teacher educator (an expert teacher of teachers) is inevitably a challenging and demanding role.

Becoming a teacher educator

As the literature makes abundantly clear, becoming a teacher educator requires more than is often immediately apparent (Dinkleman, Margolis, & Sikkenga, 2006a, 2006b; Mueller, 2003; Ritter, 2007). Coming to understand what it means to be a teacher educator can therefore be perplexing as Brandenburg (2008) noted:
My professional uneasiness continued. Clearly it became evident that I was required to be more than a classroom teacher, although at that point, I was not quite sure what the more meant. (p. 5)

There is a dramatic shift in the way teacher educators conceptualize their practice when the 'more', as Brandenburg highlighted, involves a new understanding of what teaching about teaching really involves. However, that realization can be both challenging and far from straightforward.

Teacher educators are criticised for, and often critical of, being left on their own, but they almost have to be left on their own to construct their own professional knowledge of practice. At the same time, this does not mean that every teacher educator needs to 'start from scratch', but it does require them to transform their perspectives.” (Berry, 2013, p. 19)

It is in understanding what it means to 'become' a teacher educator and the difference between the needs, demands, expectations and outcomes of that work compared to that of school teaching that the second myth emerges.

**Myth 2**  
**Teacher education is just teaching in a different context**  
As the response to the first myth suggests, telling as teaching and listening as learning does not suffice. It is only when teaching is understood as problematic that the complex nature of practice is genuinely uncovered and available for serious scrutiny and critique. Clearly then, if teaching is understood as complex business, teaching teaching must be at least as complex. The notion of a pedagogy of teacher education (Crowe & Berry, 2007; Heaton & Lampert, 1993; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Loughran, 2006; Ritter, 2007) is a beginning point for grasping that complexity.

**A pedagogy of teacher education**  
A pedagogy of teacher education is about thoughtfully engaging with practice beyond the technical; it is about using the cauldron of practice to expose pedagogy (especially one's own) to scrutiny. In so doing, collaborative inquiry into the shared teaching and learning experiences of teacher education practices can begin to bring to the surface the sophisticated thinking, decision making and pedagogical reasoning that underpin pedagogical expertise so that it might not only be recognized, but also be purposefully developed. The result being the creation of conditions for the development of informed professionals who better understand, and are able to articulate, the complex and sophisticated business of teaching.

In developing a pedagogy of teacher education, teacher educators need to: reposition the attention of students of teaching from the visible performance of teachers' work to the invisible work that supports it; resist the temptation to give students all the answers so that they learn to think and act in the face of uncertainty; and, create shared spaces for the exploration and resolution of difficult emotions without judgement (Forgasz, 2013).

Learning to teach is neither a passive activity nor about accommodating a routine or developing a script - and that view needs to be upfront and explicit in the ways in which teacher educators conceptualize and enact their practice. Therefore, without doubt, learning about
the learning of teaching requires thoughtful, focused and meaningful development in the work and practices of teacher educators.

Put simply, a pedagogy of teacher education encompasses the knowledge and practice of teaching and learning about teaching (Olmstead, 2007; Russell, 2007a) and reinforces the notion that teaching as a discipline matters in moving beyond simplistic views of teaching and superficial views of teacher education. One aspect of seeing into the nature of a pedagogy of teacher education is interwoven with the development of a teacher educator's identity; all of which highlights that teacher education is far from 'just being a teacher in a different context'.

Teacher educator identity

There are many things that influence the development of a teacher educator's identity. One way of thinking about how that identity is shaped through a consideration of how the work is conceptualized (For example, What is expected in the role?, How is the role performed?, How are knowledge and practice of teaching understood and portrayed through the role? See for example, Boyd & Harris, 2011; Bullough, 2005). In an extensive study into teacher educators' identity, Davey (2013) highlighted the shift towards the 'academization' of teacher education. As a consequence, just as in any other field of academic endeavor, she made clear how the need to know and understand the underlying knowledge base that informs practice must be explicit and strong in a teacher educator's work. It is partly for this reason, and the demands that accompany the translation of those ideas into the teaching of teaching, that the transition to being a teacher educator - and hence doing much more than simply being a teacher in a different context - can be so difficult.

Murray & Male (2005) suggested that it takes (at least) three years to transition into being a teacher educator. There is a natural sense of loss in moving from a being leader in one field (school teaching) to a novice in another (tertiary education). Obviously, experiences of a change in the nature of the teaching role impact not only what is involved in teaching in teacher education, but also how that feels and subsequently shapes identity formation.

Accompanying the development of an identity as a teacher educator, and deeply embedded in the importance of being able to make explicit what a pedagogy of teacher education looks like - how it is formed and informed - is also the contextual shift in the work environment. Sadly, although the work of teacher education is complex, teacher education itself appears to suffer low status in the academia.

It seems hard to understand how it can be that the very work of building and supporting the teaching profession (through teacher education) is somehow seen as the beginning of an education academic career, rather than the peak of that academic career. Perhaps it has to do with how teaching is valued in society and how that impacts how teacher education is viewed in academia. If teaching is undervalued, then teacher education is also undervalued. Hence the implicit view that teacher education may be a starting point for an academic career in education. Typically in Faculties of Education, there appears to be an odd perception that moving away from teacher education involves moving up to more prized roles. These issues impact what it means to be a teacher educator and have a direct influence on how the role and identity interact to shape expectations of practice.
I argue that by purposefully developing as a teacher education scholar, the contradictions and tensions in the role and the identity can be confronted. In so doing, the second myth is immediately addressed. The next challenge then is to ensure that the third myth does not (through inattention or a search for 'something better') become the reality. Scholarship and practice should not exist in isolation from one another. Scholarship in teacher education is about theory and practice in harmony; not in tension.

**Myth 3**

**Theory is only in the ivory tower; practice is only in the swampy lowlands**

Donald Schön (1983, 1987) rekindled interest in reflection and started a new wave of research in the field through the power of his ideas around reflection-on, and reflection-in, practice. Through his work the importance of knowledge of practice and the ways in which the ability to 'frame and reframe' situations as crucial to the development of knowledge, understanding and expertise in teaching took on new meaning. In many ways, his work offered a new way of reconceptualising the oft' bemoaned theory-practice gap (Bullough, 1997; Cabaroglu, 2014; Gore & Gitlin, 2004; Kessels & Korthagen, 2001) because of the way in which he saw each as responsive and dependent on one another; rather than in opposition.

Just as there is a crucial symbiotic relationship between teaching and learning which lies at the heart of the real meaning (and intention) of pedagogy, so too the same exists (or should exist) with theory and practice. That relationship could be stated as: Practice informs Theory informs Practice. When viewed that way, the perception of an ivory tower and the swampy lowlands begins to diminish - and that is a good thing when understood in relation to teacher education. Unfortunately, it can be too easy to create a situation where theory and practice are competitors in teacher education when in reality, productive development in teaching and learning about teaching is meaningful when they are responsive to, and invested in, each other. Teacher education can therefore be used as a context for reconciliation of the two, or an excuse to maintain different, distant and isolated world views of theory and practice. Such reconciliation begins with the ways in which the curriculum is organised and understood.

**Negotiating the curriculum and change**

The interplay between theory and practice should be evident in the curriculum of teacher education. However, in considering how teacher education is structured and organised, it seems reasonable to question whether or not there is (or should there be), a teacher education curriculum - or is it that each program is idiosyncratic and loosely structured around the expectations drawn of theory and practice as separate and distinct entities? How teacher educators challenge the ways in which the curriculum is constructed is key to bridging theory and practice. Therefore, yet again, what it means to be a teacher educator is important in shaping the nature of the programs for which they are responsible for developing and delivering (Swennen & van der Klink, 2009).

As a sweeping generalisation, it could be asserted that there is a tension in the fact that teacher educators may well be experienced practitioners, but their lack of academic experience (or perhaps more pointedly, their perceived standing in academia) can make it difficult for them to have a 'voice' in the academy; especially when it comes to challenging existing
curricular conventions. Hence, the need to be able to negotiate the interplay between the many conflicting and sometimes contradictory positions in academia means that educational change can be very difficult to manage. Therefore, what emerges may actually be a set of compromises between theory and practice that become increasingly evident in the curriculum as opposed to a holistic and integrated approach to teaching and learning about teaching as a coherent and conceptually strong construct.

Teacher education is complex work involving curriculum, pedagogy and research, yet most teacher educators are provided with little professional development support or mentoring in most teacher education programs … we are expected to attend to, and experiment with, clinical aspects of practice as teacher educators in order to develop into skilled practitioners … At the same time, the academy expects teacher educators to pursue rigorous programs of research … While most teacher educators begin with a deep commitment to effective teaching and pedagogical reform, the culture of education colleges and the promotion criteria and other reward systems within universities privileges scholarship over clinical practice. (Gallagher, Griffin, Parker, Kitchen, & Figg, 2011, p. 880)

The challenge is clear. In developing a teacher education curriculum, imposing a theory-practice gap should not become an excuse to divide knowledge and practice. Despite the different needs and expectations of the worlds of academia and school, theory and practice exist and thrive in both, so the creation of an artificial divide is counter-productive to developing deep conceptual roots in the teaching and learning of teaching. Confronting myth 3 is then a portend to myth 4.

Myth 4
The 'practicum' is the only place where you learn to teach

Students of teaching often see the 'practicum' (school teaching experience) as the most valuable aspect of their teacher education program (Beck, Freese, & Kosnick, 2004; Clarke, 1995; Olmstead, 2007; Ure, Gough, & Newton, 2009).

However, that is often as a consequence of the practicum being viewed as the only site in which teaching is practised. Seeing beyond the 'practicum' to the notion of a more holistic Professional Experience is a conceptual, practical and organisation shift that matters in challenging myth 4; a shift that requires:

- Genuine partnerships that build on the opportunities available through the different educational environments.
- Challenging the status quo of practice teaching.
- Support in learning about teaching through risk-taking.
- Formative assessment occurring well in advance of summative judgment.
- Creating conditions for learning about teaching that are educative and meaningful.

In order to facilitate that shift, teacher education programs should be based on principles that direct their activities. Working from principles allows context to shape curriculum and for learning about teaching to be embedded in professional experience.
Building up from principles

If teacher education is built up from foundation principles then there is more likelihood that professional experience can become the centre-piece of a program and appropriately mediate the demands, expectations and realities of what it means to learn about becoming a teacher and what teaching more fully entails beyond the notion of teaching as doing. Korthagen et al. (2006) developed a set of fundamental principles for teacher education through a comparative analysis of three different programs internationally and concluded that learning about teaching:

- involves continuously conflicting and competing demands;
- requires a view of knowledge as a subject to be created rather than as a created subject;
- requires a shift in focus from the curriculum to the learner;
- is enhanced through (student) teacher research;
- requires an emphasis on those learning to teach working closely with their peers;
- requires meaningful relationships between schools, universities and student teachers; and,
- is enhanced when the teaching and learning approaches advocated in the program are modelled by the teacher educators in their own practice.

Clearly, if principles of the form briefly outlined above are used to guide the development of a teacher education curriculum, then it is more likely than not that each of the preceding myths are able to be appropriately mediated. However, such principles require a holistic response in terms of the curriculum, the teaching of teaching, and the learning of teaching. In so doing, professional experience might become a vehicle for bringing together these important elements in both the university and school settings and transcend the traditional practicum model of a student of teaching being observed and evaluated in their practice in ways that can simply lead to socialisation (Zeichner & Gore, 1990), or enculturation, into teaching. Pushing professional experience to become central to learning about teaching is enhanced through an inquiry-stance; and that is something that can be modelled by research informed teacher educators.

Research informed teacher educators

Cochran-Smith (2005) offered a comprehensive overview of that which she considered important in being a research informed teacher educator. Beyond the need to know "how to read, evaluate, critique, and use … research in their own work" she also suggested that there was a need "to be able to interpret new research studies by locating them within a larger discourse that is informed by multiple historical, empirical, and epistemological perspectives" (p. 224). She then pushed further stating that also evident should be an expertise in researching "their own practices and programs … self examination and interrogation of the biographical bases of behaviour and beliefs … [and the ability to] conduct empirical research on practice in order to determine what the outcomes of teacher preparation courses and field experiences are for prospective teachers' own learning, for their professional performances in schools and classrooms, and for their pupils' learning" (p. 224).

Enacting a pedagogy of teacher education means that research informed teacher educators similarly explicate how that learning impacts their practice which serves to model how such an inquiry stance shapes their approach to professional experience, thus encouraging a similar approach in their students of teaching. That also means that for students of teaching, simply being viewed as needing to be ‘classroom ready’ actually diminishes the full comple-
The demands, challenges and expectations of teacher education

Myth 5
The job of teacher education is to produce ‘classroom ready’ teachers

It is not surprising that from a Principal's perspective, there is a natural inclination to want 'classroom ready' graduates. The more able a beginning teacher is at making the transition into teaching the less issues and concerns there are likely to be in relation to the ongoing organisation and running of a school. However, as is the case with the preceding myths, the idealised situation is often based on a set of expectations and/or assumptions that, although at first glance may appear reasonable, on closer examination take the reality of a complex situation and attempt to respond with a simple solution.

Being classroom ready is often conflated with familiarisation and confidence with, and the ability to master, the requirements of a given curriculum. Further to that, observable competence in classroom management is often seen as synonymous with being a good teacher without considering Russell's earlier point about the links between teaching, learning and student behaviour (see myth 1). Both of these issues (curriculum and classroom management) are very different when being negotiated on an ongoing basis in full time employment rather than that which is more common during the more sporadic and/or constrained episodes experienced during teacher preparation.

Importantly, in considering what it might mean to be classroom ready, I would argue that the conditions created to support the transition into the profession are at least as important as the nature of the teacher education program from which a graduate emerges. Learning to teach is not complete at the end of a teacher preparation program and does not cease at graduation (as Northfield and Gunstone (1997) noted, teacher preparation by definition is incomplete).

Such things as mentoring, support, collaboration, reflection, evaluation and researching practice shape and inform the nature of the beginning teaching experience, expectations and actions; they also offer a window into the type of working environment to which a beginning teacher embarks.

Teacher education can (and should) establish in the mind of students of teaching the importance and value of striving to develop as professionals. Therefore, the extent to which the conditions for professional learning and career development established through teacher education can be quantified across the diversity of workplace settings that exist in school contexts is not possible. Clearly then, responsibility for beginning teaching extends well beyond preparation; expectations for professional growth must be inherent in a workplace situation.

It seems fair to assert that teacher education should establish an expectation in students of teaching about the nature of professional learning and act as a vision for growth and ongoing career development. Thus, in many ways, understanding expertise in teaching as comprising much more than 'mastering' teaching is important in creating a vision of professional learning that goes beyond the acquisition of skills and classroom routines. The importance of 'quality student learning' as the driver for the development of teaching expertise demands that teacher educa-
tion and school workplace conditions make explicit that the transition into teaching is a beginning point for such thinking about, and practices as, an emerging professional. It may well be that setting such expectations is as much about the ways in which teacher educators and teachers alike are seen to be well informed about their practice; self-study is one mechanism that can be valuable in reinforcing that endeavour.

Self-study of teaching and teacher education practices

Inquiring into one’s own practice creates opportunities to develop deeper understandings of, and actions in, teaching and learning about teaching. The manner in which teacher educators’ knowledge and practice is modelled for students of teaching should offer a vision for how growth and development in teaching can progress throughout a career; the same applies in teaching through such things as action research and teacher research (see for example, Berry & Milroy, 2002; Clarke & Erickson, 2003; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1990; 1991, teacher research is synonymous with self-study in a school context, mirroring that of self-study in a teacher education context).

Collaborative inquiry through self-study/teacher research can offer new opportunities for learning about teaching and learning and catalyse a change in conceptions and practices of teaching from a somewhat isolated and individual affair to a more collaborative and shared adventure. In so doing, self-study as a clear and explicit form of professional learning also illustrates why the notion of classroom ready can be somewhat limiting in relation to what it means to develop as serious, well informed professional pedagogue. Thus, myth 5 can be seen as a naïve perspective on the expectations of teacher education and a crude reinforcement of myth 1 which is then a prescient reminder of the value of tackling, rather than accepting, explanations of issues, challenges and concerns as myths in the first place.

Conclusion: Tackling the myths

This paper has argued that one way of conceptualizing some of the demands, challenges and expectations of teacher education is by recasting them as myths to be ‘busted’. In so doing, it makes it possible to see how the myth as a story to explain a particular phenomenon or situation can inhibit understanding of the situation and therefore place limits on change, or actively discourage alternative conceptions. As the extensive research on reflection combined with the centrality of reflection to teaching illustrate, the ability to frame and reframe situations (Schön, 1983, 1987) is crucial to developing productive, thoughtful and informed responses to situations in the search for meaningful change.

The five myths offered in this paper can be summarized as:

- Myth 1: Teaching is easy
- Myth 2: Teacher education is about picking up the tips and tricks of teaching
- Myth 3: Theory and practice do not meet in teacher education
- Myth 4: You can only learn to teach in school
- Myth 5: Teacher education is all about being ‘classroom ready’
These myths were constructed in an attempt to ‘push back’ against some of the stereotypical responses to the challenges, demands and expectations that teaching and teacher education traditionally confront. In framing this paper through the notion of myths, I trust that it has helped to create new ways of thinking about the knowledge, skills and abilities that underpin expertise in teaching and teacher education and offers new possibilities for that work so that it might be more highly valued.

References


