This book provides a “primer” with respect to the debate about class size between economists and educators. In particular it offers an overview of how economists look at school funding problems, and makes a comparison between the work of the Chicago School and others like Eric Hanushek, which has focused intensely on the economic relationship between public spending on educational resources and the cost of equipping and expanding school infrastructure, and student outcomes. The book therefore focuses on class size as a primary example of the way in which economists have come to treat teaching and learning as a site for the development of human capital.

The book also takes a historical look at the debate about class size from the perspective of theories about public choice, which have emerged from the Chicago School through the writings of Milton Friedman. This raises the issue of how the notion of the “public” is understood, and whether educators and economists are coming from different perspectives about what schools should do for the community. Many educationists think about the problem of class size from the perspective of a classroom teacher, who must “eye-ball” her students and regard them as flesh-and-blood individuals, whereas economists deal in statistical numbers and should therefore be understood as regarding class size as symptomatic of population issues.

The book surveys the two sides of the long-standing debate about class size and its supposed relationship to student achievement. The aim is to disclose a theoretical principle that is adopted by both sides in the debate, even if neither side is conscious of it. This principle relates to the issue of individuals and populations as a binary opposition that supplies either side with a valid viewpoint. The book explores this principle, arguing that each of these opposing perspectives depends on the other for its own logical outcome. The book analyses the procedure of
Class Size and Pupil-Teacher Ratios

Where Education and Economics Collide

by

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CONTENTS

Introduction: A Quixotic Interpretation of Class Size ....................... i
1. Where Education Meets Economics ........................................... ii
2. Diverse Perspectives on Class Size .......................................... iv
3. The Quixotic ........................................................................ vi
4. The Insufficiency of Educational Self-Consciousness ..................... vii
5. An Interest in Naiveté ............................................................. x
6. The Looking-Glass Effect ......................................................... xi

I. Education and the Industrial Age................................................ 1
1. What Do Statisticians Think Class Size Is? ......................... 4
2. What Else Could Class Size Be? ........................................... 6
   2.1. Detailed Statistics on Pupil-Teacher Ratio and Class
       Size From Developed Economies ................................ 7
   2.2. The Meaning of Class Size Statistics ............................... 8
   2.3. Investing in Children .................................................... 14
3. Investing in Teachers ............................................................. 15
4. A Natural Classroom ............................................................. 18
   4.1. Bourdieu and the Economic Distinction Between
       Nature and Culture ..................................................... 20
   4.2. Bourdieu and the Natural Learner .................................. 21
6. Freedom or Determinism? ..................................................... 24
2. Class Size as a Symbol of Social Organization ......................... 29
   1. Introduction ........................................................................ 29
   1.1. Looking Through the Statistical Lens at Education ............... 30
   2. How Am I Representing "Social Organization?" ....................... 31
   3. How The Meaning of Class Size Changes According to
      the Conceptual Parameters of a Research Discipline............... 33
      3.1. The History of Class Size as an Economic or
            Educational Concept .............................................. 35
      3.2. Assumptions About the Meaning of Educational
            Production ....................................................... 37
      3.3. What is "Student Achievement" Anyway? .......................... 40
   4. Breaking "Achievement" Into Time-Based Packages ................. 42
      4.1. Is It Really Possible to Measure Cause and Effect? ............. 43
   5. What is the Philosophical Principle Underpinning This
      Determinism? .................................................................. 45
      5.1. Voluntarism in Educational Activity ............................... 48
      5.2. How Voluntarism Became Entrenched in
            Social Theory .................................................... 50
   6. Conclusions ........................................................................ 52

   1. Introduction ........................................................................ 55
   2. School Populations: Homogeneous or Heterogeneous? .............. 56
   3. What Does the Community Expect From Schools and How
      Does This Impact on the Distribution of School Resources? ...... 58
   4. Philosophical Antecedents of Public Choice Theory ............... 61
      4.1. Retaining Bureaucracy and Transforming Solidarity ........... 62
      4.2. The Difference Between Market Choice and Public
            Choice ............................................................... 64
      4.3. Class Size, Commodity Circulation, and
            Capital Mobility .................................................. 66
      4.4. Capital Mobility and School Funding ............................. 67
      4.5. Defining School Efficiency ........................................... 70
   5. Public Choice and the Definition of Individual Freedom or
      Liberty ........................................................................ 71
      5.1. Public Choice as an Economic Function .......................... 73
   6. Class Groupings in School Reflect Population Groupings .......... 75
      6.1. Are School Class Groups in Competition With Each
           Other? ................................................................ 76
   7. Are School Systems a Marketplace in Microcosm? ................... 78
   8. Conclusion: Historical Force as Force of Erasure and
      Social Identity ............................................................ 80
4. The Economic and Moral Function of the School..........................85
   1. Introduction ..............................................................................85
   2. Conceptualizing the Teacher as a Subject ..............................87
      2.1. What Does Postmodernism Offer Teachers? .................88
   2.2. What Is Personal Morality and Responsibility? ...............89
      2.3. The Morality of Education and Economics ..................90
      2.4. Defining Self-Interest in Educational Discourse ..........91
   3. Offering Teachers a Rigorous Analysis of “Self” .................93
   4. The Ontology of the Educated Subject ................................95
      4.1. The Subject as a Discursive Entity ...............................96
   5. The Class as Subject .............................................................97
      5.1. What Does the School Provide in Defence of
           the Individual? ................................................................100
      5.2. The Individual as a Site of Ideological Reproduction ....101
   6. Rhetorical Violence at the Scene of the Classroom .............103
      6.1. Analyzing the Teacher’s Own Rhetorical Operation ......105
      6.2. Why Class Size Matters to Statisticians, as Well as
           Teachers .....................................................................106
   7. Conclusion .............................................................................108

5. Conclusions ..................................................................................113
   1. History .....................................................................................113
   2. Should Governments Regulate Schools? ...............................116
   3. The Paradox of Class Size .....................................................117
   4. The Violence of Economic Rhetoric .......................................118

About the Author .............................................................................123

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1. U.S. Class Size and Pupil-Teacher Ratios ......................9
Table 1.2. NSW Classes—Average Primary Class Sizes By Year,
          1997 And 2002–2012 ..............................................................12
Table 1.3. Victorian Classes ..........................................................13
Table 3.1. Government Recurrent Expenditure on Schools
          Selected Years: 1976–2011 .....................................................68
Table 3.2. Trends in Australian Commonwealth Funding of Schools
          ..........................69
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INTRODUCTION

A Quixotic Interpretation of Class Size

Class size is ostensibly a statistical construct used more or less exclusively in the field of education, and in that branch of economic debate that is concerned with educational resources and funding. It is used to analyze the problem of how to manage student populations and the supply of teaching staff, in a way that tries to balance the quality of student experience against funding resources.

I say "ostensibly" because the definition I have just given the reader is the received wisdom, the prevailing outlook. Writing a book about class size that addresses both its origin as a statistical construct, and the way in which the concept of class size bridges a gulf between two theoretical disciplines that is, education and economics, is challenging in a number of ways.

To begin with, I don't think that a problem such as this—wherein thinkers from two completely separate disciplines each address the same words from utterly foreign perspectives—is easily satisfied by merely stating the opposing views, and sitting on the fence, so to speak. I will therefore concede some different kinds of bias, both within the debate and on my own part, in an effort to identify and describe the impossibility of eluding bias, when considering this kind of problem.

I think that the first issue, that is, the disciplinary gulf between education and economics, is not necessarily as broad and unbridgeable as one might
assume. Many in the field of educational research may approach class size from different camps within education, and there will always be those like John Hattie (2005), for example, who treat the concept of class size pretty much like an economist would. On the other hand, there are many educational researchers (e.g., Graue & Rauscher, 2009; Normore & Ilon, 2006; Blatchford, Bassett, & Brown, 2011) who adopt a broader perspective: which generally means that any attempt to increase the number of children in a given class will result in decreasing opportunities to support individual learning. So the first bias that economists identify (and some educationists) is that teachers refuse to privilege statistical evidence that says that class size has little impact on student achievement.

Of course, educationists who take the opposing perspective think that economists and statisticians are privileging statistical evidence in a context where it is the teacher’s job to treat the individual learner as the unit of analysis, not the class as a whole. Some teachers would argue that if one child is disadvantaged in a class of 28, that constitutes evidence that larger class sizes militate against student achievement. But of course, that argument itself could be seen from either perspective as relying upon the statistical determination that 15 is an optimal class size for optimum student achievement. I discuss this further in Chapter 1.

So can teachers dispense with statistical calculations when considering the issue of class size? Can economists see the problem that teachers face when they must eyeball small children in a primary school and prioritize which ones need the most help in a given day? Or are both camps alienated systematically from each other so as to prevent any rapprochement?

WHERE EDUCATION MEETS ECONOMICS

Problems like this can often end in an intransigent conflict, owing simply to the impossibility of bringing two fields of discourse onto common ground. I think it might be useful to pause here, long enough to ascertain what should be understood by “conflict” in this setting, and accordingly, to consider what “common ground” would mean in correlation to it. Because we are dealing with theoretical disciplines, we are largely addressing ways of rationalizing class size, and defining it based on certain settled presumptions. Those presumptions are furnished in each case by the parameters of the discipline. What if we ask about whether it is possible to rationalise class size in a manner that accepts some of the parameters of each discipline? Will this go any way toward producing a superior and more widely accepted explanation of class size? One that might better meet the needs of policymakers?
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I doubt it. That’s mainly because I am convinced that policymakers always use statistical evidence, and that it is educationists who don’t privilege statistical evidence who are already on the margins of policy debate. To be absolutely clear, this book does not adopt a positivist epistemology when addressing the concept of class size. It provides four discussions in four main chapters, each of which offers related but distinct approaches to issues that have arisen for this author when reading the literature about class size. The book doesn’t pretend to be an exhaustive analysis of class size, and it doesn’t pretend to tell educationists everything they will need to know about class size.

It is important to recognize that there is not so much a single problem that the book addresses; rather, it recognizes the likelihood that educationists and economists are at cross-purposes when thinking about class size, and that different policies are impacted by this intersection of views; sometimes educationists like Hattie (2005) will take a view that effectively supports the conservative, econometric viewpoint, and sometimes educationists will be absolutely opposed to that view. But often the two camps don’t speak to each other: I don’t think it would be incorrect to suggest that this is an expression of left-right politics in the field of education. However, one of my presumptions within this book is that if both sides were able to undertake a more balanced, less ideological evaluation of the different forms of evidence, then they might recognize that each of their ideologies is not wholly adequate as a means of comprehending the factors contributing to class size. Nevertheless, it does tend (normally) to be that the debate about class size functions as a conflict. If I’m right, and some educationists are marginalised in the policy debate surrounding class size, one may reasonably ask why smaller class sizes have tended to be adopted in schools in many nations? Furthermore, we may also ask (without much likelihood of getting a straight answer) whether federal governments supply money to schools on the basis of bigger class distributions per capita, while school systems themselves distribute the money to smaller classes because bigger classes won’t work.

Another, potent reason why smaller classes won’t work is that “class size” is a significant distributor of perception about the quality of education. I think that would be because parents are more easily persuaded by the argument for smaller class sizes, and the increases in individual teacher attention that are promised to their child on that basis. Parents vote, and parents pay taxes.

So we end up with a quite paradoxical situation, in which economists tell policymakers to increase class sizes, and that this is one of the surest ways to reduce the expenditure on schooling, yet those implementing policy don’t often take the advice, even though it remains the received wisdom. Nobody really listens to the educationists except the parents, who are
probably not reading the economic analysis, and who quite possibly don’t read educational research either. The parent’s image of their child—being swamped in a giant class with many other screaming juveniles competing for a teacher’s attention—is a horrifying prospect in the current milieu. Parents are willing to pay from their own pocket, in many cases, for a place in a school that guarantees smaller classes, just to avoid the crushing stampede of unwashed children trampling on their offspring’s prospects for a future. So is class size a lever that elite schools can use in their own marketing, as a way to attract enrolments, on the dubious basis that a child will always do better in a class that is smaller? Is class size gaining credibility in the community because of the commercialisation of a given school sector, and increased competition for enrolments?

**DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON CLASS SIZE**

My own bias now: the problem of how to understand class size is not resolved by reducing it to a statistical construct, even if it is pretty much a waste of time to overlook the enormous extent to which economics and econometrics are fundamentally responsible for generating the concept in the first place. Educationists too are irresponsible if their analysis of class size effectively fails to consider the full range of analytical premises and presumptions through which the issue can be addressed.

Class size is not simply a statistical construct because the premise on which economists raise it, as a way of measuring the cost of education, is only one significant factor by which it ought to be analyzed. Economists are essentially pragmatists, who set aside the individual child as a unit of analysis because they are concerned primarily with the best way to distribute public resources. They are also concerned, almost with equal vigour, with the mobilization of schools as a site of economic activity: they think we should invest in schools only to the extent that the investment yields a dividend for the people who made the investment. Spending more on schools that cannot offer durable and productive benefits is a waste. Fair enough.

Except that, as soon as you label a given level of expenditure as waste, you have breached the parameters of scientific logic and entered the world of moral judgement, like it or not. My presupposition is that all economic wisdom is a fusion of these two domains: logic and morality.

I am gratified that there is, at least some tentative acknowledgement within the broader debate (not limited to class size, that is) among economists and conservative social scientists, that this fusion of morality and logic is a reasonable definition of economics (cf. Hill, 2001). The reader will discover in my account of class size that an insufficient level of attention has been paid to that fusion of logic and morality when it comes to economic debate about class size. On the other hand, I also think that
Class Size and Pupil-Teacher Ratios

teachers are woefully ignorant of the historical factors that have governed their own discipline; fortunately, when educational researchers approach the issue of class size, their response negates the shrillness and naivety of teachers reactions.

The economic argument advanced here, although an important contribution to the CSR [class size reduction] debate, falls short of answering the full question on whether CSR is a good investment for society. First, it assumes that societies generally make expenditure decisions on the basis of long-term net returns (benefits). This is clearly not the case. Worldwide, investments in education yield nearly universally positive social returns (Psacharopoulos, 1994), but virtually no society has increased its educational expenditures to the point where costs equal long-term benefits (a resting point of zero returns). (Normore & Ilion, 2006, p. 434)

If it is true that, even from the perspective of economic analysis, education always returns on an investment, why are we so convinced that it doesn’t, to the extent that we look for ways to reduce public investments in education as a matter of course? I think the answer to this does not lie purely in the debate about wealth distribution, or even about capitalism, although I will address both of these factors in this book. Rather, I think we have to begin more rigorously to question what we think education really is, what it is for, and whether many of the most seemingly indisputable assumptions about teaching and learning continue to warrant our faith and loyalty.

So some of what follows, in this book, aims squarely at the field of education, in an effort to look into the loose stitching between teachers and researchers (either educational thinkers or economic thinkers). In Chapter 4, I pay special attention to the fundamental ontological problems that underpin much of the confusion about class size.

The function and success of teaching and learning activities (whether they happen in schools or not) will always be mediated by the numbers of people involved; so I don’t think there should be any doubt about the legitimacy of concerns raised by teachers about the impact of increased class size on their work. We will get different outcomes depending on teacher: pupil ratios; however I also think we ought to go much deeper than countering the statistical evidence by insisting that smaller classes are more effective for children’s learning.

Partly, this is because such a counterargument is insufficient: it simply uses a different approach to address the issue of how much time a given teacher spends with a given individual child. I think what we also need to do is investigate the language we use when thinking about the classroom. That will involve a new approach to the discourse of education that refuses the positivistic implications of prevailing educational and economic thought.
I'm not sure that this discussion of class size is the most optimal place to undertake such an analysis of educational discourse. However, it does provide a good place to start debate about the impact of different kinds of positivism on education per se. To provide an introductory account of that type of analysis, Chapter 4 broaches the issue of the school class as a form of *subjectivity*: we sometimes tend to speak in a manner that appears to treat a multiplicitous entity (the group of children who compose a school class) as a whole, a form, with its own substance and will. In the context of different kinds of debate about the efficacy of schools, the capacity of education to be productive, to prepare each generation for employment, to yield returns on public expenditure, we all sometimes speak of a class as achieving at a given level, or as failing to compete with other classes in the same cohort. I think this issue is relevant to the overall debate about class size because it demonstrates some of the hidden assumptions we make about the school class more generally.

**THE QUIXOTIC**

Broadening the outline of this book, I now wish to argue that the fusion of morality and logic that is sometimes evident in economic thought is also relevant for thinking about educational thought, albeit in different ways and contexts. It has been my singular experience as an educational researcher that I find myself speaking to other educational researchers, other educationists, other teachers, on matters that are at the core of our work and our daily experience as educationists, and finding that my own perception of the world is alien to theirs.

Yet I trudge forward, convinced of the correctness of my own position, in the face of obvious disagreement. I too am a fusion of morality and logical positions. Pondering this dilemma over the past 15 years, I have been persuaded to consider a more literary approach to the texts that compose educational and economic discourse. I don't adopt a positivist epistemology in considering class size because I am addressing the intertextual matters that inform the concept of class size, and its historical formation within different discourses that are completely discontinuous with each other.

It is within this more literary approach that I have been identifying the value of an analogy to the legendary *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, perceiving threats and imagining beauty where others see sheep and peasants (Cervantes, 1617/2004).

If part of the problem underpinning debate about class size is a fusion of morality and logic, then part of what I am trying to do is to pull out the threads of morality posing as logic in the debate. If I am to identify the
perspective of the teacher, do I perceive a threat within economic arguments, and especially within neoliberal morality, with respect to class size? Yes, and it boils down to trying to measure educational success by means of standardized benchmarks of student achievement. But—educationists are often also convinced of the value of such benchmarks—so why is this a terrible thing?

I'm obviously not alone in criticizing standardization in education; but I also don't think that educationists can successfully resist the reforms that have allowed such benchmarks to be implemented. What is at most risk is the possibility that educationists could ever govern the education system so as to protect their own intellectual authority—not that they have ever done so historically anyway. But the prospect of teachers being valued at a commensurate level with economists and, for example, psychologists, is increasingly poor, in my view. In Neil Brown's (1991) words, we lack "a sufficient critique of the authority of the human sciences" for education (p. 13). John Kennedy once described psychology as "squeezed" as a discipline, because it "can never flout the assumptions it made about mankind it made in asserting it would be scientific" (Kennedy 1984, p. 35). Historically, psychology and sociology have authorized the discipline of education, and now economics looms over us as well.

We educationists have been quite oblivious to this imbalance in power over our own profession, and the field of research that informs it. We are therefore complicit in the statistical objectification of students and student experience; furthermore, we do so because we no longer bother to question the scenography of educational reality. We have accepted that all humans are *cognitivist* beings, first and foremost, physical and sentient on a secondary level. We continue to measure education on the basis that it is a slave to economic activity, to work, to family, to lives lived in acceptance of cultural ideals that education no longer bothers to question. Teachers no longer even learn about the history, or the philosophy, of their own profession—how could they question the concepts through which their daily work is governed? (Phelan et al., 2006). Where others see enlightenment and student achievement, I see a threat to the ideals of human freedom, driven by a deterministic school system that assumes teaching as a cause of learning.

**THE INSUFFICIENCY OF EDUCATIONAL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS**

It may be necessary to step back for a moment and evaluate my own claim upon a Quixotic temperament with regard to education; in order to genuinely fulfill the characteristics of the errant Spanish knight, I would need
to believe in a heroic role, occupied in the current instance by me, in which
education is meant to consist of the growth and cultivation of knowledge
in the service of freedom.

So far, I appear to be claiming that those around me threaten, rather
than reinforce that ideal. Alone, I project myself (the heroic teacher) trot-
ting through idyllic country landscapes, unfurling my sword at regular
encounters with vagabonds and bandits (economists and educationists
alike) who would kidnap or molest the beautiful young maiden (the little
protectorate of my classroom) whose chastity (purity) I am bound to protect
and defend.

I hope that the purpose of my analogy with Don Quixote is sufficiently
evident to my intended audience: teachers and educationists alike. The
folly of upholding a Romantic ideal of human enlightenment when those
around you recognize only too well one’s own insanity, exposes the nec-
essary risk associated with education: that the teacher’s own self-regard
operates to delude him. Fighting to defend the small class against the
onslaught of neoliberal vagabonds who wish to increase it fourfold is, from
one perspective, sheer folly, and leads nowhere.

But folly is more than foolishness: as the 16th century philosopher
Erasmus asserted, it is a deliberate political position

that of the fool who claims license to criticize all and sundry without repri-
sal, since his madness defines him as not fully a person and therefore not
a political being with political desires and ambitions. (Coetzee, 1992, p. 1)

Is this positioning of myself an admission that I renounce “personhood”
in order to step forward as a critic? Yes, with the specific caveat that one
of my criticisms of the field of education is that the educational “person”
is already the half-person, owing to their failure to engage in a sufficiently
critical dialogue about education itself. By stepping into a non-person
status I accept both the dismissal of my criticism by educationists as a con-
dition of my freedom to criticize, and a place on the margins of education
which is itself a necessary condition for the criticism itself.

What of this criticism of the educationist? A half-person? I owe this
denunciation to my sense that the discourse of class size is symptomatic
of a transition between the historical period of industrialization and the
postindustrial: in short, the industrialization of education witnessed the
development of mass schooling, especially during the 19th century, and it
is within that historical period that virtually all the fundamental concepts
of modern teaching and learning were introduced. Class size could not
have emerged as an issue for theoretical debate, could not have possessed
any practical salience, were it not for the emergence of statistics in itself,
which, as I discuss in the first chapter, was a scientific innovation of the
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19th century. Furthermore, of course, we know that school classes could
not have been conceptualized until schools were institutions that were tied
to economic activity and which were placed at the disposal of the state to
"mobilize" society (Donzelot, 1991).

So the possibility of the teacher as a "half-person" is my own adaptation
of the Marxist criticism of how capital transforms the labor-power of the
producer and distorts the human individual (the teacher, in this case) in
the process:

When analyzing the production of relative surplus-value...within the capitalist
system all methods for raising the social productivity of labour are put
into effect at the cost of the individual worker; that all means for the develop-
ment of production undergo a dialectical inversion so that they become
means of domination and exploitation of the producers; they distort the
worker into a fragment of a man, they degrade him to the level of an ap-
pendage of a machine, they destroy the actual content of his labour by turn-
ing it into a torment; they alienate from him the intellectual potentialities of
the labour process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as
an independent power. (Marx 1976, p. 799)

It is my corollary assertion that teachers, as teachers, are "half-people,"
incapable of questioning the logic of their own professional functions; and
that this incapacity is a necessary consequence whenever the teacher-as-
individual is alienated from the process of determining the nature of their
own intellectual authority, from the process of determining the content of
the curriculum, from grasping their own technological purpose within the
school when it is constituted as an instrument of the state. Bourdieu and
Passeron (1990) argued that

The misunderstanding which pervades pedagogic communication remains
tolerable only so long as the school system is able to eliminate those who do
not meet its implicit requirements and manages to obtain from the others
the complicity it needs in order to function. (p. 99)

Teachers are complicit in their own oppression and exploitation, and this
complicity should become visible to us as an acquiescence to scientific logic,
to empiricism, and an accession to the career structures and bureaucratic
reforms that have dominated educational institutions since the late 1980s
(Ball, 2003; Gewirtz, Ball, & Howe 1995).

In the postindustrial era, this alienation continues unabated: "all means for
the development" of intellectual production, that is, knowledge, con-
tinue; so it is important to acknowledge that postindustrial education is
in fact, to borrow from Lyotard, industrialized education in its nascent
state, and this state is recurrent (Lyotard, 1992, p. 22). But what is added
to industrial education, what occurs alongside it, is what Fredric Jameson (1998) calls a “secondary abstraction”: the idea that teaching is not merely a concrete practice undertaken at the scene of the classroom, but that teaching “separates from the concrete context of its productive geography.” Now school systems begin to “disinvest” in those older, concrete practices which illustrate our imaginary classroom, in order to undergo a “frantic search for more profitable investments” (p. 142). The debate about class size is an instance of this disinvestment: it entails imagining a form of student achievement that does not rely purely on classroom interactions, on face-to-face pedagogy, or on the socially and intellectually nurturing activities that might occur between parents and children. Class size is a concept that signals the demise of the older, expensive, labor-intensive approaches to education that stem from the industrial era, and the advent of new forms of measuring student achievement that, as we will see in Chapters 2 and 3, rely more explicitly on analyzing the quality of family life than ever before.

AN INTEREST IN NAIVETÉ

I am interested, in this book, in the problem of how to address class size—as an educationist—with sufficient recognition and regard for one’s own idealism, the very idealism that doubles as a passion for education. Because it seems to me that no one would even care about the issue of class size from a theoretical perspective unless they thought that there was a moral problem to wrestle with, at the core of the debate.

On one hand, the economists, as I noted earlier, are driven by a fusion of moral speculation and the pretence of scientific logic (operating under the mask of statistical methodologies). On the other hand we have the educationists, who disseminate the absolute impossibility of discovering an educational experience; who accordingly pretend that education is empirical, observable, that an individual’s learning can be measured and verified, that student achievement is subject to repetition and standardisation, making the student herself subordinate to the abstract processes of calculation, ranking and matriculation. What is the educationist’s concern with increasing class size? Is it self-interest? Will an increase to class sizes mean more work for the teacher, and poorer results for students? Do teachers think that the student’s result is a reflection of their own performance as an educator?

Or is it that some teachers (and some educationists more generally) hold up the lesson, the scene of the classroom, as a site for the establishment of equality between citizens? Is it possible that the moral interest that educators take in class size is an interest in the determination of social balance and harmony? If this is so, is it also the case that educators think that the ultimate source of efforts to increase class size is a threat to social equity? It
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seems to me that the utopian quest for social equity is at the core of many educational criticisms of economic perspectives on class size. As we will see in Chapter 5, the issue of the idealist foundations that inform economic views on class size (particularly in the context of the school choice debate) are actually very comparable to the utopianism of educationists on this matter. So who is naïve and idealistic, in the end? Who really benefits from representing class size as a battlefront in the culture wars being fought between two branches of the middle class?

I think that educationists will only recognise the truth about class size when they are able to acknowledge their own idealism, and incorporate a sense of their naïveté about economics within educational debate. After all, the alternative is to carry on with a false assumption that social equity could be safely promised to disadvantaged people in a range of contexts by winning the battle over class size, and by addressing the conservative, neoliberal threats to the old industrial values as if the disadvantaged could really triumph in the face of the capitalist system and its cyclical process of exploitation and alienation.

Some readers may take this quixotic interpretation of class size as a conservative rejoinder to those educationists who wear social justice on their sleeves. But I think that merely reinforces a naïve perspective, in which there is a right way and a wrong way, and capitalism is inherently a moral problem that can be solved by assuming the “right” ideological perspective. Theorizing class size from this quixotic perspective is in fact more interested in the way in which we blind ourselves to the passions that drive our claims to objective, rational argument about education. I frame the dominant methodologies within education, that is, empiricism, sociology, psychology and statistics itself, as contributing to the educational illusion: that these methods are merely tools we use in our rationalisation of the world, of reality. Rather, I propose, those methods are the looking-glasses you have selected to see “reality,” and convince yourself of what is sane and rational. To be quixotic, we will examine the various looking-glasses available to us, more effectively, to “see” class size, in all its permutations.

THE LOOKING-Glass EFFECT

A reader may detect a sense of paradox in the approach I am taking to interpreting class size. To begin with, I situate myself as someone who—
as an educator—would defend the class as a protectorate, a territory or domain—and that in doing so, I am somewhat quixotic. I see a threat where others see statistical measurements.

Second, I proclaim my own amusement at the manner in which I am represented by those “others” as bearing some naïveté toward education
and class size in particular. I characterize those “others” as subject to historical processes of which they are insufficiently conscious.

But I, too, am subject to those historical (discursive) processes, by which my own consciousness of the discourse of education is also distorted. I am not immune to these alienations by which the social productivity of my labor is also bent out of shape in order to exploit me. I cannot be conscious of that distortion at the same time as I assume the position of a productive educator. And so we encounter a paradox surrounding the “event” of my own consciousness, which is fractured whenever I am teaching. Gilles Deleuze (1990) explains this paradox by reference to Alice and Through the Looking-Glass, which, he argues, “involve a category of very special things: events, pure events.

When I say “Alice becomes larger,” I mean that she becomes larger than she was. By the same token, however, she becomes smaller than she is now. Certainly, she is not bigger and smaller at the same time. She is larger now; she was smaller before. But it is at the same moment that one becomes larger than one was and smaller than one becomes. This is the simultaneity of a becoming whose characteristic is to elude the present ... paradox is the affirmation of both senses or directions at the same time. (p. 1)

It is by way of an alternating perspective that consciousness may be isolated at all, as a unified “thing,” or as Deleuze notes, a category of very special things. I am resorting to this explanation in the introduction to this book because it offers me the opportunity to attend to the question of reality that will underpin much of my discussion of class size.

Educators are bound to take the concrete experience of their classroom and the students who occupy it as a form of reality that they constantly negotiate. In taking the class as their fundamental boundary, educational reality is defined in very specific ways around dialogue and pedagogical interaction. Teaching is accordingly understood—more or less universally—as a series of events through which the work of teachers and students alike progresses; but what is specific to these events is that they are shared, in a manner that subordinates all those who are perceived as joining in these events; by subordination I mean that educational reality is framed so as to demand cognition of a multiplicity. The individual must surrender, more or less, to a reality of what the teacher recognizes is happening, and the success of the lesson depends to a large degree on the acquiescence and complicity of those who participate in the lesson, to agree that what the teacher describes as “real” is also “real” for them.

As we teachers and students are represented at the scene of the classroom, “we” are a unified thing, and we share an event (the lesson). Change that is assumed to occur as an effect of the lesson is caused by the simultaneity of that experience to which everyone is subordinate. So to stand
outside that lesson and objectify it is to engage paradoxically with it, to both deny the simultaneity (because I can see different experiences of students and teachers) and to affirm the simultaneity (because I place them together in the classroom).

It is one function of my discussion in this book to address the paradoxical character of the different types of objectivity that economists and educationists each bring to their conceptualization of the class. To take the class as a unified thing is an a priori setting, on which the act of measuring the size of the class is predicated. But statisticians and educators alike work as if that unity of the class is so obvious that it cannot and ought not be questioned. Comprehending class size as more than a statistical measurement will be possible only by recognizing the paradoxical character of that simultaneity we call the lesson. It is a temporal concept, an event: it is not merely a thing that happened, nor a thing that is about to happen, nor is it a thing that is happening, but all of these at once, such that it "pertain[s] to the essence of becoming to move and to pull in both directions at once". If that is the lesson, then you and I may each assume the position of Alice, who "does not grow without shrinking, and vice versa" (Deleuze 1990, p. 1). We each may look through the looking-glass at class size and render it paradoxical by dint of our consciousness.

REFERENCES


