

# STUDENTS RESEARCHING TEACHERS' PRACTICE: LINES OF FLIGHT AND TEMPORARY ASSEMBLAGE CONVERSIONS IN AND THROUGH A STUDENTS-AS-CO-RESEARCHERS EVENT

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## Abstract

Observers of teachers' practice in their classrooms have typically been adults: academic researchers analysing professional practice, school executive members assessing teacher quality and colleagues engaged in professional development and school reform initiatives. This paper discusses observations of teachers' practice from a different vantage point: students. In 2011, two Year 9 students observed a teacher in her classroom. This student research event was part of a broader four-year Students-as-Co-Researchers initiative investigating teaching and learning in a low socio-economic high school receiving targeted funding. In 2013, these students were invited to remember and re-construct the 2011 research event in various configurations. This paper examines the affective flows at work in re-positioning students and teachers using the concepts of the "assemblage" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/ 1987), subjectivity as "lines" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977) and "rhizoanalysis" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/ 1987). It is argued that lines of flight - ruptures in thought and experimentation in practice - escaped in and through the 2011 research event and the 2013 research assemblages for both the students, the teacher and the researcher. Alternative ways of speaking, relating, teaching, learning and becoming prompted by these encounters in the classroom, the staffroom and the school are considered for their potential to convert the "education assemblage" (Youdell, 2011, p. 137).

## Introduction

Observers of teachers' practice in their classrooms have typically been adults: academic researchers analysing professional practice, school executive members assessing teacher quality and colleagues engaged in professional development and school reform initiatives. The observed teacher has either been directly involved in the planning, observation and evaluation process, as in lesson study (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999) or other forms of collaborative research (for example, Hayes, Johnston, & King, 2006; Munns, Arthur, Hertzberg, Sawyer, & Zammit, 2012), or the teacher has agreed to being observed by a senior colleague or an external researcher.

This paper discusses observations of a teacher from a different vantage point: two Year 9 students' observations of a teacher in the context of a broader four-year Students as Co-researchers initiative. Involving students as co-researchers in school communities is a key mode of student participation in school decision-making (Cook-Sather, 2002a; Fielding, 2004; Groundwater-Smith, 2007).

## The context of the research

The 2013 research discussed in this paper is a segment of a broader participatory ethnography of student participation in school reform at an Australian comprehensive co-educational high school facing challenging circumstances. This 2013 study explores students', teachers' and parents'/caregivers' constructions of the involvement of students as co-researchers in the school's reform

process funded by the National Partnerships for Low Socio-Economic Schools<sup>i</sup> (2010-2013). Since 2010, a representative group of approximately twenty students from Year 9 (and a cross-age group in 2013) has been apprenticed as co-researchers at the beginning of the year for a year-long “collaborative inquiry” (Bragg and Fielding, 2005, p.205) researching student and teacher perceptions of the reforms<sup>ii</sup> in teaching and learning needed to re-construct the school as a learning community. The rationale for the Students-as-Co-Researchers initiative and the process of recruitment, training, student-led research, analysis and dissemination have been detailed by Mayes and Groundwater-Smith (Mayes & Groundwater-Smith, 2010, 2011, forthcoming).

In this paper, I focus on one co-research event from 2011, as discussed by two students and one teacher in 2013. In the second year of the co-research (2011), as part of an inquiry into ‘*The teachers I’d like,*’ the two students, Onetwothree and Sarah<sup>iii</sup> (along with two other students) chose an ‘effective’<sup>iv</sup> teacher and formally sought permission from the teacher to observe a lesson. I focus on the recounts of Onetwothree and Sarah of this experience, although it must be acknowledged that the other two students involved in this lesson observation might give different accounts. In 2011, the four students devised a research question, decided on how they would collect data and designed interview protocols, observed a lesson, interviewed students from the lesson and the teacher, and then provided the teacher with feedback (cf. the approach to pre-service teacher education at Bryn Mawr/ Haverford Education Program ‘Teaching and Learning Together’, described in Cook-Sather, 2002b, 2006). Later in the year, the findings from all the lesson observations were analysed and presented in generalised form to the teachers at a staff meeting. Two years after the observation, Onetwothree and Sarah, and the observed teacher (Miss Wood) participated in a focus group and interview respectively about their experiences of this student co-research.

Below, an outline of the key concepts of Gilles Deleuze (in collaboration with Claire Parnet and Felix Guattari) that I am ‘thinking with’ in this paper is followed by a description of the research method used in the 2013 research assemblages. The 2011 research event will then be ‘re-eventalised’ in a recount collectively composed by Onetwothree, Sarah, Miss Wood and I. This re-eventalisation (Fraser, 2006, p. 130) will be followed by an exploration of the students’ discussions of this event in a focus group, and Miss Wood’s discussion of the event in an interview in 2013. In the final section of the paper, I explore two lines of flight that escaped during the 2013 research assemblages that raise “unknown, not foreseeable” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 125) questions, practices and knowledge and suggest “assemblage conversions” (Youdell, 2011, p. 50) that might be possible in their slip-stream.

## Theoretical frame

I view the Students as Co-Researcher mode, the research event of the students’ observation of Miss Wood’s classroom, and the 2013 research encounters exploring the 2011 event through Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the “assemblage” (1980/ 1987). Assemblage, the English translation for the French word *agencement*, is a concept describing a conglomerate of “unexpected, disparate and productive connections that create new ways of thinking and living” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 76). Individuals, groups, situations, societies are constituted and re-constituted in dynamically shifting assemblages where heterogeneous elements inter-relate. Assemblages may include human and non-human elements: individuals, texts or objects and shift and change with the introduction of new elements. Assemblages are structures that also allow for the processes of “change, resistance, agency and the event: that is, the irruption of the unexpected or unpredictable” (Venn, 2006, p. 107). The shifting assemblage of individuals in a Students-as-Co-Researchers event may differ to traditional classroom assemblages. Where traditional classroom assemblages may privilege the authority of the teacher in an assemblage of teacher-bloc of students, in a Students-as-Co-Researchers event, the assemblage may look more like: student-teacher-student. In this second assemblage, individual students might stand face-to-face in relation to the teacher, speaking *before* the ‘other.’ Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* (1994/2009), as part of a critique of human rights, say, “We are not responsible for [pour] the victims but responsible before [devant] them” (p.108)<sup>v</sup>. In changing the

preposition from *pour* to *devant*, they argue that one is “responsible before others, facing them, and in relation to them” (Gilson, 2011, p. 79). One is *among* and *within* the singularities of a multiplicity as one speaks *before* another, connected in an assemblage that demands an engagement with others. In speaking *before* the other, one is responsible “because one is in the midst of, linked to, and becoming” in connection with the other (Gilson, 2011, pp. 79-80).

There is “a multiplicity of dimensions, of lines and directions in the heart of an assemblage” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 100). In *Dialogues II* (2006/ 1977), Deleuze and Parnet describe three types of lines that make up the assemblage of individuals or groups: the line of rigid segmentarity, the molecular line, and the line of flight. The line of “rigid segmentarity” is linear, classificatory, hierarchical, “cut[ting] us up in all senses” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 93). The school system operates along segmentary lines: teacher – student; successful – failing (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 93). The second type of lines, molecular lines, are “much more supple” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 93) than segmentary lines: “They trace out little modifications, they make detours, they sketch out rises and falls” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 93). Students-as-co-researcher initiatives could be argued to be molecular lines – cracking the segmentary lines of traditional school structures, whilst still remaining close in relationship. Lines of flight are the third type of line, where a rupture breaks with the segmentary or molecular line. They function to experiment, to deterritorialise, to produce new assemblages. These lines of flight may be productive or destructive, and must be analysed for what they “enable or effect in specific space/time configurations” (Ringrose, 2011, p. 603, emphasis her's). While distinct, these three lines are “tangled”, “caught up in one another” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 94).

The 2011 lesson observation is viewed as an ‘event’ in Deleuze’s sense of the word (2009/1969). Events are moments that create ruptures, create lines in unforeseen directions, engendering changes in the subject (Masny, 2013, p. 341). An event is “actualised in diverse manners at once” (Deleuze, 2009/ 1969, p. 116), simultaneously “everywhere in these bodies and independent of these bodies” (Bryant, 2011, p. 33). An event is not necessarily bound to a particular space and time, “but may be experienced whenever it is actualised anew”, retaining “an openness to re-inventions (or re-eventualisations)” (Fraser, 2006, p. 130).

Events are constituted of entangled lines and affective flows. For Deleuze, ‘affect’ can be understood as bodily sensation, distinguished from ‘emotions’<sup>vi</sup> which are the labelling of these sensations in discourse (Youdell, 2011, p. 48). Affective flows are collaboratively constructed (Boler, 1999, p. 6), in perpetual circulation rather than located in the interior self (Ahmed, 2004, p. 8) but also shot through with relations of power (Ringrose, 2011, p. 602). A body can be understood in terms of its capacities for affecting and being affected (Deleuze, 1988, p. 19); affect is the materiality of change in relation to an experience or encounter (Hickey-Moody, 2009, p. 273). Indeed, an act can be considered to be “bad whenever it directly decomposes a relation, whereas it is good whenever it directly compounds its relation with other relations” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 35), in affective assemblages that are life affirming. Assemblages, lines, events and affect are concepts tied up with one another in Deleuzian thinking.

## Research method

I view the 2011 student research event and the 2013 research activities with students and teachers as assemblages. In 2011, an assemblage was formed of Onetwothree-Sarah-two other students-Miss Wood-Eve Mayes-bloc of students, contrasting to the traditional classroom assemblage of teacher-bloc of students. In 2013, three separate assemblages were created: a focus group with Onetwothree-Sarah-third student-Eve Mayes; an interview with Miss Wood-Eve Mayes- excerpt from student focus group transcript; and a meeting with Onetwothree-Sarah-Miss Wood-Eve Mayes to construct a collective account of the 2011 research event. We spoke and I collectively pooled our memories of the 2011 research event on a Word document viewed by all, collectively negotiating the wording of the account for the assemblage of this research paper. This co-writing assemblage was inspired by

Deleuze and Guattari's collaborative writing, and their admission of the complexity of this process since "each of us was several" (1980/ 1987, p. 1), as well as other collaborative writing projects influenced by Deleuze (Sellers & Gough, 2010; Wyatt, Gale, Gannon, & Davies, 2011). Each element of an assemblage fundamentally shifts its constitution and its effects. My subjectivity, as former teacher, colleague and facilitator of the students as co-researchers initiative, is "folded" (Deleuze, 1988/ 1993; cf. St. Pierre, 1997, p. 177) into the accounts of self of Onetwothree, Sarah and Miss Wood, overlapping and entwined in our accounts. "Spiral[s] of memory" (Cole, 2011, p. 61) were constructed in these research assemblages. In this paper, I present the 2013 research in a signifying assemblage (a paper with an introduction-context-theoretical approach-research method-re-eventualisation-data analysis-conclusion) (Masny, 2013, p. 342).

I engaged in an individual and collective process of "rhizoanalysis" with Onetwothree, Sarah and Miss Wood. Rhizoanalysis might be described as the study of the lines "in groups or as individuals" or a study of the composition of assemblages (Deleuze, 1988/ 1993, p. 137). The "data" presented in this paper from the focus group with Onetwothree and Sarah, the interview with Miss Wood, and the meeting with Onetwothree, Sarah and Miss Wood are assemblages themselves, potentially infinite in possibilities for thought. I weave in and out of the words spoken in these focus groups, "exiting in the middle" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 94). There is so much more to say about these students, the teacher and their stories than is possible here. Data are always partial, incomplete, in the process "of a re-telling and a re-membering" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. ix). I have not taken the path of coding participants' words, which classify, fix and territorialise data, taking us back to what is known rather than allowing the production of different knowledge (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 12). Instead, I have been struck by "intense affective passages" (Masny, 2013, p. 343) where Onetwothree, Sarah and Miss Wood have expressed or recounted affective intensities. I analysed these moments or recounts of affective experiences or rupture by myself, thinking with Deleuze.

Below is the collaborative writing from the third assemblage. This re-construction is not intended to present the 'truth' of the 2011 research event, as if it were possible to capture and categorise experience (Scheurich, 1997, p. 73), but is rather a "re-eventualisation" where the 2011 research event is actualised in multiple ways (Fraser, 2006, p. 130) as each person grasps the event (Bryant, 2011, p. 34).

## A re-eventualisation of the 2011 research event

*Miss Wood stood at the front of the classroom looking at the Year 8 students. Onetwothree and Sarah sat at the back of the room in the middle with paper taking down notes. Two other Year 9 student researchers sat on either side of Onetwothree and Sarah. Onetwothree felt a bit nervous – this was the first time he had done something like this. Miss Wood also felt worried about being observed; self-conscious about what she was saying and how it would be interpreted. Onetwothree and Sarah felt like the students were staring at them, as if to say, "What are you doing in our class?" There was a teacher's aide who moved around the room helping students. Eve Mayes sat in the corner of the room.*

*Miss Wood told the class to get their books out and number their page from one to ten. She started reading a list of spelling words related to their topic of performance, and gave a sentence using each word. Students leaned forward over their desks writing down the words. Miss Wood said, "if everyone gets 10 out of 10 I'll put a whole scoop of rice in the bottle, but if you try your best, I'll still put half a scoop." Students looked up at an empty soft drink bottle on her desk that had a white sticker with "movie day" typed on it in big capital letters. Miss Wood poured a little bit of rice in the bottle as a demonstration.*

*Halfway through the spelling list, a girl opened the door and walked into the room late. Miss Wood walked over and crouched down and told her what to do, pointing to the girl's book. She explained the work individually to the girl.*

*About 20 minutes into the lesson, the Year 9 student researchers chose 5 students from the class to go*

*down the drama room for a focus group about Miss Wood's lesson. They asked the students questions about what they liked about Miss Wood's class, what they wanted to change about it, and what they wanted to change in the school. Sarah felt good to be asking younger kids what they feel about school, to give them a voice. It is hard to remember what the students said, but Onetwothree and Sarah remembered that the students liked that Miss Wood encouraged them.*

*After the focus group, the Year 9 student researchers interviewed Miss Wood. Miss Wood sat at her desk and the two other Year 9 student researchers sat next to her as the interviewers, while Onetwothree took photos and Sarah videoed the interview. After the interview, Onetwothree and Sarah stood up next to Miss Wood as she sat down at her desk. Onetwothree and Sarah read out some of the feedback from what they heard from the students: what the students liked and what they wanted. Onetwothree thought that Miss Wood could have felt intimidated by this interaction and might have thought: "these kids are interviewing me, when it should be the opposite." But Miss Wood loved hearing their perspective on a level playing field. It made her feel good to see that the effort she put into her work was actually appreciated by students. Onetwothree and Sarah felt good after the interview – it was a new experience.*

## Students' (re-)constructions

In the first 2013 research assemblage, a focus group with Onetwothree, Sarah and a third student, the students explored their memories of the 2011 research event in a discussion of their experiences of student participation and school in general. This event was revisited at different stages of the ninety-minute focus group. Here, the chronological 're-eventualisation' of the 2011 event above is used as a guide to exploring Onetwothree and Sarah's commentary, whilst acknowledging that the focus group discussion was non-linear, erupting in different directions and jumping from topic to topic. I focus on Onetwothree and Sarah's recounts of their experiences of the lesson observation research event, while re-locating their words alongside their critiques of pedagogical practices that erupted in the focus group.

Onetwothree and Sarah described the different perspective afforded in the 2011 research event:

*Eve (E): Did it feel different to be watching her class rather than to be in her class?*

*Onetwothree (O): Yeah.*

*Sarah (S): Yeah. Because [...] in class you don't realise all this stuff. But when you're actually observing it you think, '**that's how that's how I am in Miss [Wood's] class**' that's how it shows it to me, but I don't realise it cause I just get a different perspective on all the other teachers– [...] Cause I was in Miss [Wood's] class that year -*

*O: Yeah.*

*S: - so I used to always think that her class was boring and cause she doesn't even do anything fun. But **looking at her - watching her** class made me realise, she's better than the other teachers because she actually whispers to you, she doesn't shout at you she doesn't embarrass you.*

*E: Yup.*

*S: If you're doing anything wrong she'll talk to you in a good way -*

*E: Yeah.*

*S: - explaining to you what you're doing wrong. And if I –*

*E: So you were kind of looking at it differently -*

*S: Yeah from when I was in the class. [...]*

*O: You look at the students and **you see from the teacher's perspective**. You see - you know what, she was doing this to us, and you know we were going to follow –*

*S: But the students –*

*O: - But then we realised what she does– cause we're not in the class when we're in the class, we're supposed to do our work and pay attention. **Now we can pay attention to the whole room.** We can see what Miss is doing and then - then we understand. [...] **how it might feel. How she feels** = in the class.*

*S: = Sometimes it's hard for teachers because, standing alone in front of 25 students and they all want something like exciting to do and **it's hard for her to excite every student because some students don't find that exciting.***

*E: Yup.*

*S: Because other students have different types of things that they like.*

O: Yeah she –  
S: So it's even hard for her. =  
O: = It's good –  
S: = So that's why we should both have respect with each other and get along with each other. So she can get a good – **a view of what we're actually like. Of the whole class together.**

Onetwothree and Sarah's described how their positioning as researchers shifted their perspective on "the whole room", on the complexities of teaching and their own place in the classroom. They described the vantage point of "looking at her" as leading to them seeing "from the teacher's perspective". Their positional distance from their traditional role of a student in the classroom assemblage set into motion different affective flows, described by them in terms of empathy ("how she feels") and understanding ("made me realise"). They also gave an account of their different perspective on the classroom assemblage from their positional distance as researcher, with their vision expanded from a narrow focus "on our work" to an expanded attention "to the whole room." When Onetwothree said this, he moved his arms outwards in a circle to signify the shift in his sphere of attention from himself to the dynamics of the room. Onetwothree's shift to the present tense, his emphasis on "whole", the movement of his arms outwards, could be argued to be markers of an epiphanic moment (Cole, 2011). The "whole" of the classroom assemblage is viewed; an assemblage with connections between bodies that demands engagement (Gilson, 2011, p. 79). From this expanded vantage point, Sarah said that she perceived the difficulty of directing students' affective flows towards excitement about learning: "it's hard for her to excite every student because some students don't find that exciting." For Sarah, this reflection prompted a statement of desire for shifts in student and teacher relationships, where there is "respect" and where the teacher apprehends a view of the multiplicity of individuals within the classroom assemblage: "a view of what we're actually like. Of the whole class together."

Onetwothree and Sarah also described shifts in their perception of Miss Wood's practice and their positioning in relation to her as they debriefed with her after the lesson.

E: Can you remember the conversation you had with Miss Wood after? [...]  
O: I felt good because – finally she's hearing what we have to say, instead of us telling the principal and the principal saying, 'I'll go tell the teacher' and she's not. We're **saying that to her** instead of something, instead of telling someone and her saying, 'blah blah blah they said this this that'. [...] And **they can see what we want and what they want as well**, instead of asking the principal.

S: She [Miss Wood] was telling us about how she planned her lesson –

E: Mmm.

S: - And how she had that – who had that rice thing? Was it her?

O: Yeah.

E: Yeah she had the rice thing – she told us about it.

S: That was a very that was a very good idea.

O: Yeah it was.

S: It was **exciting**.

O: It was **something new**.

S: We should - teachers should keep doing their lessons like that. [...]

E: When you got to tell Miss [Wood] these positive things, do you think you would normally have told her that if you were just a student in her class – like told her these positive things?

S: = No.

O: = No.

E: What was – was it different to sort of do that? She was standing up and you were sitting down and saying -

O: Yeah like **I felt [...] like I had more authority than her**. I felt yeah you know **this was good. I felt like I was her boss**.

Onetwothree expressed a sense of the difference between telling Miss Wood directly their experience of her lesson to telling a third party (for example, the principal) about their experience of her lesson, to pass on to the teacher. Speaking face-to-face, in relation to the teacher, Onetwothree suggested that there is greater potential for shifts in practice: "they can see what we want and what they want as well." As Onetwothree and Sarah recall Miss Wood telling them about her lesson planning and her rationale for the "rice thing," Sarah erupted in an affective assessment of Miss Wood's pedagogical choices: "It was exciting". Onetwothree added to this assessment a reason for its affective

productivity: "It was something new." The assemblage of their interview with the teacher, physically positioned above Miss Wood and evaluating her professional practice before her, face-to-face in relation with her, led to a temporary affective shift in Onetwothree's sense of self: "this was good, I felt like I was her boss."

However, Onetwothree and Sarah's positive re-construction of their experiences in the 2011 research encounter in this focus group was tangled up in other statements of frustration and disillusionment in the broader school environment. Onetwothree and Sarah discussed their observation of and reactions to Miss Wood's calm, explanatory manner with a late student by contrasting it with the manner of "another teacher":

O: Say it was another teacher like a strict teacher, I could name any - and you walk into the door and you say, 'I'm sorry miss, I'm late blah blah blah', *[adopts deeper pitch, imitating a teacher]* 'why you late for? Why you coming late to class? You're truanting = blah blah bah' –

S: = You're wasting half the lesson.

O: 'Alright, alright, go sit down.' And you ask the teacher - 'no I'm not going to help you.' She'd just chuck the paper, 'do it yourself.' Miss *[Wood]*, I was saying, she crouched down she just like, 'do this this this that' –

E: Mmm mmm.

O: - she didn't bother the class cause the class is working –

E: Yep.

O: She told me, 'do' and yeah. She helped them individually not just, say it out to the whole class – one on one.

E: Mmm hmm.

S: And when a teacher **embarrasses a student**, [...] as much as the student is doing something wrong, you shouting at the student **brings down their self esteem level**.

E: Yep.

S: Miss *[Wood]* told the student to go outside and she'd speak to them outside the classroom. But other teachers would **just tell you off in front of all your classmates and embarrass you. You wouldn't feel comfortable going back into that class**.

Onetwothree and Sarah's recount of Miss Wood's individual assistance to a late student, physically lowering ("crouched down") herself to explain the work, prompted a line of flight to the affective flows at work in a contrasting experience of a teacher "embarrass[ing]" a student "in front of all [their] classmates". They expressed a preference for Miss Wood's treatment of students as individuals, relating to them "one on one" in an assemblage of diverse individuals. Entwined in Onetwothree and Sarah's recounts of their observation of Miss Wood are lines of critique of "another teacher," "a strict teacher" who speaks in "order words" (Cole, 2011, p. 101) to the "whole class" as an undifferentiated bloc. Students are constituted as subjects in the patterns of discourse and relations of power in the domains of individual classrooms, "subjectivated" as particular 'types' of students in a manner that is "ongoing and potentially multiple and even contradictory" (Youdell, 2011, p. 81). While Onetwothree and Sarah suggested that there were productive and restorative affective flows at work in the 2011 research event, they also gestured towards other classroom assemblages that they found to be discouraging and infuriating. Indeed, these lines of critique interweave, loop over, traverse the lines of affective possibility produced in the account of the 2011 research event.

## The teacher's (re-)constructions

A month after the focus group with Onetwothree and Sarah, with their permission, a second research assemblage of Miss Wood-Eve Mayes-extracts from the focus group with Onetwothree and Sarah transcript was formed. Before reading the transcript extracts, I asked Miss Wood what she remembered from the 2011 research event. Her re-construction focused on the students' positive reinforcement of her routine of starting each lesson with a brief spelling quiz and her behaviour management strategies:

[I remember them] sitting at the back watching the class, and then [...] they were telling me the things **they really** liked about it. And when they told me that, ever since, **it's stayed with me forever**, I know that they like to do spelling at the beginning of the lesson. I had been doing that for ages anyway, but I was doing it more for me but since talking to them, I realised that the kids like that structure as well. So

that was really good. [...] I'd always done spelling at the beginning of lesson, but for me it was an anticipatory thing, settling the kids down, focus them, but I realised that the kids like that structure because they like knowing that as soon as they get into class, that's what they do.

Miss Wood's recollection of the research event initially focused on their reinforcement of her classroom strategies as she was interpellated as a 'good' teacher; her orientation to the bloc of students in her class through planning her lesson to begin with a spelling quiz. She articulated that the effects of this encounter lingered with her ("stayed with me forever") – traces of this enunciation of the positive aspects of her practice shaping her construction of her frequently-used teaching practices.

Adding the excerpts from the focus group transcript to the assemblage of my interview with Miss Wood shifted the interview discussion to her interactive positioning of students in individual conversations. As she read the transcript excerpts, she stopped after particular statements that interested her to respond to Onetwothree and Sarah's words. After reading what Onetwothree and Sarah had said about her treatment of the late-arriving student and their broader discussion of teachers' treatment of 'misbehaving' students, Miss Wood said:

I don't remember that [the late student]. Hmm. Mmm. That's nice. It's almost like I'm getting told again the things that I should be doing. That's good. [...] That's good to know, that they prefer to go outside cause sometimes when I tell the student, 'let's go outside and have a conversation' they go, *[imitating an exasperated student sighing out]* 'naaaah' you know – they sort of make a big deal. So you're like, 'what?' You can't win. But that's good that some students would like it.

Miss Wood repeats that it is "good" to be told "again the things I should be doing". Repetition of similar ideas later in time is meaningful again because of her positioning in a different temporal and contextual location. Yet, Onetwothree and Sarah's words do not only resonate with her experiences, but also clash as she recounts how not all students have appreciated her practice of asking students to step outside to talk. Like Onetwothree's performative imitation of a frustrated teacher above, here Miss Wood imitates a student's exasperated response to her attempt to discuss their actions in a respectful manner. She also suggests the multiplicity of potential responses to an action, and the variety of affective flows potentially prompted by an utterance ("let's go outside and have a conversation"), depending on the individual to whom it is spoken.

Reading Onetwothree say that he "felt good" speaking to her directly rather than via a third party of a principal prompted an affective flow in Miss Wood. She said after reading this, "oh that's nice, so they appreciated being able to tell me." She then said:

Reading this, I'm realising, cause I know that we did heaps of the [student participation group] group things - it had more, **more of an effect on me the kids directly telling me** the things than any – I don't remember any of the group stuff we did - than the kids generalising about teachers in general and then telling us stuff about the teachers in general. [The staff presentations] [...] Not that I didn't find them interesting. But some stuff – I was either like, 'mmm it doesn't apply to me,' or, 'it's almost offensive because they're generalising'. So instead of getting my back up, I was really willing – '**you've directly seen me teach, now you give me your feedback.**' So it's more effective- and I know that's so unpractical to do that for every single teacher [...] but just reading this, I'm just realising **how much more of an effect that's had on me than anything else.**

In the assemblage of this interview with extracts from a transcript, Miss Wood returned to a moment from the past and made a connection between this moment and her professional sense of self. Indeed, "time may repeat and congeal at certain moments" in a manner that Cole has called, drawing on Deleuze, an epiphany (2011, p. 58). Miss Wood articulated here the impact on her professional practice of standing face-to-face with students immediately after a lesson, speaking about specific pedagogical actions and their affective potential. The 2011 research event and others like it are subjectively significant because they are immanent to the event of the lesson, located temporally close, and focused on the students' affective experience of the lesson, more than generalised, temporally removed accounts of effective teaching practice.

Yet, Miss Wood expressed surprise at the affective flows at work in Onetwothree and Sarah's re-constructions of the 2011 research event, and questioned the transferability of their emotional insight from this encounter to different pedagogical contexts. After reading Onetwothree and Sarah describe their emotions associated with seeing the classroom from a different perspective, Miss Wood

said about Onetwothree:

I would never think that he would be able to empathise with anybody [*laughs*]. Isn't that nice? [...] It's such a pity though that you can't get the kids to realise this sort of thing while they're in the class, because wouldn't that be better for their learning?

Later in the interview, reading Sarah's comments about her shift in her perception of Miss Wood, she said:

It's so good that they can empathise with it, but it's almost a little bit pointless because I feel like they're not trying to take it on to their own lesson. [...] [Sarah] did that 2 years ago, and I taught her in Year 10. She didn't change the way she treated – she was a good – don't get me wrong, she wasn't a bad student, she was never a bad student – but she didn't change anything. [...] So, because I guess it was a different environment.

Miss Wood suggests here the significance of environment in shaping students' affective responses to learning. In the assemblage of the 2011 research event and the assemblage of the 2013 focus group discussing the 2011 research event, Sarah and Onetwothree expressed and re-constructed affective flows that Miss Wood did not think that she had apprehended when they were back in the 'traditional' assemblage of the classroom. Each assemblage prompts different affective flows; Onetwothree and Sarah's return to traditional classroom assemblages did not necessarily continue to generate the empathetic, positive affective flows that the research assemblage had produced.

## Lines of flight

Within the 2013 research assemblages considering the past and present affective flows in teaching and learning, lines of flight also escaped that suggested possibilities for alternative futures. In the 2013 research assemblages, it is "as if something carried us away [...] towards a destination which is unknown, not foreseeable, not pre-existent" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 94). Onetwothree, Sarah and the third student in the focus group, immediately after discussing their encounter with Miss Wood, their experience of student participation and research, and of school generally were invited to create a vignette using any art-form and about anything to do with student participation. Onetwothree, Sarah and the third student chose to devise a puppet show about three teachers in a staffroom. In their puppet show, a frustrated teacher enters the staffroom and pleads for advice from her colleagues. One of the 'teachers' gives the following advice:

When you walk in, make sure you **comfort them**, make sure you ask them how was their weekend or their day has been and don't act so bossy and don't make them **scared** of you and don't make them expect the worse of you. Always make sure they expect their best and make sure they're having a **good time** all the time.

The 'advice' given to the struggling teacher centred not on the teacher's preparation, pedagogical strategies or assessment, but on the affective flows set in motion in the teacher's greeting and interactions with students. When I asked after their performance if they thought teachers actually spoke like this in their staffrooms, Onetwothree said, no, and that he expected teachers he knew to say to the frustrated teacher, "'don't worry about them. Give them more work. Punish them. Don't worry about them. Do what you want to do.'" The enactment of a different type of staffroom conversation in their vignette could be argued to be a line of flight imagining alternative ways that teachers might share and discuss their professional practice and the affective dimension of classroom assemblages that they do not perceive to be dominant in the present. They collectively imagined alternative modes of becoming in staffrooms – previously unimaginable ways in which teachers might encourage each other to become listeners, comforters, producers of more positive affective flows that compound the subject's "relation with other relations" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 35) and thereby strengthen pedagogical assemblages.

Similarly, within the interview with Miss Wood, her reading of Onetwothree and Sarah's transcript excerpts prompted a line of flight as she imagined how she might position students differently in the future. After wondering aloud about Onetwothree and Sarah transferring their affective responses to the lesson observations to other learning contexts, she said:

I feel like after reading this I want to give like the kids in my class their own little research type thing – two kids at a time – 'you're not going to do work today, you're going to sit at the back of the class and I want you to write down the positives you see with me, positives you see with other students in the class,

and the negatives you see – well not negatives, but you know constructive advice you could give me, constructive advice you could give the other kids' cause I feel like if this – cause I love their attitude – [Onetwothree, Sarah's] – I love the stuff they're saying, that they're realising things about themselves and they're realising things about me – and I don't get defensive if it's specifically about me [...] And so, if a student was to say, 'we don't like it when you do this cause it makes us feel like this', and that's me specifically than I'd so definitely take that on board. [...] And it's about specific things and individual things [...] I'd so appreciate it if I didn't realise it myself. Cause you never intend to make people feel bad. [...] It makes me want to do my own little thing in the class with the kids. I want to tie it to a lesson somehow. Something other than just an empathy exercise or understanding the perspectives. [...] I have a really challenging Year 8 class at the moment [...] I don't even know if they'd do it properly, but it'd be worth a try I think.

As Miss Wood read and discussed what students had said about their emotions during the lesson observation, lines of flight erupted in relation to her current dilemmas. Like the frustrated teacher in Onetwothree and Sarah's vignette who was encouraged by her colleagues to "comfort" and engage her students, Miss Wood was moved by reading Onetwothree and Sarah's words to hesitate (Sellar, 2012) and re-consider how she might re-position her Year 8s as researchers. The school's segmentary "devices of power" and its "code-territory complex (do not approach my territory, it is I who give the orders here...)" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 96) were questioned as she wondered aloud what might happen if she opened herself to a line of critique and encouragement. This is a "little crack", an imperceptible rupture that finds something "between" the binary roles of 'teacher' and 'student' (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 99), seeking "multiplicity" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 99). The affects fostered in this research assemblage generated "escape routes from limiting regimes of habit and repetition", inviting experimentation (Cole, 2009, p. 68). Sense emerged here through affect as she read the transcript, remembered her memory, and re-visited the ruptures in her current pedagogical life. These rupture lines are "tangled" in the segmentary lines of the school and molecular lines of the research encounter; "immanent, caught up in one another" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 94). But they also have the potential to lead to questioning of the binary machine that produces the division of teacher-student, movements in these segmentary lines in different directions and conversions of educational assemblages. Something new was created *in* the 2011 event and *through* the event in its 2013 re-construction and re-eventualisation (Bryant, 2011, p. 36). In re-constructing her memory of the 2011 research event, in assemblage with the transcript of students' re-constructions of their memories of the event, Miss Wood was prompted to re-construct her future teaching practice, and perhaps even her sense of self as a teacher, afresh.

## Conclusion

Re-configurations of students and teachers in considerations of teaching and learning might lead to "assemblage conversions" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 94) in education. Assemblage conversions in education might be generated through affective flows between and among students and teachers fostered through individual assemblages that differ to traditional structures. Encouraging assemblages where students speak face-to-face with teachers, giving an account of the emotions generated by alternative classroom practices, might produce different affective flows in classrooms, engendering new modes of speaking, relating, teaching and learning.

These re-configurations could be argued to be conservative, transitory or vulnerable to cooption or new forms of fascism. The lines of flight suggested by the students as they considered staffroom talk, and Miss Wood as she re-considered her positioning of her Year 8 class could be considered to be conservative, closely related to previous pedagogical practices. But Deleuze and Parnet warned readers of the need for "prudence" in manipulating a segmentary line, "precautions" that need to be taken "to soften it, to suspend it", because undermining a line is not merely aimed against the State and existing hierarchies, but "directly at ourselves" since segmentary lines are "so much a part of [our] conditions of life" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 103). Indeed, these moments of re-configuration may be transitory; Onetwothree and Sarah were entwined again in the school's segmentary lines. There is also the danger that practices like this might be co-opted, re-territorialised by the school system in processes aimed to encourage students to be more self-

governing of their behaviour (Bragg, 2007). Alternatively, students' enthusiastic embrace of their 'voice' might sink into a "black hole": "a supple line rushes into a black hole from which it will not be able to extricate itself" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 104). In this form of "micro-fascism," students might be so self-assured of their "case", their "role" and their "mission" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006/ 1977, p. 104) that they disregard any destructive affective consequences of their speech, the response of the hearer and their responsibility to the other to whom they speak; their inextricable entanglement from the other in the educational assemblage (cf. Butler, 2005).

Yet, even if these assemblage conversions might be fleeting, constrained in time and space, vulnerable to re-territorialisation by the school system and student micro-fascisms, they might also "congeal over time" to shift educational assemblages (Youdell, 2011, p. 140). Assemblages where students and teachers observe each other reciprocally, one-on-one, generates "counter-spaces in the present" (Foucault, 1967) that unsettle assessment of teachers based on their students' NAPLAN results or their ability to construct an account of their teaching practice according to a set of fixed professional standards. Traditional assemblages might exist side by side with alternative assemblages, shifting and moving over time in a process of becoming. In these assemblages of teachers who are becoming-learners and learners who are becoming-teachers, teacher-learners and learner-teachers might speak before the other with whom they are entangled, dynamically becoming in relation to others.

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<sup>i</sup> The Australian federal and state governments signed a National Partnerships Agreement for Low Socioeconomic schools in February 2009. This partnership aims "to improve student engagement, educational outcomes and wellbeing in participating schools and make inroads into entrenched disadvantage" (Australian Government).

<sup>ii</sup> Conceptions of 'reform' in contemporary policy rhetoric have been subject to recent critique. Stephen Ball (2008, p. 15) has tracked the use of the rhetoric of "transformation" and "radical reform" by neoliberal

governments who co-opt these terms in a way that elides individual, collective and corporate interests. Reform rhetoric is also teleological, setting goals that may suppress difference, disallowing the irruptions that burst through when a plan comes into contact with a multiplicity of bodies in shifting contexts (Mayes, 2012). While acknowledging that the approaches to school reform at a state and federal level may be problematic, this paper will focus on one approach to reform taken in an individual school and its micro-level effects.

<sup>iii</sup> All names are pseudonyms. The students chose their own pseudonyms, and Miss Wood was happy for me to use the pseudonym 'Miss Wood'. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the complexities of naming and describing oneself as a research participant. When I asked Onetwothree and Sarah how they would like me to describe them in this paper, they appeared initially to resist pinning down their identity: Onetwothree said, "whatever you want" and Sarah said, "I don't know." After some discussion of my ethical desire to have them describe themselves rather than for me to describe them, Onetwothree wrote down "smart" and "looks Koala." Sarah said she wanted to be described as "understanding." While the students have given (and withheld) markers of their 'identities', they are multiply positioned across gender, social class, race and academic rankings, and there are complex "intersections and interrelations between multiple axes of inequalities and sites of identifications" (Youdell, 2011, p. 80).

<sup>iv</sup> Criteria included: teachers who help you to learn more, teachers whose classes you feel happy about attending, teachers who use teaching strategies that engage you.

<sup>v</sup> It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the debates surrounding the problem of speaking for others and Spivak (1987) and Alcoff's (1991) critique of Deleuze and Foucault's (1977) discussion of this problem.

<sup>vi</sup> In this paper I use Deleuze's term 'affect'. Anna Hickey-Moody has eloquently discussed Deleuze's use of Spinoza in his notion of affectus and the status of affect as a relational practice through which knowledge is produced (2009). For the sake of clarity I avoid terms associated with affect, including emotion, feeling and passion. Rich theorisations of emotions can be found in Boler (1999) and Ahmed (2004).