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**From colonial past to New Zealand classroom:  
The biographical narrative of Will Potter —  
Commercial secondary school teacher  
(1958–1976)**

*A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of*

*Doctor of Education*

*at Massey University, Manawatū, New Zealand*

**Jacqueline Monique Burne**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis tells the teaching story of one post-primary Commerce teacher, Will Potter—my father. Will taught in five New Zealand post-primary schools from 1958 until his retirement in 1976. This case study of Will looks at what makes his story unique: he was an immigrant of Dutch descent, whose first language was not English and who came to teaching without qualifications at age 51, and went on to write Commerce textbooks. He also began teaching at a significant time in New Zealand post-primary education—the 1950s, with rising school rolls and lack of teachers and facilities.

This qualitative study of Will involved document analysis of his memoir, letters, and papers, a focus group discussion with Will's three other children, and semi-structured interviews with people who taught with or were taught by Will. Four research questions guided the study, and sociocultural–historical theory was used as a framework to reveal the complexity of his personal, interpersonal, and wider contextual teaching story.

Two major backdrop influences are revealed about Will's life: his colonial background in what was the Netherlands East Indies (NEI; now Indonesia) and his internment in Japanese concentration camps during World War II (WWII). Reasons are provided for his decision to go teaching, and his pedagogical approaches are described. Of particular note is his storytelling, mainly of his internment experiences. He wrote eleven Commerce textbooks that were used in New Zealand post-primary and tertiary settings, as well as overseas.

This story will add to the store of New Zealand teacher stories as well as contribute to the social history of the Dutch who were forced to leave the NEI post WWII.

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As part of my doctoral studies, I was not alone in my journey. I was fortunate to be part of three doctoral support groups and the 2014 EdD cohort, sharing anecdotes and experiences with my fellow doctoral travellers. To the members of the Breakfast Club in Palmerston North, the Tauranga Group, my online buddies, and my fellow EdD cohort: thank you for sharing with and assisting me so openly. I was always in awe of your research, writing, and conference-presenting talents, technical acumen, and ability to balance study, full- or part-time work, and life.

To the people who so graciously offered to be part of the research process associated with Will's teaching story and shared so willingly of their experiences of having taught with or been taught by Will—thank you. It was a privilege for me to hear your stories, and I am grateful to you for sharing so openly and honestly about your own history. This thesis would not exist without your input.

Because this thesis is about my father, Will Potter, I must also thank my siblings for allowing me to research and write about our father. I am grateful that you allowed me to share this part of our family with the outside world and were so willing to be part of the research process as well. For you—and Will (Dad)—I dedicate this thesis.

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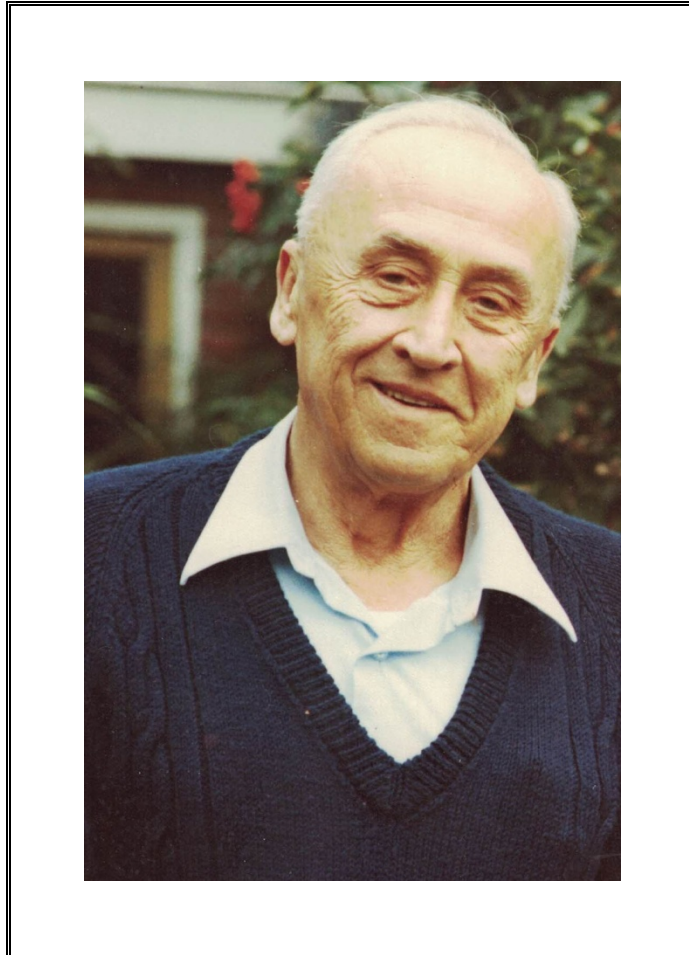
## TIME LINE OF MAJOR EVENTS AFFECTING WILL'S LIFE

- 1595 The Dutch arrived in what was to become the Netherlands East Indies (NEI).
- 1901 The Dutch introduced the Ethical Policy to the NEI.
- 1906 Will was born in Probolinggo, Java, Netherlands East Indies (Sugar Factory Ombul).
- 1912 July 1: Will began primary school in Surabaya, NEI.
- 1924 Will failed high school examination; returned to school for another year. Due to bank collapse, Will's father lost money and could not afford to pay Will's tertiary tuition costs.
- 1925 Will passed high school examination (age 19). On a Dutch passport, Will went to the Netherlands to study Accounting at the Dutch Trade School in Rotterdam; his uncle paid Will's tertiary fees.
- 1926 Will's first cycle trip to Switzerland.
- 1927 Will attempted his first oral examinations for his first five subjects at university.
- 1928 Will's second cycle trip to Switzerland and Germany.
- 1929 Will completed military service (Dutch)—six months.
- 1931 Will returned to NEI to work at Bunisarie, a remote rubber and coffee plantation on Java in the NEI.
- 1934 Will began working at Tanyong East rubber plantation just south of Batavia.
- Will began tutoring his boss's (at Tanyong East plantation) high school age daughter in the evenings in all subjects, including languages.
- New Zealand's Department of Education first School Certificate examination instituted in New Zealand post-primary schools as a school leaving examination for those not intending to go to university.
- 1937 Proficiency Examination abolished in New Zealand.
- 1938 Will paid off his student debt to his uncle's widow.
- 1939 World War II (WWII) began.
- Will became the manager of the Tjarui and Redjodadie Estates, situated in south Central Java.
- Will bought his first car.
- 1940 The Nazis occupied the Netherlands.

- 1941 Will married Loes Willemse on June 6 in Bandung, NEI.  
As a plantation manager, Will attended a meeting as to what to do should the Japanese invade.
- 1942 January: Netherlands East Indies invaded by Japan and surrenders.  
Will became a father when his first son was born on June 9 in Lawang (10 June, 2602 under Japanese time).  
July: Will interned in his first concentration camp, Kesilir.  
Thomas Commission set up in New Zealand to look at post-primary school Education.
- 1943 August: Will transferred to his second concentration camp, Banju Biru, just south of Semarang in Central Java.
- 1944 Will sent to next concentration camp at Tjikudapateuh in Bandung.  
February 1: New Zealand school leaving age raised from 14 to 15 years.  
Thomas Report released; included establishment of a new subject, Commercial Practice.  
Matriculation replaced by University Entrance Examination in New Zealand.
- 1945 May: European World War II ended.  
August 15: Pacific War ended.  
August 17: Sukarno declared independence of the NEI from the Netherlands.  
Indonesian civil war began.
- 1946 February: Will and his immediate family came to New Zealand the first time as 'Displaced Persons' to recuperate from their internment for six months, then returned to the Netherlands to await call up to NEI.
- 1947 Wellington Technical School set up first one-year Commercial teachers' training course.
- 1948 March: Will returned to NEI to a remote plantation amid the continuing civil war; Loes and their three children joined him about July.
- 1949 December: Republic of the United States of Indonesia proclaimed.  
Will and Loes made plans to emigrate to New Zealand.
- 1950 Republic of Indonesia proclaimed.  
Will and his family came to New Zealand, then on to Western Samoa to work for the New Zealand Reparations Estates.
- 1952 Post-Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) set up.

- 1953 Will had a new job as Accountant at the Treasury of Western Samoa.  
Will and his family became naturalised New Zealanders while on furlough in New Zealand.
- 1954 Will passed Stage 1 Accounting and Stage 1 Commercial Law.
- 1955 Will passed Stage 2 Accounting.
- 1956 Will and his family relocated to Auckland, New Zealand.  
Will began a job as an audit clerk at the Education Department in Auckland.
- 1957 Will's boss at the Education Department suggested to Will that he could teach Commercial subjects as a post-primary school teacher.  
Will applied for four post-primary school teacher positions: Avondale College; Pio Pio District High School (DHS); Te Kuiti High School; Onewhero DHS.  
Rotorua Boys High School contacted Will and also offered him a job.
- 1958 February 1: Will started teaching at Onewhero District High School.
- 1959 Will organised Onewhero DHS's textbooks.  
Will became the Careers Advisor at Onewhero DHS.
- 1960 Onewhero DHS girls' hockey team—coached by Will—beat Manurewa High School 11–0.
- 1961 Will started teaching as Head of Department (HOD) Commercial at Waiuku College.  
Will coached boys' hockey team.
- 1962 Will became the Treasurer to the Waiuku College Board of Governors.
- 1965 Will started teaching as HOD Commercial at Paeroa College.  
Will Treasurer to Paeroa College Board of Governors (three months).  
Will began marking School Certificate Commercial Practice examinations.
- 1967 Will started teaching as HOD Commercial at Spotswood College (New Plymouth).
- 1968 Will began self publishing textbooks: Suggested Answers to '*An Introduction to Accounting*' (1968 edition).
- 1969 Post-primary teachers' grading system abolished.  
Will wrote Suggested Answers to '*School Certificate Bookkeeping*'.  
Spotswood College is divided into three schools: East, West, and Senior.  
Will began marking School Certificate Bookkeeping examinations.

- 1970 Will self-published: *School Certificate Commercial Practice: Study Notes*.  
Will self-published: *School Certificate Commercial Practice: Revision*.  
Will self-published: *School Certificate Commercial Practice: Suggested Answers*.
- 1971 Will self-published: *Bookkeeping—The Why and the How*.
- 1973 Will self-published: Suggested Answers to '*An Introduction to Accounting*' (1972 edition).
- 1974 Will self-published: *UE Accounting: Theory and Practice*.  
Will self-published: *UE Accounting: Tests and Exercises*.  
Will self-published: *UE Accounting: Solutions*.
- 1975 Will began teaching as a pro rata teacher at Mount Maunganui College.
- 1976 Will retired from teaching at the end of the school year, aged 70.
- 1979 Will self-published: Suggested Answers to '*An Introduction to Accounting*' (1978 edition).
- 1982 Will wrote his memoir for his children.
- 1993 Will passed away February 15, aged 86 years.



*William George Potter (1906–1993)*

Source: Private Collection (c. 1979)



## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

*“Three good points about stories: if told, they like to be heard; if heard, they like to be taken in; and if taken in, they like to be told” (Carson, 1999, p.1).*

This thesis tells a teaching story. It is a case study of one teacher—Will Potter—who taught Commercial Practice, Bookkeeping, and Accounting in five New Zealand post-primary schools from 1958 until he retired at the end of 1976. Although the focus of the study will be on Will as a post-primary school teacher, it will also look at his experiences and life skills that he brought to the teaching profession. However, in telling Will’s story, this thesis also offers a broader account of Commerce and post-primary school teaching from 1958–1976. Will’s teaching story is one that is now told.

This introductory chapter begins by offering a short background about Will and the decision to tell his story. It then offers some information about myself as the researcher and writer of the thesis. The chapter then goes on to provide reasons and justification for the thesis, notes its aims and objectives, outlines the methodology, and ends with an overview of the chapters in the thesis itself.

#### **Background to the Study**

William George Potter (‘Will’) was born in the then Netherlands East Indies (NEI; now Indonesia) in 1906. Although his forebears were from England—hence, the English family name—he was the second generation in his family to be born in the Dutch colony. Will had a privileged upbringing, living within a servant-filled colonial culture that Peters (2006) considers was idyllic for the Dutch. In 1941, Will married Loes<sup>1</sup>, and their first child, a son, was born in 1942. The NEI of the 1930s and early 1940s, despite the Depression years, managed to retain its Dutch colonial culture. However, after the Japanese invaded the NEI in 1942, Will, along with Loes and their son, went on to experience internment, then civil war, the loss of all his possessions, ejection from his homeland, migration to New Zealand, the embracing of a new language and culture,

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<sup>1</sup> My Mother’s legal name was Louise, but I have opted to refer to her in this thesis as Loes, the Dutch version of the name and one which she was often called.

and, ultimately, two new careers—that of a post-primary school teacher of Commerce subjects and an author of Commerce textbooks.

The impetus to tell Will's story within the context of an academic thesis began as I considered doctoral study. His is an interesting story to tell, but Will also had five specific differences. First, he was an immigrant. His Dutch cultural upbringing in the NEI highlights his second difference: Dutch was his first language, not English. However, Will did learn English, German, and French at school in the NEI and also spoke other Indonesian dialects to the family servants and workers on the plantations where he lived and worked until 1942. Third, Will came to teaching relatively late in life at the age of 51 years, without a teaching qualification—his fourth point of difference. Finally, Will wrote textbooks for Commerce subjects that were in use throughout New Zealand and even overseas. These differences make Will's story one that could add interest to the cache of New Zealand's stories about teachers and their everyday work (1958–1976).

Will began teaching in New Zealand in the late 1950s, a decade that saw a rapid rise in the numbers of pupils entering and remaining at post-primary school. This meant there was a lack of teachers and school facilities. Post-primary schools were also adjusting to the changes initiated by the Thomas Report of 1944 with its emphasis on acknowledging pupils' individual differences and social development, and greater pupil involvement in school generally (Marshall, 1989; Whitehead, 1974). Teachers also had few and outdated resources and were often forced to teach core subjects with which they were neither familiar nor confident (Whitehead, 1974). The teacher shortage meant Will was able to enter the profession without a qualification, except for his commercial skills.

### **Introducing the Researcher**

Will Potter was my father. I am the youngest of his four children and the only one to be born in New Zealand. Will was never my teacher, and I did not attend any of the post-primary schools at which he taught, but I have had a lifelong interest in education, including that of my own, my children, and my students. I am a 'mature' student whose background is in primary school teaching, but I am now involved in

tertiary education. With my own teacher background, the idea of studying my father's teaching journey piqued my interest.

I also identify with Gouda's (1995) story about her own parents' experiences in pre-World War II (WWII) NEI. Although my parents spoke Dutch to each other but English to their children, like her, I recall both my parents speaking Indonesian (*Maleis*) words: *pisang* (banana), *ketimoen* (cucumber), and *sambal* (a spicy hot chilli relish). Our home fare was based on rice and included tasty Indonesian dishes. My parents occasionally made reference to *tempoe doeloe*<sup>2</sup>. The concept of having 'servants' was a foreign one for me and some of my generation, particularly those of us having been born and brought up in New Zealand. I even recall a heated 'discussion' around the dinner table as a 14-year-old, challenging my parents' servant culture, only to be told that this is the way it was. Gouda says she wonders about the millions of Indonesians who did not appear in any of her parents' photographs and thinks they "tended to be invisible, serving mostly as a silent backdrop to the hustle and bustle of the Dutch colonial community in which they lived and worked" (p. 12).

I went to Indonesia myself as an undergraduate student, hoping to learn more about Will's (and my Mother's) home country, but there were no landmarks or family homes to visit and only one distant relative who was doing research in Indonesia at the time. Bakhtin (1986) notes that "outsideness" (p. 7) is very meaningful in studying cultures; he goes on to say that it is only "in the eyes of *another* culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly" (p. 7; italics in the original; see also Freeman, 1997). Therefore, this potential study presented me with an opportunity to find out more about this colonial culture that Will grew up in, and that I feel affiliated to yet estranged from, both at the same time. Perhaps selfishly, through telling Will's story, I hoped that my research would also help me to find some of my own background and history, especially as Peters (2010) acknowledges that the most pressing concern for second generation Dutch—such as myself—is their Dutch roots, identity, and sense of belonging.

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<sup>2</sup> Collective memories of the good old days in the NEI.

## **Rationale for the Study**

I believe that the story of a New Zealand Commerce teacher (1958–1976) has not yet been told. Although studying a family member is not usual, others have done so. For example, Abramson (1992) researched the diaries of his late grandfather, a Russian-born Jew who migrated to the United States (US) at the beginning of the twentieth century. Similarly, Sewell and Bethell (2009) and Bethell and Sewell (2010) have studied the teaching experience of Sewell's mother who was a kindergarten teacher in 1940s New Zealand. Despite the obvious concern for bias and possible nepotism, this story about Will is one that needs to be told.

There are three main reasons why I wanted to tell Will's teaching story. First, Will passed away in 1993 and, in more recent times since my Mother died and as I have aged myself, I can relate to what Noam Chomsky, the noted American philosopher and linguist, revealed when his own father died: there is now nothing—or no one—standing between myself and eternity (Cordery, 2014). This has caused me to look back to the man who was my father and try to understand him more, and one way of doing this was to look at him in his role as a teacher. Second, I had heard that his former pupils seemed to learn a lot in his classes and they enjoyed his teaching, particularly his storytelling. Reflecting on these comments, I wondered if these previous pupils were sincere. A third reason is the generation gap between Will and myself. Will was 51 when I was born, so he was an older father and, although I loved and have many precious personal memories of him, there was not the same bond that comes with younger parents who have greater energy to play with or to be more involved with their children growing up. Therefore, I needed to identify more with this seemingly older man.

Like other children, I considered my father to be old and out of touch. In many ways, I was a little scared of him as he often seemed grumpy or distracted. He was a somewhat distant father but one I knew cared deeply for me and the rest of his family; he just did not—or perhaps could not—tell us this. Therefore, my interest was piqued again: was Will distant like this in his teaching, which is a pupil-focussed career?

Further, how did he approach teaching praxis, or the artistry of teaching, especially when he had no formal training in its craft?

Part of telling one teacher's story is to give them a 'face.' Teacher numbers and statistics might assist educational planning and record keeping, and are often useful for policymaking, but taking one teacher and bringing them to life can aid in realising that teachers are ordinary people too but can be extra-ordinary through their teaching endeavours. I liken this concept to a visual display at the Tauranga City Library: in making World War I pertinent to the local population, a photograph and some personal details of the local soldiers who were killed in the War showed that these were husbands, sons, fathers, and relatives. My story of Will is also similar to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin's (2009) description of the hermeneutic circle: in order to understand a part, we need to look at the whole, and to understand the whole, we need to look at the parts. Applying this concept to the study of Will—to understand Will as a teacher—I need to understand his background, the world he grew up in, and the world in which he taught in order to gain additional insight into, and understanding of, teachers and teaching, particularly within the New Zealand context; in turn, to understand teaching, I need to look at individual teachers like Will. Therefore, it is pertinent and useful to look at one such individual within the profession.

### **Justification for this Thesis**

There is reason to undertake research into what teachers do or did in their classrooms because it is important to understand the experiences of the everyday lives and work of teachers (Bethell & Sewell, 2010). Bethell and Sewell add that "Unlike the 'well-known' in education past, where significant traces of their lives remain in archives and official records, little such evidence exists of the lives and work of 'ordinary' teachers" (p. 14). In addition, Sewell and Bethell (2009) claim that it is important to "restore teachers' stories and their activities from historical invisibility and into our historical records" (p. 95). Individual teachers' stories have rarely been heard in the past (Middleton, 1998; Openshaw, Lee, & Lee, 1993) and, even if people are not interested in history, Jacoby (1977) argues that looking back helps people to learn from their

mistakes and triumphs, and to evaluate their future directions. In a somewhat cynical commentary on the plight of teachers, McCourt and Rice (2008) add:

In America, doctors, lawyers, army officers, actors, television people, and politicians are admired and rewarded. Not teachers. Teachers are spoken to politely but they aren't respected; they're congratulated on having such long vacations. When teachers stop working, they disappear into the shadows, hoping that one child will remember them. Keep dreaming, teacher. You won't be celebrated. (p. 2)

Thus, Will's story is one that could add to knowledge of pedagogical techniques, teaching experiences, and background influences, and it could also be interesting for other teachers and educationalists to read. It might even be celebrated and make known some of the invisible yet vital work of teachers that deserves respect.

The significance of this thesis is that it can bring to life not only one teacher's story but also one whose story is set within a particular historical context—the 1950s to 1970s. While such stories are important for teacher motivation and inspiration, they also have value for identification: other teachers may have been or are going through similar situations and issues. This thesis is also significant in that it tells the story of one Dutch immigrant from the NEI and what happened to him after he left his homeland. Even though this thesis is about teaching, it also explains some of Will's internment experiences that affected him and most of the NEI Dutch of his generation, thus personalising some of the effects of war. Willems (2003) explains that the social history of the Dutch who were once part of the colonial Dutch empire needs to be told, and Will's is one such story.

This thesis, then, relates one teacher's story but it can only be "partial and fragmentary" (Bethell & Sewell, 2010, p. 26). I cannot begin to know such things as the complete motivation why Will went teaching or the full influences that affected his role. I cannot adequately describe a culture I have never experienced nor convey in words what it means to be imprisoned or stateless. I have never known hunger or the loss of all my worldly possessions. However, I can take what I have found out about Will through documents, his memoir, and interviews and offer personal interpretations and a partial story of Will's teaching career.

## **Aims and Objectives of the Thesis**

In any such case study, it is important to have a focus so that the research has a framework in which to be situated. Therefore, in keeping with the intention to tell Will's teaching story, the aims of this thesis are threefold:

1. To explore Will's experiences as a post-primary school Commerce teacher from 1958 until his retirement in 1976;
2. To make connections between his migrant experiences and background and his teaching practices in New Zealand; and
3. To add to the cache of teacher stories in New Zealand.

In accordance with these aims, four research questions emerged to guide the study. Research questions in case study research focus on what can be learned from the specific case rather than on generalisations, so research questions are vital to any such case study project (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). In a case study approach, questions may relate not only to a description of the case but also to the themes or ideas that emerge from the case study (Creswell, 2014; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). Initially, I wanted to know about Will's own personal, social, and cultural backgrounds that would all affect Will as he entered teaching, especially in a foreign country. Therefore, my first research question is:

1. *What key life experiences shaped Will before he started teaching?*

Will was 51 when he began teaching—relatively late in life to begin a new career—so it was important to know why Will decided to go teaching in the first place. This desire to understand Will's choice to go teaching then led to the second research question:

2. *What motivated Will to go post-primary teaching?*

Will had no teaching qualifications nor a degree yet he went on to teach for 19 years, so there must have been certain techniques that he utilised in his teaching to stay in the profession. In keeping with positive comments I had heard about his teaching style, I felt I needed to know more detail about what exactly went on inside his classrooms. Hence, the third research question is:

3. *What teaching approaches did Will use?*

During Will's time as part of the education community in New Zealand, he taught and became a Head of Department and also went on to write Commerce textbooks in his chosen subjects. Therefore, I wondered what sort of contribution he made to Commerce teaching (and learning) in New Zealand, especially as very few teachers write such resources for schools. This then led to my fourth and final research question:

4. *What was Will's contribution to Commerce teaching in New Zealand?*

## **Methodology**

In keeping with my desire to tell Will's teaching story, this is a qualitative study. I have positioned myself as a biographer, seeking information from a variety of sources, but focussing most on talking with those who taught with, or were taught by, Will. My natural inclination is interpretive but, within this case study, more descriptive information was needed to offer a richer and more detailed depiction of Will and his teaching (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). The methods used to gather data involved analysing documents, including photographs and letters; a focus group discussion with my siblings; and semi-structured interviews with those who knew Will within the post-primary school context. These methodological aspects are further discussed in Chapter 4.

## **Outline of the Thesis**

This thesis comprises seven chapters. The first is this Introduction, which has introduced and justified my study, leading to Chapter 2 that provides the background to this thesis. This background includes information about the former Netherlands East Indies where Will grew up and where he mainly lived until he was 44 years old. The chapter also provides information about Will himself prior to going teaching, including his childhood, student years in the Netherlands, plantation work, and internment. There is also information about World War II in the NEI and internment in general, thus adding to Will's background experiences. The chapter also contains some general explanations of Dutch social and cultural characteristics and immigration to New Zealand. These details respond to Research Question 1.

Chapter 3 reviews the body of wider research relevant to this thesis. A review is made of sociocultural and sociocultural–historical theories that are used as lenses through which to analyse Will’s story. The chapter also includes a section on 1950s post-primary education in New Zealand, reviewing some of the political and social conditions that affected post-primary teachers of the day.

Chapter 4 explains more fully the methodology and methods guiding this thesis. Explanations are included of my own worldview as well as the use of case study and story within this thesis. Self-reflexivity—an important aspect of a qualitative study and especially one involving a parent or relative—is discussed. Data collection methods are also outlined, as are aspects such as sampling, analysis, validity and reliability, and ethics.

Chapter 5 is Will’s story. It is told in a somewhat linear fashion and as chronologically as possible, although particular themes are accentuated. The answers to Research Questions 2, 3, and 4 are contained within this chapter.

Chapter 6—the Discussion chapter—draws out relevant themes from Chapter 5 for further and closer examination, informed by the wider literature. The chapter discusses particular aspects of Will’s story, such as his storytelling and his writing of Commerce textbooks, that emerged from the data set.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis, summarising the main points noted in the thesis as viewed through a sociocultural–historical lens. As this is the end of the thesis, this chapter seemed an appropriate place to note some of my own self-reflexive thoughts in carrying out this research. The chapter also reiterates the significance of this thesis, notes some ideas for future research, lists some limitations, and ends with some final comments.

## **Chapter 2**

### **HISTORICAL AND PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

*“Interpretive studies are organized in terms of a biographically meaningful event or moment in a subject’s life” (Denzin, 2008, p. 117).*

A person’s background means more than a list of dates and events but involves their experience of, and reaction to, major happenings, which become personalised meaningful events. Hence, in telling such an historical story of Will, it is important to have some understanding of the contextual background that influenced him. The first part of this chapter, therefore, talks about the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) where Will was born and spent the first half of his life. The second part gives a brief history of Will as a person until just before he began post-primary teaching in New Zealand in 1958 and which answers Research Question 1 about key experiences that served to shape Will prior to teaching. The third part of this chapter explores Dutch immigration to New Zealand as well as assimilation into New Zealand society. Throughout this chapter, the likely impact of these sociocultural–historical issues on Will as a teacher is highlighted.

#### **The Netherlands East Indies (NEI)**

Will was born and grew up in the NEI (now Indonesia), a South-east Asian archipelago made up of about 13,466 islands, with nearly 1,000 being permanently uninhabited (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2018). The country is situated between the Indian and North Pacific Oceans and covers approximately two million square kilometres (see Figure 2.1). The population was estimated in 2017 to be 260,580,739 people (CIA, 2018). In 1942, when still a Dutch colony, the NEI’s population was made up of approximately 70,000,000 indigenous people and about 300,000 Dutch, both ethnic and political (Gouda, 1995; see also Kemperman’s foreword in de Jong, 2002).



Figure 2.1. Map of Indonesia.<sup>3</sup>

The NEI has a long history. The origin of the Indonesian people is not known (Fischer, 1959), but there are records of Indonesia in Islamic records from 1,000 AD (J. G. Taylor, 2003). European history traces Indonesia as being the Spice Islands: Europeans needed spices to prevent their meat from rotting, and their aversion to Islam meant they tried to avoid the Arab markets and came east in the 16th and 17th centuries looking for cloves, nutmeg, and mace. At that time of smaller and slower boats and high fatality rates at sea, spices were valuable cargo due to their compactness and high prices (Fischer, 1959). The Dutch came to the pepper ports of Indonesia in 1595 where the Indonesian people had “cities, temples, governments, irrigation systems, handicrafts, shipping, art, and literature” (Fischer, 1959, p. 9).

The Dutch traders gradually developed more control in the islands and, in 1602, Dutch commercial companies merged to form the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) or the United East Indies Company (J. G. Taylor, 2003), thus establishing Dutch power in the region. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the VOC was the largest employer in the islands, and it dominated the trade routes between the Netherlands and Asia. As a company, the VOC had political and economic powers and became the major

<sup>3</sup> Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Atlas\\_of\\_Indonesia](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Atlas_of_Indonesia). Reproduced in accordance with the Wikimedia Foundation’s Terms of Use.

importer of Asian goods—such as spices, coffee, copper, gold, and even opium—to Europe. The VOC also had some involvement in the slave trade in the Indies and the Indian Ocean (Bosma, 2012; Oostindie, 2012; Vink, 2003). The VOC's first site in the NEI was called Jayakarta (later Batavia, and today Jakarta), and it remained as the Dutch capital after the VOC was disbanded in 1800 and the Dutch government took over the ports. Initially, Dutch women were not permitted to go to the NEI, so the early VOC (male) workers used the indigenous people as servants, concubines, and, according to Knight (2001), as slaves until the 1850s.

Besides spices, the NEI was known for other plants and products. Coffee was introduced to the NEI by the VOC in 1696 (J. G. Taylor, 2003). When Will arrived in New Zealand, he could not understand why everyone seemed to drink tea when he had been brought up drinking coffee, exemplifying different social mores. Tobacco was brought in by the Spanish and Portuguese from North America in the 16th century. Rubber was a “British creation” (T. K. Taylor, 2006, p. xxi) after the British took control of Batavia from 1811–1816 (J. G. Taylor, 2009), but the demand for rubber really increased after the pneumatic tyre was invented in 1888 and the development of the car industry after 1900 (Hayashi, 2002). Will himself worked on rubber plantations during the 1930s and early 1940s on the island of Java, thus developing his managerial skills that were later used in his teaching. Sugar plantations were plentiful on Java during the mid-nineteenth century (Knight, 2001), and Will was born on one such sugar plantation—Ombul.

Dutch control of the NEI was strongly set during 1850–1940 (J. G. Taylor, 2003). By 1930, around 70 per cent of those classed as ‘European’ had been born in the NEI, one of whom was Will. Dutch arrivals after 1870 felt they had licence to live as the Indonesians did with morning coffee, afternoon siestas, men wearing white suits and changing to batik-style pyjamas afterwards, and partaking of the *rijstaffel*<sup>4</sup> (J. G. Taylor, 2009). Will, born in 1906, was also brought up eating Indonesian food, and he continued this Asian style of eating when he came to New Zealand, even though ‘meat and three veges’ seemed to be the norm in the 1950s. Women, including Will's

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<sup>4</sup> A ‘rice table’ consisting of rice and various spicy meat and vegetable dishes. This Dutch name for the banquet is still used today.

European mother, wore the indigenous *sarong* (skirt) and *kebaya* (blouse; Knight, 2001; J. G. Taylor, 2009).

By the early twentieth century, the NEI, being 60 times the size of the Netherlands and having seven times its population, was a very valuable colony (Friend, 1988). The NEI Dutch were a wealthy and privileged group (Imhoff & Beets, 2004), and the retirement age for civil servants in the NEI (the main occupation for the Dutch) was between 40–50 years, relatively young compared to what Will later experienced, retiring from teaching at the age of 70. Although it was a small country, the Netherlands was considered to be a “colonial giant” (Gouda, 1995, p. 41). Gouda explains:

Owing to Holland’s small population and its undistinguished military presence in Europe, Dutch colonial administrators could not rely on crude power or brute force. Instead, many among them saw their primary role as one of governing their districts with more anthropological learning, greater cultural sensitivity, and better political skills than any other imperial power in Asia. (p. 41)

Therefore, in recognition of the large Muslim population in the NEI, the Dutch instituted a new moral plan called the “Ethical Policy” (J. G. Taylor, 2003, p. 283; see also Gouda, 1995; Kemperman’s foreword in de Jong, 2002; Locher-Scholten, 1994) at the turn of the twentieth century to provide education, health facilities, and infrastructure for the local population as well as to alleviate their harsh working conditions (Hayashi, 2002). The Policy’s underlying theme was one of patriarchy whereby the Dutch would develop and tutor the Indonesian population according to Western ideals (Locher-Scholten, 1994). Civil servants began to be trained in this way of thinking but many still considered Indonesians to be child-like and naive.

The Communist Party was established in the NEI in 1920 when Will was 14. Later, when Will was 21 and living abroad, the Communists in West Sumatra rebelled in 1927, and 13,000 were arrested, with 4,500 jailed and 1,308 sent to prison camps (J. G. Taylor, 2003). Gouda (1995) suggests that these were the first concentration camps, much like the later Japanese ones where Will was interned and which formed the basis of many of his teaching stories. The nationalism movement grew in the NEI at the same time as the development of the Ethical Policy. However, the Dutch did not consider self-rule for the NEI was an option, and the NEI essentially became a police

state, with controls on the press and on political meetings (Kemperman's foreword in de Jong, 2002).

The early Dutch to the NEI embraced the use of servants due to the intense heat and their desire for a more relaxed life (Locher-Scholten, 1994). Most Europeans or Dutch colonials had between 3–10 Indonesian servants, with the wealthier having more and the poorer less (perhaps one), even during the Depression (Locher-Scholten, 1994). Will had servants throughout his time in the NEI, even when he was a single man on remote plantations on Java during the 1930s and early 1940s. Being a servant was less popular for the Indonesians than other forms of work (Locher-Scholten, 1994). However, servants were paid and also had free accommodation in the outhouses on the colonial properties (Lanzing, 2017; Locher-Scholten, 1994). Indonesians had to sometimes bow to the Dutch and certainly sit at a lower level in their presence, and colonial values meant that housekeepers had to appear 'invisible' when serving the Dutch (J. G. Taylor, 2009).

Like Javanese society, the Dutch also had a stratified social system. Many Dutch considered the Indonesians to be less developed than themselves (Locher-Scholten, 1994), and some even thought the indigenous Indonesians were the 'missing link' in the evolutionary scale, hence justifying their lower place in the social order (Gouda, 1995). In terms of race issues, initially, the NEI was open to inter-racial marriage (Laarman, 2013), but, by 1900, the growing number of people of mixed descent was considered to be "a threat to white prestige and as a sign of degeneration and moral decline" (Laarman, 2013, p. 52). Race was also an issue for Will, who was interned because he was white yet had to prove he was white when wanting to come to New Zealand in the 1950s.

The NEI stood alone after the Netherlands surrendered to Germany at the beginning of World War II (WWII) in 1940. Japan coveted the NEI's oil, bauxite (for aluminium), tin, and rubber for their war effort (de Jong, 2002), so invasion was a real threat. As Friend (1988) explains, "peace without oil was excruciating; war without oil was impossible; oil without the Indies was unthinkable" (p. 55). When the Japanese invaded Indonesia in January 1942, they wanted to show that the Dutch colonial regime was over, and,

within months, Dutch men, women, and children—about 100,000 of them—were rounded up and interned in concentration camps where they stayed for the remainder of the Pacific War (Bosma, 2012). Will and his extended family were part of this interned group.

Many of the Indonesians welcomed the Japanese invasion as a means to rid them of their colonial oppressors, the Dutch (Emery, 2010). After the Pacific War ended on August 15, 1945, Sukarno<sup>5</sup> declared independence on the 17 August, and a civil war called the *Bersiap*<sup>6</sup> ensued (Peters, 2006). The Dutch camp survivors were then endangered again as nationalist extremists vented their violent tendencies on the ex-interned Dutch, who were encouraged to stay in their concentration camps, protected by their Japanese captors (Peters, 2008). Troops from the Netherlands, sent to the NEI to try to retain the colony as part of the Dutch empire, were also accused of excess violence and executions (Gouda, 1995; Luttikhuis & Moses, 2012). Following the war for control of the NEI, the Republic of the United States of Indonesia was proclaimed in December 1949 but went on to become the Republic of Indonesia in 1950.

This history of the NEI provides a brief picture of the broad social, cultural, and political contexts, enabling Will's story to be better understood. The next section focuses on Will's own background up until the time he went teaching and further expands on the key experiences that shaped him prior to teaching: namely, his colonial background and internment.

## **Will**

### **Will's colonial and Dutch background**

Will was born at the Ombul Sugar Factory (see Figure 2.2) near Probolinggo in the NEI on July 2, 1906. His brother, John, was four years older than Will, and his sister, Jane, 11 years younger. His father, John Potter, who had also been born in Probolinggo, was the Chief Engineer at the sugar factory at the time. Will was part of the 'Indies-Dutch,' a term Pattynama (2012) uses to describe white Dutch people who had lived in the NEI

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<sup>5</sup> A leader of the nationalist movement and Indonesia's first President.

<sup>6</sup> Prepare for action.

for generations. Will grew up speaking Dutch in his home and travelled on a Dutch passport. His family were relatively wealthy as evidenced by the dress, spacious home, and toys seen in the photograph in Figure 2.3. Will attended pre-school (referred to as Fröbel schools in the NEI) in Probolinggo, about five kilometres from Ombul, and was taken there in a horse-drawn buggy (Memoir, p. 259).



Figure 2.2. Postcard of Ombul Sugar Factory, c.1899.

Source: Used with permission from eBay.

Will began primary school in Surabaya—where the family had shifted—on the first day of the school year (1 July) in 1912 at the age of six, which was the usual time to begin schooling under the Dutch system (Memoir, p. 261). His school day began at 7.30am, being the cooler part of the day, and finished at noon, five days per week, and until 11am on Saturdays. There were seven classes in primary school, after which Will had to pass a High School Entrance Examination in Dutch, French, and Arithmetic before he could proceed to post-primary school. All the subjects he took at post-primary school were compulsory and all academic, including English and German (Memoir, p. 261). In Will's time, the only subject choice he had was in the fifth class at post-primary school when he could opt for either Bookkeeping or Technical Drawing (Memoir, p. 262); he chose the former and later taught the subject in New Zealand. There was no social promotion, which Will later encountered in New Zealand, and pupils had to repeat a class if their grades were not good enough to proceed to the next level. Will describes how the Dutch marking system that went from 1 to 10 had been informally explained to him: "10 was for God, 9 for the teacher, and when you were brilliant the best you could expect was an 8" (Memoir, p. 262). He mentions that a '5' for subjects like

Mathematics, Physics, and languages was not a pass. There was no corporal punishment, either at primary or post-primary level—another difference that Will noticed when he began teaching.



*Figure 2.3.* Will (left) and John in their playroom in the NEI, c. 1910.  
Source: Potter Family Archives.

In 1924, aged 18 (see Figure 2.4), Will failed his first attempt to pass the school leaving examination, similar to University Entrance (Memoir, p. 262). He was disappointed by his failure and returned to school for another year, this time passing in 1925. He had to sit three-hour (a five-hour one for Dutch) written examinations, much like the later School Certificate ones in New Zealand, followed by half-hour oral examinations with his teacher and an inspector from the Education Department as a moderator for all his 13 subjects except Biology, which had no examination.



*Figure 2.4.* Will, aged 18 years.

Source: Potter Family Archives.

His examinations for French, German, and English were all in the vernacular and,

interestingly, Will attained a 7 for English but a 6 for Dutch (Memoir, p. 263), perhaps putting him in good stead for his later life in New Zealand. He got a 9 for Accounting that he would later teach and a 7 for Economics, showing his skill in these Commercial subjects.

Will then went to the Netherlands for his university study. It was usual for Europeans and others living in colonial societies to be sent back to Europe for tertiary study, and university degrees from overseas were highly valued (Friend, 1988). As Will's father lost most of his money when his bank went into voluntary liquidation in 1924, he could not afford to finance Will's education, but Will's uncle agreed to pay for his tertiary study (Memoir, p. 264). There were no governmental student loans in the 1920s, and usually only the wealthy could afford the tertiary fees. Because Will wanted to be an Accountant for a large company (Memoir, p. 264), allowing for greater career opportunities, he enrolled at the *Nederlandsche Handelshoogeschool*<sup>7</sup> in Rotterdam on the advice of his high school Bookkeeping and Economics teacher.

Will encountered academic failure a second time, this occasion in his tertiary study, and he never passed his degree. The system at the time, according to Will, was of up to seven lectures per week for 11 subjects, with classes running from 9am to 5pm each week day and from 9am until noon on Saturdays (Memoir, p. 266). Will experienced didactic style teaching, unable to discuss ideas or ask questions. At the end of two years of study, he had to take oral examinations in five of these subjects, with three lecturers interrogating him about his work from the preceding two years. He was required to wear formal morning dress<sup>8</sup>, which he hired for each of the examinations (Memoir, p. 267). At his first attempt in 1927, he passed in four of the subjects but had to spend a further five months on Economics and was not able to sit the oral examinations for the remaining six subjects (Memoir, p. 118). At his next attempt five months later, Will passed Economics and three other subjects but had to do an extra three months for Civil and Commercial Law. He eventually tried to pass all of these orals five times and, each time, had to come back for one of the subjects. In the end,

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<sup>7</sup> Loosely translated as the Dutch Trade School, now the Erasmus School of Economics.

<sup>8</sup> Morning dress usually consists of a coat with tails, waistcoat, and striped trousers for men.

he gave up and returned to the NEI in 1931, owing more than f<sup>9</sup>10,000 to his uncle (Memoir, p. 118), and it took him until 1938 to pay off the debt (Memoir, p. 271). Will gives no reason why he was unable to pass his oral examinations.

Will initially lived in Delft during his student years, and, later, in *den Haag* (The Hague). During the six years that Will spent in the Netherlands, he could not afford to return to the NEI for the summers so, instead, he cycled through parts of Europe (Memoir, p. 271; see Figure 2.5). Will was also conscripted into the Dutch Army while a student. Conscription was compulsory in the 1920s and failure to complete it could influence later employment, even in the NEI (Memoir, p. 267). Because Will was a Dutch citizen, he was chosen by ballot and completed his six month military service in 1929 with the Royal Grenadiers at Waalsdorp, near *den Haag* (see Figure 2.6).



*Figure 2.5.* Will on one of his cycling trips in the 1920s (Will is at far left).  
Source: Potter Family Archives.

Will was also part of a band during his student years and beyond. As a child, Will began to play the piano, spending many leisure hours at the instrument but never taking formal lessons and playing mostly by ear (Memoir, p. 60). In the 1920s in the

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<sup>9</sup> The 'f' relates to Dutch East Indies guilders, the currency of the time in the Netherlands East Indies. The sum of 10,000 Dutch guilders in 1931 would equate to about €85,000 (<http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate.php>) or NZ\$145,000 in 2018 (<http://www.x-rates.com/calculator/?from=EUR&to=NZD&amount=85000>).

Netherlands, he was a member of a student dance band called the *Rhythm Kings* (Memoir, p, 260; see Figure 2.7), playing jazz music most Saturday evenings during the winters. This commitment to the band may explain why Will did not pass his examinations. Later, in the mid-1930s, Will was also part of another band, *Simon's Band*, when he worked on a plantation near Batavia that gave half-hour dance music interludes over the local radio station, and he also played for the *Brown's Sugar Babies*, one of the best Batavian bands. Will's piano skills were later used in his teaching career as accompaniment to pupils' dance lessons, at various teacher functions, and at school assemblies.



Figure 2.6. Will (centre) at Waalsdoorp, c. 1929.

Source: Potter Family Archives.

In 1931, Will returned from the Netherlands to the NEI to work on various plantations in the colony, some of which were in remote locations with no access roads and where life could be solitary and lonely. Initially, Will found work at a rubber and coffee plantation owned by *Pirelli*, an Italian company, at Bunisarie, near the south coast of West Java (Memoir, p. 272). Here he had to learn two new languages—high and low Sundanese—to communicate with the workers and the servants. He initially worked seven days a week but, after 1937, had four days off per month (Memoir, p. 274). He bought and refurbished his first piano here so that it was good enough to play

(Memoir, p. 282). Will had three servants in Bunisarie—a cook, a house boy, and a laundry maid—and the latter two stayed with Will until 1942 as he moved from plantation to plantation. In 1934, he began working on the Tanyong East rubber plantation just south of Batavia (Memoir, p. 277) and, while there, he began tutoring his boss's post-primary school age daughter (Memoir, p. 279; see more in Chapter 5). In 1939, Will became the manager of the Tjarui and Redjodadie Estates, situated in south Central Java and owned by two absentee-landowner British families (Memoir, p. 287). He was also able to purchase his first car in 1939 (Memoir, p. 288).



*Figure 2.7.* The Rhythm Kings, c. 1920s. Will is at the piano.  
Source: Potter Family Archives.

Will's memoir actually begins in June 1941 when he describes a meeting of NEI plantation managers and staff being instructed as to what items to destroy should the country be invaded: cars, motorcycles, bicycles, engine oil, diesel oil, and petrol (Memoir, p. 1). Will considered the meeting to be a waste of time and thought it incredulous that Japan would invade the NEI. However, this they did in January 1942, and in March, after the NEI capitulated, Will had to destroy the aforementioned items as well as bid his servants farewell. Will had married Loes, my Mother, in June 1941, but, as she was having their first child, Will sent her to be with his mother in Lawang in

East Java to await the birth (Memoir, p. 3). By the time the baby was born on June 9, 1942, the NEI was under Japanese time, and Will's son's birth date was registered as 10 June, 2602<sup>10</sup> (Memoir, p. 16).

This brief summary of Will's life serves to paint a picture of Will and his life in a colonial society as well as in Europe during the 1920s. Returning to the NEI in 1931, he then had to take on a relatively low-paying job as a manager on a remote plantation on Java. By 1942, he was a married man and a father. The year 1942 was also the beginning of the second influential occurrence in Will's life: internment.

### **Internment**

Will was sent to his first concentration camp in July 1942 (Memoir, p. 17), and, in September, Dutch women and children, including Will's wife and their infant son, were interned as well (de Jong, 2002). When imprisoning the Dutch civilian population, the Japanese told the internees that they were not prisoners of war but, rather, "Guests of the Emperor of Japan" (Emery, 2010, p. 59), which is perhaps why the title of Will's memoir is: 'Hotel "Great Japan," et al.'. Will's first concentration camp was Kesilir in the south-eastern part of Java (Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies (NIOD), 2018; Memoir, p. 19). The Japanese set up a camp in this remote area so that the internees could support themselves through agriculture (de Jong, 2002). Verheem (1979, pp. 24–25, cited in de Jong, 2002, p. 491) explains the conditions at Kesilir:

Sombre men, their world violated, their lives disrupted, stunned by imprisonment and the loss of dominion, unaccustomed to bowing to oriental rulers. After years of issuing orders and being obeyed, now aimlessly staring, weak, limp, many finding a quick death in this place of exile due to resentment and sorrow.

Will, however, had the strength of character to not only survive but to be a leader in the camp. The men there worked to repair the huts for habitation and to plant and

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<sup>10</sup> The Japanese 'Kouki' dating system was to honour the first Emperor, Jimmu, who ascended the throne in 660 BC; therefore, 660 years were added to the Gregorian calendar to establish the year. The dating system was instituted by Japan or 'Nippon' (as it decreed to be known) on 29 April, 1942 (Emperor Hirohito's birthday). The NEI capitulated in March 1942/2602, and the system was used in the archipelago until the end of the Pacific War on 15 August, 1945/2605. ([http://japanseburgerkampen.org/vjb/cms/cms\\_module/index.php?lang=eng&obj\\_id=16133](http://japanseburgerkampen.org/vjb/cms/cms_module/index.php?lang=eng&obj_id=16133))

harvest, but the Kesilir experiment was unsuccessful and the men (with Will among them) were transferred to other camps in August 1943. Will was then sent to Banju Biru, a real prison just south of Semarang in Central Java (Memoir, p. 45) where Will explains the herd instinct whereby “*shared misery means halved misery*” (Memoir, p. 54). In 1944, he was then taken to a military barracks in Tjikudapateuh in Bandung (Memoir, p. 58) where Loes and their son were also held in a women’s camp. Near the end of WWII, the Japanese eventually planned to kill all the prisoners of war, but the dropping of the atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima saved the lives of thousands of internees (Emery, 2010), including Will and his family.

Conditions in the camps were harsh. Sometimes the internees would eat frogs or other animals to ward off hunger (Lanzing, 2017). There was also the constant waiting—for news, the War to end, or the day to pass. Emery (2010) describes the general conditions that Will would have suffered:

Poor sanitation yielded the spread of infection, disease, and death. Camp hospitals were always crowded and only serious case patients were admitted ... The high level of humidity and heat triggered boils and tropical ulcers that never healed and were constantly infected by swarms of mosquitoes. The Japanese hoarded all of the Red Cross packages, so the camp hospitals had limited supplies of cleansing cloths, bandages, and sanitary needles. Little or no medicine was available during the entire time of internment. (p. 22)

Overcrowding in the camps generally was also an issue (Frederick’s foreword in Lanzing, 2017), especially as the war dragged on.

Will suffered during his time in the camps. In 1942, he was separated from his wife of one year as well as his infant son and other family members. He does not record if any of his extended (male) family members were with him in any of the camps, so it would have been a relatively lonely experience. To add to his suffering, Will also endured lack of food. For example, Will had a piece of bread and a cup of tea for his evening ‘meal’ (Memoir, p. 82). Potts (1994) notes that most internees lost about 60 per cent of their body weight over the three years of internment. A further effect of hunger and malnutrition would be that as the war and internment progressed, internees like Will would have lost energy and physical strength so that it was difficult just to survive. This slowing down and listlessness would also have meant that internees could sometimes

withdraw into themselves, thus producing apathy (Frankl, 1959/2006). Will's focus on wanting to see Loes and their son again was a strong motivation for survival for him but, nevertheless, his psychological well-being would have been affected.

In the camps, Will was also exposed to diseases, such as beriberi, dengue fever, malaria, dysentery, and tuberculosis (Potts, 1994). Will also mentions oedema<sup>11</sup> due to a lack of vitamins (Memoir, p. 68). Like others in the camps, Will was beaten: for example, on the back of the ribs (Memoir, p. 63); his head (Memoir, p. 56); behind the knees (Memoir, p. 76); and with a bull whip on his back and shoulders (Memoir, p. 76). Will maintains that his later shortness of breath was a result of his camp years as well. Immediately after the war, Will also suffered from dizzy spells, and his body was also covered in boils, possibly due to his weakened immune system (Memoir, p. 96). Such experiences were stressful, as was the uncertainty of not knowing when and if the war would end, if loved ones were alive, when the next punishment would come, and if there would be food to eat that day (Potts, 1994). Not knowing the length of internment was a particular stress (Frankl, 1959/2006). Matussek (1975) writes about some internees (in the Holocaust) having the self-will to endure and survive the atrocities of camp life, and Will talks about his goal in the camp to "*get out alive*" (Memoir, p. 78).

Will admits that his camp experience was a difficult one. However, he also acknowledges the power of prayer and his trust in God (Memoir, p. 78). He admits he was not a religious person, despite his conversion to Catholicism to marry Loes in 1941, but adds that "*even during the severest setbacks in my life since our liberation I have never lost faith in prayer*" (Memoir, p. 78).

Others had different memories or perspectives of the concentration camp experiences in the NEI. Frederick (foreword in Lanzing, 2017) talks about *Oostindisch Kampsyndroom* (East Indies Camp Syndrome) or the "hysterical need to sensationalize—indeed lie about—the Indies wartime experience" (p. xvi). The conditions there were not like the German ones with barbed wire and search lights (Lanzing, 2017). Rather, the NEI camp experience was more about boredom, quarrels,

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<sup>11</sup> Swelling due to water retention in the body.

hopelessness, and lack of food—in direct contrast to Emery’s (2010) description of the health issues. However, Lanzing was a young boy when he was interned and, as such, had different impressions of the camp experience. He also contradicted himself at times, stating that the camp food was adequate then going on to talk about the emaciated children in Cideng camp post-WWII. Nevertheless, such different perspectives are important to note and acknowledge. Some may have thought that Will’s retelling of his camp experiences in later years, particularly in his teaching, was unusual at best or diminishing of its seriousness at worst.

Some of the effects of concentration camp syndrome—in both Europe and the NEI—were anxiety, irritability, preoccupation with the past, and feelings of alienation, and these symptoms did not always manifest until decades later (Bramsen, 1995; Potts, 1994). In many ways, Will exemplified these effects within his teaching career in that he often worried; could be impatient and grumpy; continually talked about the past to his pupils and others, especially of his internment; and did not always feel fully accepted in New Zealand. Will survived the camp experience, as well as the subsequent civil war for what is now Indonesia, the latter influencing his decision to leave what was his homeland (the former NEI) in 1950 and his permanent stay on the New Zealand mainland in 1956.

### **Will leaves his homeland**

After their internment during WWII, Will and his family were part of a relatively small group of ex-interned Dutch from the NEI who were able to come to New Zealand aboard the hospital ship *Tasman* (see Figure 2.8) to recuperate in 1946 (Harper, 1954; Memoir, p. 108; van Dongen, 1992). Will and his family initially came to New Zealand as refugees or ‘evacuees’ in formal documents (Harper, 1954). Will refers to himself and his family as ‘Displaced Persons’ (Memoir, p. 24). The evacuees were “a pitiable sight when the ship left Batavia on January 26, but soon recuperated” (“Dutch Evacuees,” 1946, p. 6) and arrived here with “sad eyes, friendly smiles” (“Dutch Cameos,” 1946, p. 8). Although Will and his family spent time at ‘Kolonie Miramar’ in Wellington (Schouten, 1992), the ex-NEI Dutch were also welcomed into the homes of New Zealanders (Memoir, pp. 112, 115-6). Will and his family stayed in New Zealand

for approximately six months before returning to the Netherlands to await a call back to the Indonesian plantations.

After two years in Europe, Will went back to Java in March 1948 (Memoir, pp. 131–2), and Loes and their now three children followed some months later (Memoir, p. 153). Due to the isolation of the plantations, the guerrilla warfare and the civil war for independence, and already having been separated for most of their married life, Will eventually resigned from his plantation position at the end of 1948. Instead, he got a job at the Foreign Exchange Control Bureau in Jakarta (Memoir, p. 165).



*Figure 2.8.* The Tasman en route from Auckland to Wellington, 1946.

Source: Private Collection.

Like many other colonial Dutch, Will wanted to return to his pre-WWII life in the Dutch Indies, but the ensuing civil war of the later 1940s resulted in the state of Indonesia being created in 1949 and the expulsion of most Europeans. Thousands of expatriate Dutch ventured to the Netherlands, but Will and his family chose to come to New Zealand, having no affiliation with Europe and believing a better lifestyle awaited them here. In 1950, Will and his family came to New Zealand for good, along with 503 other

Dutch people (Blauw, 2006), arriving with a few suitcases to their name (Memoir, p. 178). Soon after, they boarded the *Matua* for Western Samoa because Will had secured a job at the New Zealand Reparation Estates as an assistant manager on one of their plantations (Memoir, p. 181). These land holdings were previously owned by Germany and had to be handed over as reparation after the Versailles Peace Treaty signed after World War I (New Zealand Reparation Estate Order, 1947). Will worked with cocoa at Tuanaimoto, about eight kilometres from Apia (Memoir, p. 182) and, for a short time, was the Acting Manager at a coconut factory in Apia itself (Memoir, p. 186). In 1953, the family moved to Vaiala because Will obtained a job as an Accountant at the Treasury of Western Samoa (Memoir, p. 194)—a position he retained until 1956 when the family returned to New Zealand, motivated by the prospect of better post-primary school education for their older son.

During his time in Western Samoa, Will passed his Stage 1 Accounting and Commercial Law (1954) and Stage 2 Accounting (1955) examinations by correspondence (Memoir, p. 205). When Will arrived back in New Zealand in 1956, he was 50 years old, and he was not positive about employment prospects (Potter, 1956). However, he eventually got a job as an audit clerk for the Education Department in Auckland.

This brief history of Will shows that his background was very different to that of his later teaching role in New Zealand classrooms. His colonial past and internment were particularly significant influences on his later life. The next part of this chapter examines Dutch immigration to New Zealand, and assimilation.

### **Dutch Immigration to, and Assimilation in, New Zealand**

Will was a refugee. His displacement from his homeland, the NEI, supports the notion that those who endured the atrocities of WWII during their young adult years have been referred to as the 'lost generation' (Hofstede, 1964; Schubert-McArthur, 2014; Thomson, 1970; Yska, 2012). Refugees, as opposed to migrants, lack free choice: they are usually ousted from their homeland to escape wars of persecution due to their ethnicity, religious or political beliefs, or been displaced by wars or other conflicts (Beaglehole, 1988, 2013; Bonisch-Brednich, 2002).

There is a certain stigma attached to the label of 'refugee.' The NEI Dutch were similar to refugees in that they had to leave the NEI suddenly, at the end of a period of chaos, and were unlikely to return (Smith, 2003). They were expected to settle in places that some had never seen and needed to learn a new way of life, despite not knowing the language and schooling systems, and had to adapt to a new climate and career changes. Will's situation was such that his nationality (Dutch) and ethnicity (European) meant conditions were not favourable or safe for him to stay in Indonesia in the late 1940s, so he had no choice but to leave the NEI.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, New Zealand preferred refugees who were unskilled and able to undertake labouring work in heavy industry (Beaglehole, 1988, 2013; van der Paas & Poot, 2011). It was thought that these refugees would assimilate better into New Zealand life and be less likely to become employers. Theoretically, Will would have been classed as unskilled as he had no formal qualifications, although he did have experience as a planter and manager.

Naturalisation was also considered important for refugees so they could believe they belonged in New Zealand, despite such differences as their accents (Beaglehole, 1988). They could adapt better to New Zealand life and feel less out of place in what they may have thought was an uncivilised place. Naturalisation was a means to reduce refugees' experiences of prejudice and racism, but it also meant they could be employed in the public service, banking, and other professions (Beaglehole, 1988). However, although the 1950s Dutch immigrants were encouraged to be naturalised, quite a high proportion retained their Dutch nationality, mainly because they could not hold dual citizenship (van der Pas & Poot, 2011). Will and his family were naturalised in 1953 so that they could have one family nationality, making it easier for them whenever they crossed international borders.

The influx of the Dutch from both Indonesia and the Netherlands in the early 1950s made them the biggest non-British group to come and live in New Zealand (Schouten, 1992; Schubert-MacArthur, 2014; Thomson, 1970). However, many New Zealanders at that time had a suspicious attitude to foreigners of another tongue and culture (Schouten, 1992). The 1950s Dutch immigrants did not usually follow their previous

careers when they came to New Zealand either (Pegge, 2006). This observation especially held true for Will whose background was as a rubber planter and plantation manager, not a teacher.

For Will, this immigration would have been a difficult social transition, especially as the Dutch in Indonesia were considered to be part of the upper class with special privileges (de Jong, 2002). The Dutch from Indonesia were caught between two worlds: the colonial Eastern lifestyle that ceased to exist after WWII and the ensuing civil war, and the Western lifestyle of Europe, America, and the Antipodes, yet they did not seem to belong in either (Willems, 2003). Will, as a husband and father and without a qualification, had no choice but to make the best of the situation he was in. However, due to the uncertainty of the previous years, changing countries may not have been such a big step for him to have taken (Hofstede, 1964; Schubert-MacArthur, 2014).

The Dutch from the NEI faced specific difficulties when emigrating. Migrants from this area had three specific problems: they had to identify with at least two or more countries (Indonesia, the Netherlands, and other countries of migration), recover from the atrocities of WWII and the Indonesian struggle for independence, and acknowledge that their home country, the NEI, no longer existed (Willems, 2003). The NEI Dutch had been ousted from “the country where they had been socialized and where they had developed their own particular outlook on life” (Willems, 2003, p. 50). In addition, the Dutch from the NEI, like Will, could not recover their social position of colonial times and, further, most lost “their home, their job, their property and possessions, and even their loved ones” (Willems, 2003, p. 37). The Japanese occupation and imprisonment also had a lasting effect.

There was a dual attitude to the Indonesian Dutch in 1950s New Zealand: compassion as to what they had gone through but resentment at giving them jobs; they were “bloody foreigners” (Okkerse, cited in Schouten, 1992, p. 150). Will often referred to himself this way. In more recent times (the later 1990s), many NEI refugees petitioned the Dutch government for compensation for their internment, thus making them ‘victims,’ which was a hard label for the Indonesian Dutch to accept because “passivity

and endurance are attitudes that clash with the resiliency many attribute to the character of the Indonesian-born Dutch” (Willems, 2003, p. 56).

At the time of Will’s immigration, there was racial bias in New Zealand (Beaglehole, 1988; Lochore, 1951; Schouten, 1992; Yska, 2012) and in other Western countries. The post-WWII world preferred to be “whiter than white” (Willems, 2003, p. 45; see also Willems, 2006). There was also a covert ‘white New Zealand’ policy in place (Schouten, 1992; Yska, 2012), which meant prospective immigrants to New Zealand had to prove that their lineage was mostly European through birth certificates of family members, and appearance, colour, and racial characteristics (Willems, 2006). In wanting to come to New Zealand, Will also had to confirm that he (and his family) were “wholly of European race and colour” (McLagan, 1949; Potter, 1950a). This stress on being white would have been somewhat ironic for Will because he was interned in the NEI because he was white, so he and others in the NEI were victims of a reverse racial bias.

The Dutch who immigrated to New Zealand in the 1950s assimilated quickly and easily into New Zealand life so they have been called ‘invisible’ (Schouten, 1992; Shrover & van Faassen, 2010; van der Pas & Poot, 2011; van Dongen, 1992). Assimilation is when a people group do not retain or reject their cultural roots and choose to mix with members of the new society (Schrover & van Faassen, 2010). The Dutch became “Dutch Kiwis” (van der Pas & Poot, 2011, p. 9), who usually were differentiated only by their accent. Some Dutch even anglicised their names to become “more Kiwi than the Kiwis” (Schouten, 1992, p. 121). Schouten explains the Dutch desire to assimilate so well was because of their “industrious, thorough, enthusiastic and conformist” (p. 169) character and their desire to be the ‘perfect’ immigrants. Will already had an English name (Potter) and a Dutch accent, but I am not sure that he desired to be the perfect immigrant.

New Zealand also encouraged assimilation. The Dutch who came with assisted passage (mainly from the Netherlands) were settled throughout New Zealand following a peppercorn philosophy so as to counteract large groups of Dutch in particular areas of the country and, thus, aid assimilation (van der Wiel, 2013). Will paid his own fare to

New Zealand, so he could choose where he wanted to live, initially choosing Western Samoa, which was administered by New Zealand from 1899 to 1962 (Anae, 2005).

The tendency of the Dutch to be invisible is seen as a way of protecting themselves because they are (culturally) social conformists (Peters, 2012). Such assimilation is also characteristic of a hierarchical society. That said, often the Dutch would conform outwardly to New Zealand norms but maintain Dutch food, traditions, and culture within their homes, referred to as a “closet culture” (Peters, 2012, p. 55). Will’s Indonesian Dutch culture, however, was more Asian in nature, with rice being a staple food, and even his use of the Dutch language not quite as guttural as those from the Netherlands. Conversely, not everyone agrees with the ‘invisible’ label of the Dutch. Rather than being invisible, the presence of the Dutch in Australia is “muted and under-recognised” (Cahill, 2006, p. 206). This could also be true of Will in New Zealand, especially as his accent rendered him different and could be why he sought to talk about his camp stories so often. In keeping with Peters’ (2012) assertion that the result of this assimilation was that the Dutch were “without and out of history” (p. 55), Will would have been keenly aware that he needed to make a success of his migration to New Zealand because he had no homeland to go back to. Interestingly, their invisibility resulted in the Dutch being regarded as model migrants, making their group stand out (Comello, 2012), so Dutch immigrants are now ‘visible’ as a people to be studied (Peters, 2006; Shrover & van Faassen, 2010). This teaching story of Will can add to this interest in the Dutch migrants.

One of the ways in which the 1950s Dutch assimilated in New Zealand was to forego speaking their native language to their children (Donaghy & Papoutsaki, 2008; Yska, 2012), resulting in its loss in New Zealand in just one generation (Shrover & van Faassen, 2010). Will only spoke English to his children, but conversed in Dutch with his wife and other Dutch friends. This meant that although we, the second generation Dutch, could understand the language, we are not able to speak it (Peters, 2012). Peters also notes that losing their Dutch language proficiency became an issue in later years with aging migrants reverting back to their mother tongue and their children left unable to communicate. Some of the Dutch who migrated in the 1950s later regretted their decision not to maintain their Dutch language with their children (Crezee, 2012;

Donaghey & Papoutsaki, 2008). Will, however, was more concerned that his children be proficient in English so as to aid their education. Although some immigrant groups, such as Chinese and Poles, have language schools in New Zealand, the Dutch did not as they were told not to speak the language and, in their “black and white” (Schouten, 1992, p. 138) efficiency, did just that.

As will be noted in Chapter 5, Will was not afraid to say what he thought. This forthrightness is one of the specific Dutch characteristics, which Will also exemplified and which showed in aspects related to his teaching. The Dutch have also been described as “strong willed, fast thinking, often stubborn and possessed with a fanaticism to succeed” (Peters, 2012, p. 55). The Dutch are also considered to be hard working and thrifty (Comello, 2012; Donaghey & Papoutsaki, 2008; Peters, 2012; Schouten, 1992; Schubert-McArthur, 2014). Schouten (1992) explains that the Dutch are also “brutally frank” (p. 140), which affected relationships with New Zealanders who referred to them as “arrogant Dutchies” (p. 140). The Dutch tendency to say what they think contrasted with the English tradition of tact that was mistaken by the Dutch for hypocrisy. The Dutch can be abrupt (Schubert-McArthur, 2014), and they like to have heated discussions (van Dongen, 1992). This directness and arrogance were culturally defined. Will also worked hard and was careful with money, although the latter trait may have been due more to his having lost all his material possessions during WWII and his lower paying jobs. The Dutch were not noted for their humour (Thomson, 1970), which can also be culturally defined: the Dutch were not always familiar with the English language nor the cultural New Zealand sense of humour so may not have been able to engage in humour. As will be shown in Chapter 5, Will did become familiar with New Zealand humour and often used it to good effect in his teaching.

## **Summary**

The first part of this chapter provided a brief history of the Netherlands East Indies, now Indonesia, a large and populous country where Will was born and lived until middle age. There was then a brief description of Will’s life before he went teaching. Knowing this background is important as it highlights Will’s differences: the land of his

birth, his cultural background, language, cosmopolitan experiences, and the many jobs he undertook, mainly out of necessity to support himself and his family. Remote plantations on Java are a long way from New Zealand post-primary school classrooms where Will taught for 19 years. Two aspects in particular—his colonial background in the NEI and his internment in Japanese concentration camps during WWII—are argued to have made an impact on his teaching. The third part of this chapter gave an account of Dutch immigration to New Zealand, including refugee status, post-WWII Dutch immigration, and racial bias. Description was also provided of the assimilation and invisibility of the Dutch in New Zealand, two attributes associated with Dutch immigrants post-WWII, as well as language and Dutch characteristics. The following chapter, Chapter 3, reviews educational and theoretical literature underpinning this thesis.

## **Chapter 3**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

*“A text has an inaugurative value precisely because it is the work of a particular author, and our returns are conditioned by this knowledge.” (Foucault, 1979, p. 27)*

The previous chapter described important background related to Will so as to deepen a shared understanding of the impact his previous experiences might have had on his teaching. However, the innovative work of previous writers, including theory and description, can further help to inform and add to this thesis. Therefore, this present chapter widens the review to examine the broader contextual aspects that both directly or indirectly shape Will’s teaching story. This chapter will first look at the features of sociocultural and sociocultural–historical theories that provide the lenses through which Will’s story can be seen. A section on the 1950s post-primary school education landscape in New Zealand when Will began teaching is also presented in order to give some historical context for Will’s teaching story.

### **Sociocultural Theory**

Sociocultural theory considers learning to be a social and cultural process. It enables us to understand the complexities of one person’s story within its social and cultural contexts (Glesne, 2016). Rogoff (1995) suggests that there are three foci of analysis in any sociocultural study. The first focus is the individual (or personal) who learns and changes as they interact and participate with others. Learning is a process of becoming that sees individual growth as being embedded in the interpersonal and communal aspects of an action. For Will’s teaching story, this personal focus includes his background, his upbringing, his interests and skills, his personality, and values formed through his background experiences. The individual does not act or learn in isolation but is also part of a wider social system (Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa, & Goldsmith, 1995), and this leads to the second focus provided by sociocultural theory—interpersonal activity. By working interdependently, the individual can also grow and change. People can do so through face-to-face, side-by-side, and/or distance interaction with others. These relationships and fellowship with others can be formal, informal, or even incidental and involve observation or actively instigating the process,

such as seeking counsel from others. For Will, such interpersonal learning would have included his engagement and relationships with his colleagues and pupils, his family connections, and written interactions with authors. The third focus provided by sociocultural theory is seeing the individual and interpersonal activities being embedded in the wider community (or institutional) context. The term 'community' suggests the educational, economic, political, spiritual, and material aspects that shaped Will's teaching.

These personal, interpersonal, and community facets all interact, with some being fore-grounded and others back-grounded at different times (Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa, & Goldsmith, 1995). Each lens or focus is said to shape and be shaped by the other two; they mutually contribute to each other. Dewey (1916) explains that "Every individual has grown up and must grow up in a social medium. His [sic] responses grow intelligent, or gain meaning, simply because he lives and acts in a medium of accepted meanings and values" (p. 344; see also Rogoff, 1995). The individual, like Will, is an active participant in their own learning and development.

Such an interconnection between personal, interpersonal, and community influences is very true of Will. For example, Will's personal life, such as his interest and skill in playing jazz piano music (personal) relate to his band playing when he was a student in the Netherlands and during his single years in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI; interpersonal). In turn, his piano playing was used within the school context when he played during formal dance lessons, and, later, at various staff functions and assemblies (community). Another example can be seen in the group characteristics of the Dutch, such as their forthright manner, which was also part of Will's make up (personal) and that one can argue affected his relationships with his colleagues (interpersonal) with whom he taught in New Zealand post-primary schools (community).

Sociocultural theory explains how learning and development happen. Instead of seeing learning as happening through being teacher dominated with transmitted knowledge or learner driven through self-learning and individual motivation (St. George & Sewell, 2014), teaching and learning is regarded as a shared activity where teachers and pupils

share responsibility for teaching and learning. Sociocultural theory therefore acknowledges the cultural and intellectual input that is available in the home—the person’s upbringing, resources, experiences, and parental expectations can all affect a person’s learning and achievement. Teaching from a sociocultural perspective sees “innovative teaching practices” (St. George & Sewell, 2014, p. 108) that can be drawn from pupils’ home backgrounds. This reflection of taste resonates with Bourdieu’s (1984) notion of ‘habitus’ or the attitudes, values, behaviour, or dispositions that can result in identity being manifest through things and belongings. However, Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) caution that the dominant culture in a society is institutionalised in the schools, and the hidden agenda in the education system is to maintain class structure.

These theoretical standpoints are interesting when applied to Will when he began teaching. This is because he grew up in a dominant colonial (NEI) culture, but he was not conversant with New Zealand’s system of social mores and practices. When he began teaching within the classroom setting, Will would have had to improvise to adapt to the new educational and school culture as well as to the wider New Zealand society of the 1950s.

In times past, teaching pedagogy was concerned with content transmission. Pupils were expected to be recipients of learning, and memorisation and rote learning were common (Freire, 1972; St. George & Sewell, 2014), much to the antithesis of a sociocultural approach. When Will began teaching in the 1950s, the ‘chalk and talk’ system was prevalent. This consisted of the teacher writing notes on the blackboard and the pupils copying them down to learn for later examinations and tests. Therefore, the focus was on the content and teacher dominance; pupils had little voice in the classroom. Effective teaching now involves such aspects as reviewing learning, collaborative learning, scaffolding, dialogue, and personalised learning (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). Interesting visual aids and presentations are also known to promote pupil engagement and motivation to learn. The authors also note that clear planning and pupil grouping in class can also aid in effective teaching, and feedback to pupils is also important. Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece also talk about classroom climate, which involves the social, psychological, and emotional aspects in the class.

Sociocultural learning theory is not so new. Jones, Palinscar, Ogle, and Carr (1987), in their book published over 30 years ago, talk of teaching in a 'new' way. The authors mention the 'strategic teacher' as being one who takes four variables into consideration in the teaching process. First, the teacher thinks about the learners and is aware of their knowledge and abilities as well as their subject knowledge, and, second, the teachers themselves need to be cognisant of the material to be learned, which is usually associated with the textbook, as well as organisation of material to be learnt. Third is deciding on the goals and outcomes of the lessons, and the fourth variable is deciding what learning strategies to use. These four variables also need to be associated with assessment. Learning, Jones et al. (1987) add, is also about linking new information to prior learning. The teacher also has a role as a model within the classroom in helping the pupils to learn new skills or content, as well as demonstrating scaffolding techniques, which are ways of helping others to learn new things that they would not normally be able to learn without such assistance (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). As will be seen in Chapter 5, Will exemplified that he was a strategic teacher.

Sociocultural theory has been used in this thesis as a pertinent way to look at Will's teaching methods. It also links to the methodology used in this thesis because this meaningful interaction with the various facets of the environment is closely aligned with social constructivist thinking (Kelchtermans, 1993), which holds that people learn and grow individually and through interaction with others (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). No person's story is an "individual production" (Denzin, 1989, p. 333) but is part of a bigger social, cultural, and historical context (see also Jones, 2001; Kelchtermans, 1993). The acknowledgement of history leads to a variation of sociocultural theory entitled sociocultural–historical theory as used by Bethell and Sewell (2010) in telling the story of Sewell's mother, a New Zealand kindergarten teacher in the 1940s, whose story was set within the historical situation of the time.

### **Sociocultural–historical theory**

History, both generic and one's own, is important when looking at the individual. Reasons for finding aspects of history include Lerner's (1997) comment about the

“usable past” (p. 120) and Brosterman’s (1997) emphasis on “biographical archeology” (p. 108; see also Bethell, 2008), with both terms suggesting that the researcher look for aspects of the past that may have had influence on the present research of the individual. Bohan and Chisholm (2011) used historical biography to give background to Mary Sheldon Barnes, a teacher in the United States (US) at the end of the nineteenth century. She was noted for her “object lessons” (p. 85) methodology that incorporated a concrete object or concept with which to begin a teaching session, an innovative teaching method of the time. She also wrote textbooks, but did not rely on them for her teaching.

Rather than the individual, and social and cultural contexts being discrete influences, the sociocultural-historical viewpoint suggests that these contexts are linked (Rogoff, 2003) but also incorporate aspects of a person’s past. The person concerned both influences and is influenced by the culture of which they are a part. The same principles of sociocultural-historical theory can be applied to Will in setting out the background on the NEI that influenced Will in the first half of his life, post-primary education in 1950s New Zealand to which Will entered in 1958, and of Will himself as he developed as a post-primary school teacher.

In addition, the past is always associated with the present, and success or failure in the present can also affect the story of the past (Biesta, Field, Hodkinson, Macleod, & Goodson, 2011). What Will experienced in the past will have had an effect on his present story and, conversely, his present story would have affected his past version of his history. For example, Will offered quite a bit of detail in his memoir about his internment experiences yet relatively little about his parents and childhood, thus suggesting the magnitude of the influence of World War II (WWII) on his development.

The notion of incorporating the past and one’s past experiences also ties in with Dewey (2016). Will’s story is one from the past, and Dewey notes that “knowledge of the past is key to understanding the present” (p. 251) and that “this past is the history of the present” (p. 251). Although Dewey believes that biography is the best way to study history, those of whom we write need to be set within the social conditions in which they lived, hence noting the sociocultural aspects discussed. Rogoff et al. (1995)

also believe it is important to look at the historical as well as the institutional aspects that affect the individual. Will's story is one—like others—that involves “socially situated interactions embedded in interpersonal, cultural, institutional, and historical contexts” (Chase, 2018, p. 547). The next section of this chapter explores one such historical context in Will's life: the 1950s post-primary education system in New Zealand when Will began teaching in 1958.

## **The Post-Primary School Education Landscape in 1950s New Zealand**

The 1950s was a significant time for developments in the post-primary school sector in New Zealand. The first part of this section looks at the Thomas Report of 1944 and the second acknowledges Commercial Practice—one of the subjects to come out of the Report—that Will went on to teach. The response made by post-primary school teachers to the Thomas Report is also described, as well as the educational trends of the decade: increased numbers of pupils, and a lack of facilities and qualified teachers in post-primary schools. The role of the Post-Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) is also reviewed, as is the emphasis on examinations and the nature of district high schools.

### **The Influence of the Thomas Report 1944**

The Thomas Commission, or the Committee for the Revision of the Post-Primary School Curriculum, was set up in November, 1942, aiming to provide “proper limits of state control of the curriculum” (Whitehead, 1972, p. 9). Its objectives, according to Beeby (1992), then Director of Education (Couling, 2005), were to:

- report on the effects of University Entrance accrediting on the post-primary curriculum and School Certificate; and
- recommend: subjects for the resurrected School Certificate, first instituted in 1934 (McKenzie, Lee, & Lee, 1996) but which was never really accepted (Ewing, 1970); the content of them; and any government changes that may be associated with them.

The overriding focus of the Thomas Report was to offer a general and well-balanced education for post-primary school pupils so that they could grow and develop as well-

rounded citizens (Couling, 2005; Ewing, 1970; H. F. Lee, 1996; Sewell, 1996; Whitehead, 1972). This development would then allow New Zealand's school leavers to "take an active place in our New Zealand society as worker, neighbour, homemaker, and citizen" (Thomas, 1944, p. 5). Having been set up in war time—in 1942—the Thomas Committee felt it important to stress democratic ideals and to set personal and social needs above economic ideals in response to the tyrannical threats becoming more evident in the European and Asian theatres of war. Therefore, in keeping with these democratic values, the Thomas Report advocated giving schools greater freedom to decide how to meet the needs of their pupils (Whitehead, 1972). The Thomas Report was a significant document because it acknowledged that pupils' abilities in a typical class varied hugely and that these variations should influence what they were taught. Philosophically, the Thomas Committee wanted post-primary school teaching to be "freer, democratic and more humane ... with an emphasis placed on flexibility, diversity and increased pupil participation" (Whitehead, 1974, p. 57). This acknowledgement of varying levels of student ability was innovative at that time (1940s), and the Thomas Report was noted not only for its "forward looking philosophies and principles that make it one of the most notable of curriculum studies in the world" (Stroobant, 1957, p. 16) but also for its subject specifications.

The Thomas Committee also sought to develop a School Certificate Examination that was recognised as showing that all pupils—of whatever ability—had completed three or four years of post-primary education to an acceptable level. Therefore, according to Beeby (1992), the Committee decided:

- a) that School Certificate should be
  - i) common core subjects of English, Social Studies, General Science, Mathematics, Art or Crafts, and Physical Education, with achievement accredited by the school, not by external examinations—although, as G. D. Lee and Lee (2008) note, no set courses were agreed on, and
  - ii) compulsory English and at least three other subjects from a comprehensive list with both general and vocational interests, including Commercial Practice (that Will later went on to teach);

- b) that School Certificate be considered a four-year programme for most pupils, but some more able pupils could sit it in three;
- c) that in the first year of the course, about 60 per cent would be common core subjects, reducing to about 40 per cent by third and later years; and
- d) that because not all post-primary pupils would sit the School Certificate, courses for those less able were to be centred around the common core.

Although the Report had the pupils' interests as its focus, the main preoccupation of education at that time was developing qualifications for jobs (Whitehead, 1972).

In seeking to offer young people greater access to post-primary schooling and to cater to their varying needs and interests, a large number and wide variety of subjects needed to be offered (G. D. Lee, 2003). Core subjects, such as English and Social Studies, needed to be accompanied by optional subjects, like Heat Engines, Greek, Horticulture, and Bookkeeping, that were more in keeping with pupils' interests and potential career choices. The Thomas Committee believed that to be fair for all pupils, 'core' or common subjects should be offered to the 'average' pupil as part of a general curriculum, the content of which could be decided by the individual schools (Openshaw, Lee, & Lee, 1993). The Department of Education<sup>12</sup>, however, would still insist on certain minimum requirements so as to endorse the egalitarian nature of the changes that were being mooted. The teachers were also to be entrusted with being "agents of adolescent socialisation" (Openshaw, Lee, & Lee, 1993, p. 175) as well as instilling feelings of national pride and personal responsibility. Commercial Practice—that Will went on to teach—was one of the 32 optional subjects that the Thomas Committee endorsed and recommended should be part of the post-1945 School Certificate Examination.

### **Commercial Practice**

Commercial Practice was a new subject in the Thomas Report (Thomas, 1944) and would be added to Shorthand–Typing and Bookkeeping as part of the Commerce subjects. Commercial Practice gave students the opportunity to learn the ways of business, including "ethical, social, economic, and legal aspects of the practice of

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<sup>12</sup> The Ministry of Education since 1989.

business” (Thomas, 1944, p. 61). It also contained elements of banking, insurance, mortgages, budgets, taxation, and even a knowledge of the business side of the work of stock and station agents. In effect, the Thomas Report considered that Commercial Practice “... should be regarded as the core of the commercial course with which work in all Commercial Subjects may be correlated” (Thomas, 1944, p. 61).

Commercial Practice presented a dichotomy. On one hand, it was a subject that was designed to allow pupils to have a more ‘rounded’ education, supporting the Thomas Committee’s democratic ideals. On the other hand, Commercial Practice offered pupils the chance to learn about the business of business, thus encouraging economic ideals. In further support of Commercial Practice’s development as an economic subject, and possibly as a consequence of the Depression of the 1930s and the effects of World War II (WWII), one of the first New Zealand writers for the subject, Jack Horrocks, stated: “as citizens of a democracy we **must** know something of the sphere of commerce, or we cannot properly exercise our franchise to prevent ... economic breakdowns” (J. Horrocks, 1947, p. iii; emphasis in the original). Commercial Practice, therefore, was a way to support and maintain democracy.

Commercial Practice was a popular subject. By 1950, more pupils tended to take Commercial Practice as opposed to Bookkeeping. In addition, by 1961, ten times as many pupils sat Commercial Practice for School Certificate than in 1946—a higher percentage increase than for any other subject (Marshall, 1989). During the same period, one pupil in seven was taking Bookkeeping for School Certificate. Part of the reason for this growth in the Commercial subjects’ popularity could be the growing middle class post-WWII and the accompanying growth in clerical positions and bureaucracies (Openshaw, 1995). Between 1946 and 1958, post-primary schools in New Zealand were divided into three different courses: “professional and general (boys and girls); trades and agriculture (boys only); commercial and home-life (girls only)” (Openshaw, 1995, p. 56), of which 60 per cent of girls took the latter in 1958 (see also Whitehead, 1974). The 1950s was a time of conservatism and, despite the rhetoric of the Thomas Report, of clearly delineated gender roles.

As the scope of the Thomas Report did not include the recruitment, preparation, or employment of post-primary school teachers, there was a lack of suitably qualified Commercial teachers at the time Will entered the profession. This shortage was beneficial for Will as it meant he could secure a teaching position without formal credentials. However, Thom (1950) argues that due to the renewed interest in business post-WWII, suitably trained Commerce teachers were needed in post-primary schools, especially as “the ordinary businessman appears to be asking rather for a beginner with some knowledge of commercial practice, a reasonable facility with figures, and some capacity for correct spelling” (pp. 86–87).

The first Commercial Teachers’ training course was established at Wellington Technical School (Caradus, 1948; James, 1950; Thom, 1950), now Wellington High School (Wellington High School, n.d.), in 1948. Caradus, the Chief Inspector of post-primary schools in the 1940s, explains that twenty trainees were selected for the first one-year course, some having knowledge of Commercial Practice and Bookkeeping and some of Shorthand and Typing, but all would be trained to have knowledge of all such subjects as well as pedagogical aspects.

James (1950) notes the characteristics being sought in Commerce teachers. They were expected to be ‘good’ role models for their pupils and to have a “suitable personality, sound health, and sound character” (p. 80), generic descriptions that applied to Will although his health had been affected by internment. Applicants were to have a suitable post-primary education as well as formal commercial qualifications and commercial experience. Will lacked the qualifications but had managerial and accounting experience from his time in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) and Western Samoa. The optimum age for male Commercial teachers was between 25–30 years or about half the age that Will was when he started teaching, but this preferred age range did not leave much time for applicants to gather qualifications and accrue commercial experience before the age of 25. Optional attributes were other sporting or subject knowledge, or other involvement with children. However, not all Commercial Practice or post-primary school teachers in general supported the Thomas Report.

### **Post-primary school teachers' responses to the Thomas Report**

In 1953, a number of post-primary teachers were against the changes espoused in the Thomas Report due to their perceived threat to scholarly standards (Beeby, 1992). This opinion tied in with the growing number of non-academic pupils who had to stay on at post-primary school due to the raised school leaving age and for whom teachers had to find new and varied ways of teaching. For so long, teachers had taught pupils in a way that was formal, narrow, and authoritarian (Whitehead, 1972). In addition, not all teachers were able to teach in ways that catered for pupils' various needs (Ewing, 1970; McGuinness Institute, 2016). Farber (1995) also talks about "ideological baggage" (p. 49) in that teachers often teach as they have been taught (see also Choi, 2014). Beeby (1992) further states: "Paradoxically, the teaching profession imposes the greatest restraints on major educational change, and yet offers the only means of bringing it about" (p. 200). The Thomas Report's aims could only be implemented by the teachers themselves, yet teachers' resistance to change meant that they were able to block the very reforms the Committee had endorsed.

Like Beeby, Couling (2005) also notes that for nearly 20 years, post-primary teachers were resistant to the changes advocated in the Thomas Report, thus revealing their "conservative, pragmatic and defensive collective identity" (p. 1). He goes on to explain that the Report tried to move away from teachers as "'transmitters of knowledge'" (p. 101) and the formal and academic nature of previous post-primary education. Therefore, the Thomas Report challenged those teachers "who looked to their academic disciplines for pedagogical justification and affirmation" (Couling, 2005, p. 101).

The spirit of the Report was that post-primary schools should be free to develop their programmes to suit the needs of their pupils. However, teachers did not change their teaching patterns or classroom practices, despite in-service and refresher courses (Whitehead, 1972). Such teacher resistance to try new teaching methods was seen as a distinctive feature of New Zealand post-primary school culture following the Thomas Report (G. D. Lee, 2003; G. D. Lee & Lee, 2008; Murdoch, 1944). However, this resistance to change was not just common in the 1940s and 1950s because Couling

(2005) also notes teachers' resistance to the Picot Report of 1988. Despite this conservatism, teachers in the 1950s:

... had difficulty understanding that post-primary schools were no longer selective or unilateral (academic), and that they were being encouraged by the Department and the Director of Education to teach new and old subjects in different ways to suit a heterogeneous student group. (G. D. Lee, 2003, p. 43)

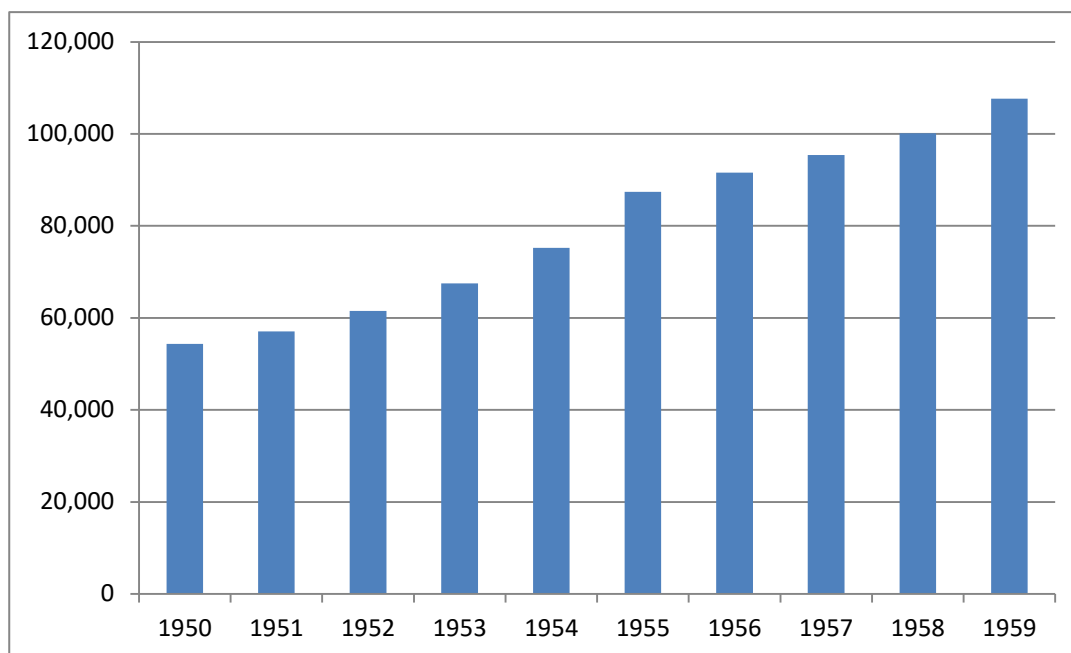
In contrast, one teacher who completed the one year Training College (teaching) course in 1952 said she was told that cyclostyled notes, writing on the board, and dictation were not good methods of teaching yet this is how she had been taught herself (Middleton & May, 1997). Such pedagogical advice was interesting for the time as these methods of teaching continued even until the 1970s in New Zealand post-primary schools.

Five other reasons could explain teachers' resistance to the Thomas Report. First, Whitehead (1974) explains that in the 1930s, schools had experienced and qualified staff, but this changed after WWII (see also G. D. Lee, 2003), so some of the pedagogical implications may have been missed. Second, teachers also had few and outdated resources due, in part, to the effects of WWII and were often forced into teaching core subjects with which they were not familiar—something that Will had to do, even going on to teach Basic English (Memoir, p. 221). They were probably less enthusiastic about having to take on other subjects as well. Third, it was rarely possible to obtain a copy of the Thomas Report during the 1950s due to paper shortages, again as a result of WWII, until it was reprinted in 1959, so a large number of teachers had not even seen it (G. D. Lee, 2003; Whitehead, 1972). It would have been important for teachers to have read the educational philosophy associated with the Thomas Report before they could more readily accept and implement the directives associated with it. Fourth, the Thomas Committee did not want their suggestions to be imposed on teachers so framed the Report as suggestions rather than as strict guidelines (G. D. Lee, 2003; Whitehead, 1972). Therefore, clearer guidance may have been beneficial for teachers to interpret and implement the Report. Instead, the Department of Education sought to improve teacher training rather than change the mindset of existing teachers (Couling, 2005). Finally, teachers had larger classes and more unruly pupils who demanded more in the way of teaching than the dated 'lecture' approach (Couling,

2005). Teachers were therefore too busy with day-to-day classroom practice to understand the change in educational philosophy (Whitehead, 1972).

### Increased numbers of pupils

Post-primary school rolls also increased during the 1950s and 1960s due to education policies and increased birth rates (Whitehead, 1972, 1974). On 1 February, 1944, the school leaving age was raised from 14 to 15 years, thus making post-primary school education compulsory (McKenzie, Lee, & Lee, 1996). The number of post-primary school pupils was also growing due to the post-WWII baby boom who, by the later 1950s, were of post-primary school age. McLaren (1974) explains that in New Zealand “...in 1933, there were 27,000 births, in 1945, 39,000, in 1946, 50,000 and in 1955, 56,000” (p. 99). Initially, it was thought that the bulge of post-war births would move through the education system and then be over; however, in New Zealand, between 1945–1961, the birth rate actually increased before it began to decline. Figure 3.1 shows the increasing number of pupils at post-primary school over the decade from 1950 to 1959. McLaren states that the Department of Education estimated in 1950 that there would be approximately 66,000 post-primary school pupils in 1959, but they underestimated by about 38 per cent.



*Figure 3.1.* Total number of New Zealand post-primary school pupils in the 1950s. Sources: Adapted from Statistics New Zealand (1952, 1956, 1961).

During the 1950s, more pupils were also opting to remain at school longer (G. D. Lee, 2003; Marshall, 1989; Whitehead, 1972, 1974). Teachers had to face much larger classes with pupils who had a broad range of interests and were not always interested in academic pursuits and didactic style teaching (Couling, 2005). Part of this problem could be attributable to the higher leaving age: previously, only those interested in furthering their formal education stayed at high school and the others left at 14 years to other pursuits. Now, these young ones were bound to stay at school for an extra year. Another reason for these larger classes was social promotion whereby pupils were automatically promoted to the next level of schooling according to age instead of ability (Edwards, 1960). Not only were the pupil numbers high and growing, but, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the ability range of post-primary pupils was wide, from very slow learners to the gifted, thus causing further problems (Marshall, 1989). McLaren (1974) notes that lower ability pupils were often given to the new teachers, and Will was given lower ability pupils in his Basic English and Core Mathematics classes at Onewhero District High School (DHS) in his first year of teaching.

#### **Lack of facilities in post-primary schools**

Another issue affecting 1950s post-primary education was a lack of facilities to house the growing number of post-primary school pupils (Cumming & Cumming, 1978; G. D. Lee, 2003; H. F. Lee, 2005; Marshall, 1989). Between 1945–1970, the number of post-primary schools increased from 69 to 210 to cope with the extra pupils (McLaren, 1974). Classroom space was so scarce that newly completed rooms would be occupied while further blocks were being built, and standard designs were used to aid the speed of construction (O'Neill, 2004). Pre-fabricated classrooms were also used (Marshall, 1989). Will's first 'classroom' in 1958, however, was not a conventional one (see Chapter 5).

#### **Lack of qualified teachers**

A further characteristic of the 1950s was the lack of qualified teachers (Couling, 2005; Cumming & Cumming, 1978; G. D. Lee, 2003; H. F. Lee, 2005; Marshall, 1989; Middleton & May, 1997). In 1945, 1,891 post-primary teachers were employed by the Department of Education but by 1959, when Will was in his second year of teaching,

this number had more than doubled to 4,120 (Marshall, 1989). However, their qualifications were not noted, and McLaren (1974) adds that staffing returns were not especially accurate in the early 1950s, with many part-time untrained or under-qualified teachers being employed, district high schools not attracting staff with the specialised skills to offer country students an egalitarian education, and fewer science graduates entering teaching. In 1957, the Post-Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) stated that there was a shortage of 460 post-primary teachers and predicted that this dearth would reach 700 by 1962 (Couling, 2005). Interestingly, the post-primary teacher shortage was foreseen as early as 1950 (Campbell, 1951) and continued for about 25 years after WWII (McLaren, 1974). Edwards (1960) believes that the teacher shortage was due mainly to a lack of planning for public policy as, up to 1950, the Department of Education was more concerned with the primary system and, in the post-War years, they did not recruit post-primary teachers. However, lower birth rates in the 1930s due to the Depression would also have affected the pool of prospective teachers in the 1950s (McLaren, 1974). McLaren further states that the New Zealand government should have offered more bursaries for tertiary graduates to enter teaching to help overcome the later shortage, especially because from 1950 there was less competition from business and industry for graduates.

World War II also had an effect on the teacher shortage of the 1950s. Male teachers and students enlisted during the War; many were killed, and those who returned were not always keen to go back to teaching (McLaren, 1974). In turn, fewer students were enrolled in the Teacher Training Colleges during WWII. People were not so attracted to teaching after the War as they were previously, and McLaren states that men, in particular, did not enter teaching due to the later technological and social changes.

Teachers in general and post-primary teachers in particular needed to have some specific qualities. In the early 1950s, the following characteristics were considered to be important for those wishing to enter teaching:

Integrity, emotional poise, some warmth and colour of personality, a sense of justice and fair play, vigour, intelligence, initiative, humour, and a liking for work with people are among those most to be sought. Good manners are important, and so also is a pleasant speaking voice ... No amount of academic

knowledge or of mere professional technique can compensate for them. (Campbell, 1951, p. 7)

As will be noted later in Chapter 5, Will possessed all of these personal characteristics and also had ‘academic knowledge’ and some ‘professional technique.’ In addition, as Wild (1958) explains, post-primary schools in the 1950s were academically oriented and sought to encourage their pupils to go on to further study or “at least to exercise their minds and make of them better citizens” (p. 18). Therefore, there was an expectation that the post-primary school teachers would have certain qualifications.

Teachers were expected to have:

... a university degree (including normally a Stage III or, preferably, a Master’s degree pass in his [sic] principal subject together with a reasonable number of Stage I and Stage II passes in supporting teaching subjects), or some more or less equivalent qualification, such as a technological diploma or membership of a professional institution. (Campbell, 1951, p. 127)

It was recommended that these qualifications be “rigorously enforced” (Campbell, 1951, p. 127) but, as the decade progressed and school rolls increased, this enforcement became harder to implement. Despite this, Thom (1950) explains that such concessions were necessary, especially for district high schools, as “many of the middle-aged teachers ... could not be expected to settle down to the severe discipline of study as extra-mural [sic] university students in addition to their normal work as teachers” (pp. 107–108).

Eventually, the Department of Education sought to increase teacher numbers through such means as reducing the teacher training period and offering post-primary school teaching scholarships (Grant, 2003). Nevertheless, by the late 1950s, a teacher shortage ensued and, in many cases, unqualified teachers were entering New Zealand classrooms, particularly in rural schools “where principals were fortunate if they had one teacher on their staff who was thoroughly proficient in a given subject” (Marshall, 1989, p. 229). School leaders generally considered it better to have unqualified teachers than no teachers at all. However, unqualified teachers had been part of New Zealand classrooms for many years, with Jack Shallcrass, a New Zealand educationalist, beginning teaching without a qualification—albeit in the primary sector—due to the teacher shortages during WWII (Middleton, 1996; Middleton & May, 1997). Grant

(2003) goes on to comment about teachers over 70 years of age having to teach at 'hard to staff' schools in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and some were untrained long-term relievers or retired (Middleton & May, 1997). New Zealand also looked to overseas applicants to fill teacher shortages. Many post-primary schools still did not have enough teachers through to the 1960s, and one in six left teaching due to heavy workloads, large classes, and better salaries outside teaching (McLaren, 1974).

Edwards (1960) also mentions the hidden teacher shortages. Because classes were grouped by age rather than ability and with an emphasis placed on individual development, more highly skilled and qualified teachers were needed, thus the lack of suitable teachers was more keenly felt. A further hidden problem was teachers' inability to cope with slower learners. Therefore, Edwards states that New Zealand had been forced to "dilute the quality of our teaching strength in our unsuccessful attempt to meet the demands for teachers at the post-primary level" (p. 7).

### **Post-Primary Teachers' Association**

Unionism is associated with post-primary teaching in the 1950s. The Post-Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA), the post-primary teachers' union, was set up in 1952, combining the previous Secondary Schools' Association and the New Zealand Technical School Teachers' Association (McGuinness Institute, 2016; Openshaw, 1995). Grant (2003) notes that in 1953, 85 per cent of post-primary school teachers were members of the PPTA, which Whitehead (1972) believes represented "conservative teacher opinion" (p. 6). Although teachers in the 1920s were paid even more than Accountants and Members of Parliament in New Zealand, by the 1950s, they were not paid the same as other professionals, such as lawyers (Grant, 2003). Therefore, Grant believes that the biggest issue of the 1950s was teacher salaries. Middleton and May (1997) agree, claiming that teacher remuneration in New Zealand in the 1950s was "appalling" (p. 115), with the country having the lowest teacher pay rates in the Western world (Grant, 2003). However, McLaren (1974) considers that teachers were "not ill-paid" (p. 115). Middleton and May (1997) also question whether teachers were employees or professionals, with Will believing the latter (Memoir, p. 243). Professions have increasingly become unionised due to declining incomes and working conditions,

affecting their professional image (Schön, 1983). This unionisation seems to reflect professionals' (such as teachers') role in a bureaucracy rather than their independent contribution to society, thus supporting Openshaw's (1995) comment about the increased bureaucratisation after WWII. The PPTA also wanted more onus put on trained teachers. Due to the growing number of unqualified teachers in post-primary classrooms, some PPTA members suggested that principals limit enrolments or send pupils home if adequately trained staff were not available (Kapiti College Branch, 1960; see also Marshall, 1989). Although this remit was not passed, the PPTA became more militant, suggesting that in relation to post-primary school conditions, strike action was not "unprofessional or unethical" (Ashby, 1961, p. 24; see also Marshall, 1989).

The PPTA was not always successful in its efforts to look after teachers. Despite the organisation, teacher conditions in the 1960s actually deteriorated (Openshaw, 1995; Webster, 1981). Lower teaching salaries and higher workloads meant teacher losses and fewer suitable and qualified applicants (Webster, 1981). Therefore, untrained and unqualified teachers continued to teach in the post-primary schools during the 1960s. It was not until 1968, after PPTA lobbying, that staffing improvements began to be made.

During the 1950s, teachers enjoyed job security and also had the support of the teacher organisations or unions (McLaren, 1974). However, securing a job and promotion were inextricably tied to grading, which was a "system of merit rating or assessment on a nation-wide [sic] basis, ... carried out by inspectors, all of whom [were] officers of the Department of Education recruited from the teaching service" (McLaren, 1974, p. 115). Inspectors (and senior staff in schools) were considered to be "the guardians of standards of taste, industry, and scholarship in the schools" (Caradus, 1948, p. 1). Nevertheless, non-New Zealand educationalists considered the grading system "a very unprofessional procedure" (McLaren, 1974, p. 115), an opinion that Will shared (Memoir, p. 244). However, some New Zealand teachers considered the grading system to be "the only way of ensuring that the conscientious and hard-working teacher is recognized" (McLaren, 1974, p. 115). Other teachers thought that the inspectors were sources of "new ideas, networking, and professional

development” (Middleton & May, 1997, p. 336). Despite these sentiments, the grading system in New Zealand was finally abolished in 1969 (McLaren, 1974).

David Ausubel, an American educational psychologist who came to New Zealand as a Fulbright Professor in the 1950s, believes that New Zealand post-primary schools were too authoritarian, with their corporal punishment, school uniforms, single-sex schools, and “exaggerated deference to teachers” (Ausubel, 1958, p. 12). He was also critical of the belief that subject knowledge was all that was needed to become a post-primary school teacher and that pedagogical or child development knowledge was not that important. Only about one third of new teachers at that time completed the postgraduate teaching course, which both teachers and principals believed was unacceptable. Therefore, Ausubel warned:

This situation makes for complacency and encrustation of traditional ways of doing things in as much as the post-primary master’s basic concept of how to teach must of necessity be largely a carbon copy of the methods he [sic] himself experienced as a pupil and generally unrelated to modern developments in educational theory and practice. (p. 12)

Ausubel also claimed that pupils were not encouraged to develop self-control or critical thinking and, apart from some of the newer suburban schools and district high schools, he thought New Zealand’s post-primary school system of the 1950s was the most outdated aspect of education in this country.

### **Emphasis on examinations**

The School Certificate Examination dominated post-primary schooling in the 1950s, but examinations were part of the New Zealand education psyche. The abolition of the Proficiency Examination at the end of Form 2<sup>13</sup> in 1937 allowed more freedom in primary schools with grades not dictating post-primary school attendance (Ewing, 1970; H. F. Lee & Lee, 2015). The Matriculation Examination controlled the post-primary school curriculum according to university standards. By 1944, this examination was abolished and replaced with a Form 6<sup>14</sup> University Entrance Examination so as to allow post-primary schools to have more input into the curriculum and to lessen the

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<sup>13</sup> Year 8.

<sup>14</sup> Year 12.

influence that the universities had over tertiary entry (Jones, Marshall, Matthews, Smith, & Smith, 1995). Ewing (1970) believes that the abolition of Matriculation and the greater freedom for post-primary schools and their curriculum was “New Zealand’s most significant post-war reform” (p. 207). Despite the more egalitarian aims of the Thomas Report and its belief that only the more able students would sit School Certificate after four years (not everyone doing so after three years as what eventuated) meant that New Zealand post-primary education continued to be dominated by examinations (see also G. D. Lee, 2003).

As School Certificate became the “passport” (Whitehead, 1974, p. 58) to jobs, passing it became a growing concern for both pupils and teachers. Teachers wanted increased passes for the assignment of specific classes as well as promotion; therefore, their focus was on adequately preparing as many pupils as possible to pass School Certificate. Predicting questions for the examination, writing notes for pupils, and offering model answers became part of teaching in the 1950s, all of which exemplified how Will also taught (see more in Chapter 5).

### **District high schools**

Will began his teaching at Onewhero District High School (DHS) in 1958. A DHS was one that had post-primary school classes added to a primary school and was usually under primary education control (Statistics New Zealand, 1957). Prior to 1900, the post-primary department of a DHS was just “a smaller and humbler version of the high school proper” (Thom, 1950, p. 15). Thom goes on to explain that at the turn of the twentieth century, George Hogben, who had been appointed Inspector-General of Schools in 1899, decided that the DHSs should be reformed because their pupils had a shorter post-primary education experience, usually about one to two years, with few proceeding to university. In addition, as these were rural schools, Hogben felt that Agriculture was an important subject as education should reflect “the life around” (Thom, 1950, p. 22).

However, the Thomas Report sought to offer equal opportunities for both rural and urban pupils (McKenzie, Lee, & Lee, 1996), and the DHSs held the same view. Therefore, rather than offering vocational subjects, such as Agriculture, that could be

beneficial to rural pupils, parents and those associated with New Zealand's district high schools in the 1950s were keen for the schools to offer academic subjects that could offer better employment options in the cities away from rural areas (H. F. Lee, 2005; H. F. Lee & Lee, 2015). Rural parents wanted wider employment prospects for their children and "fully expected the district high schools to provide upward social, economic and vocational mobility for their youth" (H. F. Lee, 2005, p. 14), thus assisting in the rural–urban drift. Although district high schools were set up to provide a "realistic type of education" (Murdoch, 1944, p. 333) in which subjects like Agriculture were important—if not the main focus—the Thomas Report of 1944 recommended that Agriculture become an optional rather than a compulsory subject in DHSs because farmers wanted to make sure their children's education was not compromised (McKenzie, Lee, & Lee, 1996). Farmers' preferences were heeded as the farming sector had political influence at that time (McLaren, 1974). Beeby notes in the Introduction to McKenzie's (1982) book, *Education and social structure: Essays in the history of New Zealand education*, that:

Whatever purposes politicians and administrators might have had for education, their plans could be deflected when ambitious parents, acting individually but in unspoken accord, decided they wanted the schools to do something different for their children" (p. v-vi) [and, further, that] "... there is always some tension between the controllers and the consumers of education and, in the long run, the consumers' purposes usually prevail" (p. vi).

By 1958, only 17 of the 104 DHSs offered Agriculture as a subject, although 38 offered Horticulture (Wild, 1958). Interestingly, my understanding is that Agriculture was not offered at Onewhero at all in the late 1950s (A. Rowe, personal communication, August 13, 2017). Apart from the lack of demand for the subject, reasons given for not offering Agriculture at DHSs included the difficulty in securing and retaining a good teacher (Wild, 1958). It was also hoped that by making Agriculture optional, the "lower status" (McKenzie, Lee, & Lee, 1996, p. 130) accorded to DHSs would then be lifted as well.

Prior to 1950, teachers were attracted to teach in district high schools as they could earn a higher salary. Therefore, these schools were reasonably well staffed (Thom,

1950). However, the salaries changed after 1950 so that teachers at DHSs received similar salaries to those in bigger, urban schools closer to amenities. This salary change meant that younger teachers were not so keen to be in isolated rural schools. To overcome the difficulty in recruiting teachers, country service was instituted in 1949 whereby teachers could not proceed up the salary scale until they had completed three years teaching in designated country schools (Marshall, 1989). Schools also sought to offer housing as an incentive for teachers, and the government undertook to build houses for post-primary teachers, especially in some rural areas—as was the case in Paeroa (see Chapter 5).

District high schools did tend to have particular problems. Their roll numbers were small; they had limited staff, so teachers had to take multiple classes; there was a lack of subject choice; and often there was a limited number of rooms and equipment (Murdoch, 1944). Will experienced all of these issues at Onewhero. Transport difficulties also posed a problem, and pupils were expected to help out at home, usually on the farm, as Will also discovered (Memoir, p. 222). Teachers at DHSs were also generally promoted from the primary sector and were graded as primary teachers, although they occasionally had post-primary inspectors. Housing was often a problem for teachers too (Thom, 1950). Despite the rural–urban drift of the 1950s (Marshall, 1989), DHS pupil numbers also rose during this time as a consequence of the raised school leaving age and the population bulge that occurred post-WWII.

## **Summary**

This chapter has discussed sociocultural theory and sociocultural–historical theory, the lenses through which Will’s teaching story is told. The chapter then provided background information from the literature about what post-primary schooling looked like in 1950s New Zealand when Will began teaching. The decade was strongly influenced by the Thomas Report and its emphasis on a new ‘common core,’ post-primary school curriculum and more individualised learning for its pupils. The raising of the leaving age to 15 years in the 1940s also meant that school rolls in the 1950s were increasing, at a time when facilities and teacher numbers were decreasing, thus

allowing Will to enter teaching without a qualification. The next chapter, Chapter 4, will examine the methodology and methods used in writing Will's story.

## **Chapter 4**

### **METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

*“Methodology might be described as the recipe for the research, the overview that produces the desired outcome. The methods or tools used in achieving the desired outcome are like the way the ingredients are combined in a research recipe.”* (Hills, 2013, p. 53)

Having reviewed some of the literature surrounding Will’s story, this next chapter aims to mix together my personal perspectives and research theory in general with the methods used to create Will’s story. This present chapter has two parts. The first looks at the theoretical framework underpinning the case study methodology that guided this study. My own worldview is explored, as is the use of story and biography in research and how teachers’ stories can add to the knowledge of what teaching is about. The section ends with a description of self-reflexivity. The second part of the chapter will describe the methods used to find Will’s story of teaching—document analysis, focus group discussion, and semi-structured interviews. Finally, methods for sampling, data analysis, ensuring validity and reliability, and ethical procedures are examined.

### **Methodology**

#### **Worldview**

In any study, the researcher needs to declare and justify their epistemology. The way that I or any other researcher views the world will determine or, at least, influence what I see and how I see it. Just as Palmer (1998, 2007) asserts that teachers teach who they are, so, too, will I research who I am. Epistemologically, my way of knowing and understanding what I know relates to social constructivism, which emphasises that we construct meaning as we engage with our world (Crotty, 1998; Söderqvist, 1991). Our social and historical perspectives assist with this meaning-making to influence our worldviews. As a researcher, I want to find out about how social interactions and history can shape people, knowing that my interpretations will be affected by my own experiences and background. Social constructivists usually have multiple perspectives and use triangulation for accuracy (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010; see also

Bogden & Biklen, 2007). Those who choose to use case studies, such as this one about Will, are usually social constructivists, who recognise researcher bias and are constantly reflective.

Such an epistemological stance informs my theoretical viewpoint (Crotty, 1998), which is interpretive. I am concerned about the person and human experience (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011), and I want to understand human action (Schwandt, 2003). The use of ‘thick description’ can be used for both myself and others to understand the different cultural contexts and reasons why people—namely Will—act as they do (Geertz, 1973). In keeping with the description of interpretivists put forward by Denzin (1992)—a Communications scholar and researcher—I prefer using one-to-one connections with people and to look at how personal and group histories can interrelate. In this story of Will and his teaching, his personal history (background, culture, and even language) needs to be positioned within the history of post-primary school education, especially that of the 1950s when he began.

I particularly relate to Denzin and Lincoln’s (2000, 2005) analogy of the interpretivist being a *bricoleur* who makes a bricolage or “a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4). Denzin and Lincoln (2013) elaborate that the *bricoleur* understands research as being “... an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting” (p. 11). I am an older, white, middle-class female of European (Dutch) heritage who is a Christian and is married with adult children. Such attributes therefore influence my interpretations. As a *bricoleur*, I want to tell Will’s teaching story in a new way that will resemble “a complex, quilt-like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage; a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations ... connecting all parts to the whole” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 11). In piecing together the bricolage of Will (see Figure 4.1 for a pictorial background bricolage of Will), I have sought to form a different understanding of his life and work as a teacher, but mine is just one unverifiable interpretation.

My epistemological and theoretical views suggest that I have a qualitative leaning. This case study of Will is an example of qualitative research, which looks for “in-depth understanding of a central phenomenon, not for explanations” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 160). Qualitative research is usually about working with words, and language is crucial in social constructivist thinking (Gergen & Gergen, 1991; Söderqvist, 1991). I also desire to know what participants think and feel (Creswell, 2008), so my focus is on considering what is going on, asking questions, and analysing answers. This case study of Will is not a complete biography. I am not telling Will’s complete life story as any story of another can only be a partial one; instead, this thesis will focus on Will’s teaching story whilst incorporating aspects of his past that have shaped his teaching.

An important part of my worldview also involves spirituality. Spirituality can be thought of as an awareness of self, community, and the very nature of existence (Jarvis, 2001). It can also involve understanding God. I am a Pentecostal Christian; I believe in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour, and my life is entwined in following His teaching. Jarvis believes that spirituality is learnt through maturation and develops through relationship and love. He also distinguishes between the two separate concepts of religion—as a set of answers—and Christianity—as a quest to find them. These concepts affect Will and myself, and the influence of both Catholicism and Christianity in our lives. In direct relation to research, Astley (2012) suggests that all learning “must reflect a humility before the truth” (p. 469), which asks the question of whose truth he is referring to. From a spiritual perspective, my own thinking is that this

Bricolage (next page):

1. Will (in car on left), family driver, Will’s father John, and his brother John, c. 1909.
2. Will playing tennis, the Netherlands, c. 1920s.
3. Will studying in the Netherlands, c. 1920s.
4. Will married Loes Willemse in the NEI on 6 June, 1941.
5. Will, Batavia, NEI, 1938.
6. Pencil sketch of Will in concentration camp, 1943.
7. Will on the plantation, c. 1948.



Figure 4.1. Bricolage of Will's earlier life.

is the truth of God as in Jesus' statement: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6 Revised Standard Version) in contrast to the more postmodern interpretation of challenging any claim to 'truth' (Kilgore, 2001). Like Dirkx (1997), I also believe that learning involves a search for deeper meaning in life, and self-knowledge requires an awareness of the soul dimension in both teaching and learning as opposed to the more common technical-rational perspective. My Christian paradigm guides (and perhaps restricts) me in my research journey.

Having explained my perspectives and personal beliefs, the following sections will explore the use of case study in research and the use of story and, in particular, biographies in explaining such a case study as Will's. There will also be a short section on teacher stories in general.

### **Case study methodology**

This research uses a case study methodology. A case study is an example of a bounded phenomenon that the researcher wants to investigate and can be defined as "a systematic investigation of a specific instance" (Nisbet & Watt, 1984, p. 74), involving methods such as document analysis, observation, and interviews. The object of the research is the 'case' (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015), and the focus is on the particular rather than the general (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Stake, 1995). Abramson's (1992) explanation of case study is particularly relevant for my research because he sees it as a non-experimental study of a person or an event that often uses archival material. A case study is also usually about celebrating individuality rather than accepting conformity. Again, this is applicable to Will, especially when considering his story as an older, English-as-an-other language, beginning teacher with no qualifications who went on to write textbooks in his chosen subjects.

Case studies have distinct characteristics. Research questions play an integral part in determining what can be learned from the specific case as opposed to the case being used to make generalisations (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Instead, the emphasis is on gathering richly detailed, in-depth information so as to clearly differentiate the case. The case study can also be of one individual, such as Will.

Case study researchers take what is common or usual as well as what is particular and specific but tend, ultimately, to find unusual or unique features due to the nature or function of the case, historical background, or the social contexts (Stake, 2005). My decision to look at one person—Will Potter—also reflects Schwandt and Gates’s (2018) reasoning for single case studies. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this story of Will’s teaching (1958–1976) was chosen not only because his story is unknown but because his story is so distinctive (an older, immigrant teacher with a first language other than English coming to teach in New Zealand post-primary schools without a qualification). Will’s story also has predictability (he worked hard and had frustrations and concerns as any teacher might, without making a name for himself nationally or internationally).

Stake (1995, 2005) notes three different types of case studies. The first is the intrinsic case study that involves one person or institution, which the researcher then studies in depth because with “all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest” (Stake, 2005, p. 445). The second is the instrumental case study that is one to learn about an issue or to generalise, and, third, case studies can be multiple or collective where the researcher studies several cases to look at a phenomenon, group of people, or a condition. My thesis about Will is an intrinsic case study because his experiences are of unique interest (Creswell, 2013; Lodico, Spalding, & Voetgle, 2010; Stake, 1995).

Intrinsic case studies are often chosen as the researcher may have a pre-existing relationship with the proposed case (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010) and, in Will’s case, my relationship with him is familial. Such intrinsic case studies are also more descriptive than interpretive and look at the characteristics of the person, the context, and specific processes involved. Although such a specific selection of a case could be a biased one (Flyvbjerg, 2011), the differences in Will’s past experiences, his decision to go teaching, and the time in which he began teaching can all add interest to one such teacher’s story. Stake (1994, 1995) also suggests that no matter how ordinary or common the case is, the resulting study is unique, and readers may relate to this uniqueness through narratives, vignettes, and experiential accounts.

There are many advantages in carrying out a case study. Case studies tell real stories (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011), and they often are written in a more

understandable way and can therefore be read by a wider audience (Nisbet & Watt, 1984). People can also learn vicariously through the case, and these experiences can be similar to the reader's (Stake, 2005). Case studies can provide 'insight' into the person and look at their historical and social world as well as allowing the reader to come to know the person being studied (Runyan, 1982, cited in Abramson, 1992). This knowledge of the person can stir up feelings of sympathy or empathy for the case being studied and increase awareness of the causes and particular implications of certain events and experiences. Will's story can also arouse sympathy for his internment, and provide insight into his historical world of the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) and, in particular, the implications of internment on Will and others. Runyan also believes that such individual case studies—like Will's—can simply be interesting to read. Of particular relevance to this study is the advantage that case study research is effective for the individual researcher, such as myself, because the case can be studied in depth over a limited time frame (Nisbet & Watt, 1984).

There can also be some disadvantages in using case study methodology. The results are not generalisable except if readers can see some link to their own experience (Nisbet & Watt, 1984). Nevertheless, in this study, such possible reader generalisation could apply to post-primary school teachers, Commerce teachers, older teachers, or the Dutch and, in particular, the Dutch who emigrated here from the NEI. However, generalisation could be in the domain of any reader: this thesis about Will can provide this information, illuminating some areas and explaining others, but leave the applicability to the reader. Flyvberg's (2013) comment about Galileo and Aristotle's law of gravity also notes that some case studies can be generalised. Eysenck (1976), who originally thought of case studies as simply a method of producing anecdotes, later realised that these cases need not prove anything but that people can still learn from them. I would argue that any such story of an educator, no matter how partial, would add to the teacher knowledge available today rather than attempt to prove an educational point.

Another disadvantage of case study methodology is that it is not easily verifiable and may thus be selective, biased, and subjective (Nisbet & Watt, 1984). Indeed, the case for this study was specifically chosen for personal as well as academic reasons, and

researcher bias is also a strong possibility in this research, particularly as I am Will's daughter. Stake (2005) acknowledges that case study data *is* subjective but argues that if the researcher (myself) relies too much on abstract theory, this can then de-personalise and, thus, undermine the purpose of carrying out such a case study.

This thesis is a case study of Will and therefore does not purport to offer a comprehensive view of teachers in general nor of Commercial teachers in particular. Further, the thesis does not suggest that Will's story is common for those from the NEI who immigrated to New Zealand in the 1940s and 1950s either. However, it does try to personalise one teacher's experience and locate his 'partial' story on the continuum of the history of New Zealand's post-primary schooling.

### **Use of story**

Everyone has a story to tell, and each personal story helps to define a person's identity (Clark & Rossiter, 2008). We all lead "storied lives" (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010, p. 143), and stories also help us to make meaning of our lives (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). These stories can come in many forms, including an autobiography or self-written prose; a story told to another; or a story written/told by another, being a biography (Plummer, 2001). Later life is an excellent time to tell stories (Freeman, 1997): this timing relates to Will, who was 76 when he wrote his memoir, and also myself in writing Will's semi-biographical teaching story for this thesis. Freeman (1997) suggests that life is a journey, and it is only as we get nearer to death that we tend to realise "what it's all been about" (p. 378). However, I would challenge this thinking because I am not sure that we can ever fully make sense of our lives; moreover, like Erikson (1980/1994), in later years I believe we evaluate our lives and may not always be satisfied with our self-assessment. Therefore, such stories of self (or a memoir) can offer a different perspective of our lives.

In early times, stories of people's lives related to memorable or notable events, hence the word 'memoirs.' Often, the stories of great leaders or sporting heroes were told so that the "'public life' [was] stressed over the 'private life'" (Plummer, 2001, p. 89). However, more recently, ordinary lives are now starting to be told and may even be representative of the voices of a group of people (Langness & Frank, 1981; Merrill &

West, 2009; Plummer, 2001). In this study, this representativeness could be true of post-primary school Commerce teachers and Dutch immigrants from the NEI to New Zealand. In telling the teaching story of Will, I have sought to examine the life of one ordinary teacher to see how extra-ordinary he is within the context of his time, culture, experience, and involvement in New Zealand's post-primary education.

The use of story has also become more acceptable in research and academic pursuits. Plummer (2001) notes that the way people make sense of their social world is now a major interest in the Social Sciences, particularly in Education. People can learn through stories by hearing them, telling them, or the more abstract recognising them, and stories are needed today to extend our knowledge of people's experiences (Clark & Rossiter, 2008). Howatson-Jones (2011) further adds that "while 'storying' does not [or, in Will's case, cannot] necessarily ask the opinion of those spoken about in the narrative, it does provide the space for their voices to be included, recognising the importance of their social contributions" (p. 39). As a teacher, Will made a difference in the lives of others, as well as in the development of Commercial subjects in New Zealand through his writing of textbooks. His is also one story of an NEI immigrant to settle in New Zealand.

There are many ways to use stories. Some researchers, such as Banks and Banks (1998), have presented their findings in a fictional way, and Barthes (1975/1995), the French literary critic and cultural commentator, suggests that the text in his autobiographical work is written as though he were a character in a novel. Other works have included fictional vignettes to exemplify concepts being investigated and discussed (Knight, 2001; Pattynama, 2005; Wright, 2002). Within the context of this thesis—yet another way to tell a person's story—I have included quoted vignettes as stories within Will's story.

Will's story, although set within an educational context, has aspects of history. History is often told in the form of stories with the historian not just analysing the past but retrospectively looking back with the benefit of hindsight and experience (Alheit, 2005). In addition, because people are autopoietic<sup>15</sup>, their stories are more than

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<sup>15</sup> They have the ability to change themselves and their worldview.

fiction: such stories add to the existing body of knowledge and also help others and ourselves as researchers to look at knowledge in a new and unique way, thereby developing new learning. In telling a story, the writer/researcher needs to put themselves into the past and thus provide a context for rewriting and living it (Denzin, 2008). Therefore, history offers a series of word pictures with particular moments sometimes quoted out of context, but which can nevertheless give background perspective to the ideas being put forward.

My aim is to write a factual story of Will, conscious of not using “the Hollywood Plot” (Connolly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 10) whereby narratives or stories invariably have a happy ending. Will’s story is not a fairy tale. Freeman (1997) believes that to tell someone’s story is to offer our own perspective on it, thus redefining truth in some way. Shotter (1993) further elaborates: “to present human life in the form of a narrative—in order to render it reflectively intelligible—is to falsify it. The fact is, our life is lived as a sequence of disjointed parts ...” (p. 173; italics in the original). Despite this caution, to offer a cohesive thesis, I need to reframe the information from and about Will and relate my interpretation of his story as a cohesive whole, picking up on the parts that I consider to be relevant to my research questions. Rather than falsifying Will’s life, I aim to highlight aspects of it and, thus, my thesis resonates with biography.

### **Biography**

Biography is a particular form of story. Plummer (2001) refers to a biography as an “own story” (p. 19) written or told by another. Such an account of a person’s life can also be written using mainly records and archives (Angrosino, 1989). Biographies offer facts about a person as well as their character and temperament, and they are suitable when looking at a small population—such as Will—using in-depth qualitative research (Connor, 2006). In this thesis, only a part of Will’s life will be told—his teaching story—although aspects of his past experiences will be included; therefore, this thesis is only a partial or semi-biographical account of Will. Denzin (1989) believes that biographies—and semi-biographies—describe “turning points in individuals’ lives” (p. 7; see also Howatson-Jones, 2011), and Connor (2006) suggests they involve “creating literary, narrative accounts and representations of lived experiences” (p. 19). The reader of the

biography should realistically be able to imagine the life of the subject (Davies & Gannon, 2006).

Angrosino (1989) suggests that biographies assume that the story is representative of a group, the person typical of a particular group, and the teller of the story simply a recorder. This is not true in the case of Will. Will was chosen as the case study due to his unique experiences, and all Dutch teachers, all Commerce teachers, or all Dutch Commerce teachers would not be similar to Will. Further, as I am Will's daughter, I am not just the recorder of his semi-biography—I have a vested interest in its development and analysis, and my thesis must also meet doctoral standards as well. Angrosino does stress that it is important to check the stories and happenings according to the historical and cultural context of the time, thus tying in with sociocultural and sociocultural–historical theories, and disregard events that cannot be verified.

Writing a biography or semi-biography has associated responsibilities (Söderqvist, 1991). As the writer, I will, in effect, construct Will's identity, interpret meanings in his life, and have control of the writing process, including what to leave in or out. I will also be responsible for his character portrayal. Denzin (1989) notes that the ultimate responsibility of the researcher is to the person being studied, adding:

The lives and stories that we hear and study are given to us under a promise, that promise being that we protect those who have shared with us. And, in return, this sharing will allow us to write life documents that speak to the human dignity, the suffering, the hopes, the dreams, the lives gained, and the lives lost by the people we study. (p. 83)

Will did not offer information personally to this thesis due to his death in 1993, but I am still obligated to protect his reputation, both for him and for other family members.

It is important to note that the person writing a biography or semi-biography is not the "all-knowing observer" (Denzin, 2001, p. 8). Although I am able to look at parts of Will's life, I cannot presume to know everything that is happening and why—I can only speculate. Biography can also be almost "narcissistic" (Merrill & West, 2009, p. 11) as researchers can get so personally involved with the subject's life details without adding

to our understandings. I have had to be aware that I am making interpretivist judgements of what I consider was the culture and thinking of 'then' but viewed through my own knowledge, experience, and understanding of 'now.' However, all researchers could be accused of this as well as yielding power over the portrayal of others' lives. I must be cautious of not only being narcissistic or egocentric but also of making inferences where inferences are not meant to be. It is also important not to turn biographies into heroic fiction (Denzin, 1992; Merrill & West, 2009) or to romanticise the subjects (Denzin, 1992). Finally, Denzin (1989) considers that any person's story 'objectively' told by another is effectively a subjective text. Nevertheless, he does add that such a story is suggestive of a real person whose story needs to be told.

### **Teachers' stories**

Elbaz-Luwisch (2007) argues that teachers are an integral part of the development of curriculum and teaching practice. Their stories and experiences can offer significant insights into what needs to be taught in classrooms and how. Since the later 1970s, she notes that there have been various examples of stories of the lives of teachers and their teaching practice. In New Zealand, these could include the work of Kane and Mellon (2006), written for recruitment and retention purposes, and Middleton (1996, 1998), who takes an oral history approach. This study of Will is based within the New Zealand context but adds unique cultural and social dimensions.

Researchers use teacher stories in different ways and for different purposes. For example, Kelchtermans (2008) looked at biographies of ten primary school teachers in Belgium as a way of analysing their professional development. These experiences or career stories were told to the author and provided the basis for understanding the teachers' "personal perspective and the subjective meaning of these experiences" (p. 444). Schaefer (2010) looked at two beginning Physical Education teachers to better understand teacher attrition. Middleton (1998) told the story of 'ordinary' teachers and pupils in New Zealand in respect to the years 1939–1949 so that their voices could be heard. The oral history project wanted to show:

... teachers as creative strategists who actively construct their educational ideas from the resources made available to them within the constraints and

possibilities of their circumstances—historical and political; cultural, geographical, discursive, generational, biographical. (Middleton, 1998, p. 55)

Openshaw (1991) also talks of teachers' stories in 1940s and 1950s New Zealand education related to Social Studies, Reading, and Mathematics. Will's story is one of him in the contexts of being a Commerce teacher, an immigrant, a late starter in the profession, and as one who was witness to the development of post-primary school education in New Zealand in the 1950s and beyond.

Clandinin and Connelly (1992) believe that stories about teachers, as well as teachers' own stories, are, in effect, research into teaching. However, Kelchtermans (2008) does warn researchers to situate such teacher stories beyond the personal perspective and in a wider historical, social, and even political context. She warns that these stories of teachers not be "just another tool for domestication, de-professionalisation, actually letting teachers celebrate and wallow in their own little stories, thus leading themselves away from a critical questioning of the situation they are being put in" (p. 30). Heeding this warning and associating it with the fact that Will is my parent means that I need to 'step back' and look at the wider context in which Will taught, including the historical and social influences on his career and teaching in 1950s–1970s New Zealand. I also need to practice self-reflexivity.

### **Self-reflexivity**

In this thesis, I am situated within my own and my father's history, both of which are inextricably linked. I must be aware that my family influences and my personal filters of gender, language, class, and faith will affect the way that I see and interpret Will's life. Hence, it is important that I be self-reflexive. Reflexivity, according to Bloor and Wood (2006), is "an awareness of the self in the situation of action and of the role of the self in constructing that situation" (p. 145). Finlay (2002b) suggests that reflexivity is "thoughtful, conscious self-awareness" (p. 532) and the term 'self-reflexivity' is, thus, a cyclical tautology—one influences the other. As the researcher in this case study, I must not only be aware of potential biases but also that I am part of the "setting, context, and social phenomenon" (Schwandt, 1997, p. 136) being looked at.

Self-reflexivity is not simply reflection. Finlay (2002b) considers that the terms 'reflection' and 'reflexivity' can be seen on a continuum, with reflection at one end, simply thinking about the study—as in pondering an object—after the event. Conversely, reflexivity is at the other end of the spectrum and is a “more immediate, continuing, dynamic, and subjective self-awareness” (Finlay, 2002b, p. 533). Hertz (1997) observes that being reflexive is “to have an ongoing conversation about the experience while simultaneously living in the moment” (p.viii). The cyclical nature of self-reflexivity suggests that for myself as the researcher, “wherever I go, there I am” (Le Gallais, 2008, p. 145). Although Bettany and Woodruffe-Burton (2009) suggest that reflexivity is carried out at “critical” (p. 668) times in the research, self-reflexivity is a constant process (Kleinsasser, 2000).

Self-reflexivity helps to establish validity in a qualitative study (Schwandt, 1997). It developed in the Social Sciences to counteract the idea that all research needed to be scientific and objective (Bettany & Woodruffe-Burton, 2009). In the past, subjectivity in research was considered a “contaminant” (Etherington, 2004, p. 25), and researchers were encouraged to be distant, non-involved, and impersonal. One would query if any researcher can entirely bury their assumptions, no matter how self-reflexive they are. In addition, subjectivity can be a positive attribute in research and is not always equated to bias as the self is very much a part of any interpretive work (Glesne, 2016). Hence, self-reflexivity is also a process for researchers to better understand themselves and their craft, therefore producing better reports (Bettany & Woodruffe-Burton, 2009; Glesne, 2016). Self-reflexivity can also be a way of monitoring and auditing the research process.

How self-reflexivity is used is also important. Researchers should not just continually reflect on their reflexivities in a never-ending cycle (Gergen & Gergen, 1991) and ought to avoid indulgence in narcissistic monologues (Finlay, 2002a). However, the absence of self-reflexivity compromises the research (Finlay, 2002a). Bloor and Wood (2006) acknowledge that there are no guidelines for a “faithful and illuminating reflexive account” (p. 147). Accordingly, not only is my reflexivity a personal journey but how I include it in my thesis is also unique to me.

I have engaged in self-reflexivity in assessing my understanding of information, when data gathering, and in the write up of the thesis. Throughout this study, and aware of my personal place within it, I have constantly checked the validity of my viewpoints and tried to be honest about my role and biases that could shape this story. Notes and self-reflexion have helped to keep my qualitative researcher bias in check. Self-reflexivity also included trying to understand the interviews through the eyes of the interviewees and being friendly and wearing muted coloured clothes when going to see them. I also mulled over how much of 'me' to present in the write up of this thesis (Burne, 2017). I also agree with Gergen and Gergen (1991) that those with a constructivist leaning have "no exit from personal subjectivity" (p. 79; see also Etherington, 2004).

As a qualitative researcher, I influenced the collection, selection, and interpretation of my data (Finlay, 2002b). For example, in using Will's memoir and as Will's daughter, I needed to be self-reflexive and retain more objectivity in studying and analysing my father's memories. As a social constructivist researcher, I worked together with my participants to form the story of Will the teacher (Finlay, 2002a), so the relationships I had with the participants could therefore affect the outcome of my research (Jootun, McGhee, & Marland, 2009). With my participants, I tried to be honest, courteous, and friendly at all times, attentive in listening, and intrigued by information offered, even when I was not so sure of its validity or the version of events. I also sometimes had to be discreet about background knowledge that I had that could have affected the participant's perceptions, such as when one interviewee insisted that Will never sent a pupil out of his classroom when I knew that he had. I also tried to be empathetic (Josselson, 1995). There were times when both the interviewees and I shed tears as stories of Will were told; I sometimes felt overwhelmed by people's affection for Will, even after all these years, and often humbled that people would give so generously of their time to share with me about him.

I made efforts to attend to the balance between being a convivial listener and over-rapport (Le Gallais, 2008). From the outset, I was aware that this study was not about me and also that people usually enjoy talking about themselves and their experiences. Fontana and Frey (2000) suggest that as interviewees open up, they can show their

human side by answering questions and showing feelings. Therefore, in later interviews, I thought that sharing a bit of myself could help the people in my study to also open up more. However, later, in typing up the transcripts, I realised that perhaps I had said too much (Burne, 2017). I will never really know. On the other hand, I was aware of my non-verbal communication (how I sat, eye contact, facial expressions, and even what I wore) and how it could influence the responses. I was also aware of trying to keep the questions as open-ended as I could. Kleinsasser (2000) notes that reflexivity gives qualitative research its “pulse” (p. 155), so constantly questioning the data and myself throughout this research process has added to the creativity and lively evolution of this study.

## **Methods**

Having looked at the philosophical framework surrounding this thesis, the use of case study, story, biography, teachers’ stories, and self-reflexivity, the second part of this chapter explores the practical steps I took to carry out my research. Research is carried out to answer questions that define and set the framework for a case study (Creswell, 2009; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006; Plano Clark & Badiee, 2010). As explained in Chapter 1, my four research questions guided the research and influenced the choice of research methods. In summary, my four questions are:

1. What key life experiences shaped Will before he started teaching?
2. What motivated Will to go post-primary teaching?
3. What were some of Will’s teaching approaches?
4. What was Will’s contribution to Commerce teaching in New Zealand?

### **Data collection methods**

A number of specific methods were used in this study to find out about Will and his teaching. Being a qualitative study, my data gathering involved soft data (Bogden & Biklen, 2007) that came from documents, a focus group discussion, and semi-structured interviews. Email exchanges were another form of data. As I gathered data about Will, I kept a data gathering log, and, after each interview, I recorded my reflections. I also kept a journal of thoughts and ideas about such things as how the information was gathered, the people I wanted to contact, and the data that was being

gathered. The practical aspects of these various forms of data collection are discussed under the following headings.

### ***Documents***

Documents can be used in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010). They are nearly always available, can be cheap or even free to access, are usually factual, and can be a rich source of context-specific information, often in the language of that context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, some of Will's early employment correspondence is in Dutch and, as I am not conversant in the language, their potential value for this thesis was not able to be realised. Documents also do not need transcribing like other forms of qualitative research (Creswell, 2008). These documents can be accessible at a time convenient to the researcher, but some information may take time to obtain as it can be in hard-to-find places (Creswell, 2014). This situation has been true in the study of Will; for example, it took five months of liaising with New Zealand's Department of Internal Affairs and Archives New Zealand to source Will's Naturalisation and Immigration files, respectively.

Various documents were used to find out about major experiences in Will's life. These documents of life, as noted by Plummer (2001), can include letters, autobiographies, and diaries, as well as photos, paintings, and memoranda. They may also involve such things as obituaries, postcards, and *whakapapa* (genealogy; Connor, 2006). If the subject is deceased, as Will is, records and archives may also be used (Angrosino, 1989). For Will, these life documents comprised Will's memoir and marks' books, photos, testimonials, pencil drawings from the internment years, and letters.

There are some negative aspects to using documents in research. McCulloch (2004) suggests that documents fell out of favour with Social Scientists for three reasons. First, documents tend to focus on the past rather than the present as they deal with previous periods of time, so they are of more use to historians. However, in this historical story of an educator, documents have been useful. Second, bureaucratic records tend to talk about the politically elite and are top-down focussed, dealing with issues to do with the "national, local, or institutional level" (McCulloch, 2004, p. 26)

rather than individuals. However, records, such as Will's Salary Card, were indeed useful to this thesis, but, in agreement with McCulloch, Will was not deemed important enough to have had his Inspectorate Report nor most of his other records retained. Third, the existence of documents may not deal with issues of direct relevance to the researcher and be very time consuming to locate, if indeed they exist to find. Although this is true of certain irrelevant documents for me as the researcher, some, such as Will's marks' books, serendipitously discovered in a family member's garage, became relevant to this study (and myself) because of their existence. In contrast, some, such as Will's university records from the Netherlands, were destroyed during World War II (WWII).

The key document used in this research is Will's memoir, written by him in 1982. His memoir helped to reconstruct Will's probable life and also gave context to the study (Glesne, 2016). A memoir is written as we "live life forwards but understand it backwards" (Kirkegaard, cited in Josselson, 1995, p.35; see also Goodson & Sikes, 2001). As we age, our future time perspective shortens, so we spend more time looking back (Jarvis, 2001); therefore, people often write their memoirs in older age for those left behind, just as Will did. However, family connections can reduce the objectivity of an autobiographic memoir (Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Jones, 2001) and, as Will's main audience for his memoir would have been his children, he may not have made known some of his more personal thoughts and happenings. His memories could also have been selective and biased, influenced by collective memory (Comello, 2012) whereby his recollections of events may have been conceptualised through socialisation with others, or even be deceptive (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Although memoirs are primary documents in that the writer was a witness to, or participant in, the proceedings, they are usually produced long after the event and, as such, can be inaccurate due to "failures of memory or selective recall" (McCulloch, 2004, p. 31). However, Will wrote much detail about his experiences as, for example, in his teaching, and details of the time, such as textbooks used. These details can be useful in such a thesis if they can be verified and were discarded if they could not be.

Will's memoir, although offering much relevant and interesting information, did not follow a chronological or thematic pattern. It began in 1941 amid WWII and was more

a 'stream of consciousness' of Will's life story rather than a strict chronological summary of events. Will was quite a talker, and his memoir is written just as he spoke, often using the exact language that I can recall him using. In speaking, Will sometimes went off topic, explaining aspects or telling alternative stories within stories, so that it was hard to follow his thinking at times. I was also cautious of heeding Alvesson and Kärreman's (2011) advice that people, even Will, may not have given a totally honest account but, rather, a favourable 'truth' for him. However, the memoir did offer a different insight into Will, not only his telling of stories and experiences but also inferred knowledge about him. For example, he wrote detailed lists of the numbers of his textbooks and the exact sums of money he earned each year from them. Such detail suggests Will was a methodical and detailed person.

Document analysis also included analysing records, which Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest are "any written or recorded statement prepared by or for an individual or organization for the purpose of attesting to an event or providing an accounting" (p. 277). An example of such an official record includes Will's Salary Cards, which I received from Archives New Zealand, giving interesting evidence about increased earning when Will went teaching in 1958. The sums mentioned also differed slightly to those noted by Will, so I opted to cite the Salary Card information. Will's Immigration and Naturalisation files gave information about Will needing to acknowledge being white when wanting to come to New Zealand in the 1950s. I particularly wanted to read Will's Inspection Reports as I felt that these would give quite an objective and telling account of his prowess as a teacher. However, a representative from Archives New Zealand informed me that teachers' Inspection Reports usually were destroyed after seven years, and that their Personnel Files also were destroyed except if they were 'important people' or part of a representative group that was retained for historical purposes. Will, apparently, fitted neither of these categories.

I tried to locate documents from other sources. In the Potter Family archives, I was able to access Will's testimonials; an informal school magazine from Onewhero DHS; and school yearbooks for Waiuku, Paeroa, and Spotswood Colleges. There were also various photographs as well as Will's leather strap, given to him when he started teaching. I also visited each of the five schools where Will taught, meeting with four of

the current principals, and asking if there was a school archivist and archives. The designated teacher archivists at Spotswood and Mount Maunganui Colleges were able to assist me with yearbooks. Having gathered all these documents (and artefacts), Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) suggest they be used in conjunction with other methods, such as focus group discussion and interviews.

### ***Focus group discussion***

I chose to hold a focus group discussion (FGD) with my three siblings—Will's children. This group enabled me to “collect shared understanding from several individuals as well as to get views from specific people” (Creswell, 2008, p. 226), using a FGD protocol (see Appendix A). The data from a FGD is socially constructed through the interaction of its members (Merriam & Tisdall, 2016), but Creswell (2008) notes that there can be difficulties at times having all members agree on answers to certain questions. During my FGD, we sometimes wandered off topic and the group could not always agree on certain matters, but various details, such as thoughts about Will as a father, were useful in creating a more balanced picture of Will. Some members can be reluctant to share personal details (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010), but I do not believe this was the case in my focus group.

The purpose of FGDs is to investigate issues and subjects rather than objectively describe or explain (Babbie, 2016). They are also useful for exploring ideas and getting in-depth information, especially as they allow for probing and have a reasonably quick turnaround (Johnson & Turner, 2003). However, one or two people can dominate. To counter this possibility, I had an agenda and provided speaking ‘rules,’ such as one person speaking at a time. My focus group was held at a private home and the event doubled (later) as a family get-together, thus helping to offset the cost of meeting. Creswell (2008) notes that focus group transcribers can have trouble differentiating between speakers, but I transcribed the discussion to avoid this.

One of the interesting things about my FGD was that I was a part of it, as one of Will's children. As the researcher, I was both an insider, having access to past histories and knowledge, as well as trying to maintain an outsider status (Le Gallais, 2008). My siblings are 10, 11, and 16 years older than me, and I doubted my ability, both before

and since, to moderate the group. Morgan (1993) and Creswell (2008) agree that the moderator is the data collection instrument in a FGD, so they need to be prepared to facilitate a discussion where everyone has an opportunity to talk. I also sent interview themes to each member ahead of time.

### ***Semi-structured interviews***

I also used semi-structured interviews—or “verbal questionnaires” (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015, p. 449)—when talking to people about Will. As interviews are retrospective in that participants recall what happened in the past, the authors caution that these offer the least accurate data due to people’s memories changing. Memory can also be socially constructed, the stories may be the ones most often told, or be our best or highly selected tales (Plummer, 2001). Although collective memory could also apply, those being interviewed would not have functioned as a group that discussed Will, so these cautions may not be so relevant. In addition, in this research, having the opportunity to interview people who taught with Will or who experienced his teaching gave me a chance to flesh out and personalise the documented evidence. As Beer (1997) maintains, interviews expand experience, not just reflect on it (see also Finlay, 2002b). While some interviews were more fruitful than others, each gave me pertinent information not just about Will but also about the social and educational systems at the time. I have tried to use data from each interviewee, both to give them a voice and also to acknowledge their willingness to be part of this study.

The interview questions evolved over the process of collecting interview data from June 2016 until April 2017 (see Appendix B for individual interview protocols). For example, in response to some of the first interviews, I later asked specific questions about age and language being factors in Will’s teaching. After each interview, I transcribed the information myself and sent the transcriptions back to the people concerned to check and sign a Release of Transcript form should there be nothing to alter or delete. Three of Will’s pupils asked that I not include some aspects of what they said because it read as being judgemental, despite it being contextual at the time of the interview. I heeded their wishes. I went to all but one of the homes or offices of

the 20 people I interviewed; the last person was interviewed in her vehicle (at her request).

It can be difficult at times knowing how many interviews to do in qualitative research. However, Richards (2015) suggests that researchers continue collecting data until their research and any other questions have been answered. Qualitative researchers may think that there are always more interviews to do, and there is often safety in doing so. When I knew that the information that I gathered was being repeated, often referred to as saturation (Braun & Clarke, 2013), I stopped conducting interviews.

### ***Emails***

I also used emails, the modern-day form of letters, to find or clarify information. In many cases, this was in response to people's emails to me about Will (having seen my advertisements in places) or to clarify or expand on issues with my interviewees. In writing up the interview transcripts, I sometimes thought of issues that I had failed to ask about, such as one teacher's experience of not having a formal teaching qualification (SPT-3). Therefore, I later emailed this person for more information. I also used email to ask for records, to find people, or to contact schools. Emails were also useful to check details, such as the correct name of the university Will attended in Rotterdam. I also used some anecdotes sent to me via email from four pupils from Waiuku College and one from Spotswood, having obtained their written (email) approval to do so.

### **Sampling**

In this case study, sampling refers to the people selected to provide data about Will. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that qualitative sampling usually involves small groups chosen purposefully. Rather than choosing people who are representative of a generalisable population, for the study of Will, I purposefully chose people who were representative "with respect to characteristics that are important to the study question[s]" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 153). In having questions about Will and his teaching, it made sense to ask only those who taught with or were taught by him. Initially, I referred to the people in my study as 'participants' or 'respondents'; after all, these are academic-friendly words that reinforce privacy and confidentiality, both

important aspects of research. However, I then began to think of the others involved in this project as people—people with whom I shared a common interest: Will. In the following paragraphs, I talk about how I located people to share their experiences of Will as a teacher.

I used purposeful sampling for the focus group. Purposeful sampling enables the researcher to talk with specific people believed to know a lot about the main focus of an inquiry (Merriam & Tisdall, 2016). The size of any focus group can vary: Creswell (2008) recommends having four to six people; Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2015) believe there should be four to eight; and Merriam and Tisdall (2016) suggest between six and ten people. I specifically chose the three (other) people in my focus group as they are my siblings and who, therefore, had first-hand accounts of Will as a man, a father, and, for two of them, as a teacher. All three also attended post-primary schools at which Will taught. Such non-random purposeful sampling is often based on prior information, yet such personal judgements may be wrong (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015). However, in this instance, these three were able to provide me with additional insight into Will's background and teaching that I would not have gleaned elsewhere. They were the ones most closely acquainted with Will in his dual roles of teacher and father.

I used a number of ways to locate people to talk to about Will in semi-structured interviews. The prerequisite was that all those to be interviewed would either have taught with or been taught by Will. As Will's teaching career spanned the years 1958 to 1976, some would have died or may not be in a position to remember. Most of the people I interviewed were around 55 years and older, and several were in their 90s.

I found one person to interview in an informal way. Through a chance conversation with a neighbour, I found out that one of Will's previous principals was a friend of hers, and she was able to arrange a meeting. He is an elderly man, so I visited him in his rest home to talk and share.

For a number of the other interviews, I used purposeful random sampling where I sought to find specific people, not known to me, who might come forward to be interviewed. I advertised for people to contact me. I did this by writing to the New

Zealand Commerce and Economics Teachers' Association (NZCETA), asking if an advertisement could be placed in their newsletter, but I received no responses through this channel. In seeking both former teachers and pupils, I placed advertisements in each of the five school newsletters, but this did not yield any responses either. However, two school secretaries sent my details on to appropriate people or contacted me about possible teachers to interview and provided their contact details (an example of 'snowball sampling' as explained below), which yielded six staff members to interview. Letters were also sent to the 'Letters to the Editor' columns of the *The Post* (Onewhero DHS and Waiuku College districts); *Hauraki Herald* (Paeroa College); *Taranaki Daily News* (Spotswood College in New Plymouth); and the *Bay of Plenty Times* (Mount Maunganui College). These newspaper letters yielded three of the people interviewed (one former teacher and two former pupils). When I telephoned some of the contacts sent to me, I had to assess whether the people concerned remembered Will enough to warrant my travel to conduct an interview.

Snowball sampling was also used. Snowballing is a way of asking people I interviewed or other contacts to suggest others who might also become part of the study (Creswell, 2008). Some of those who responded to my advertisements told me of other teachers or pupils I could contact, two of whom I interviewed. I was also invited to attend the reunion in December 2016, celebrating 125 years of education at Onewhero, where Will had taught, and I also conducted two further interviews (one former teacher and one former pupil) because of this reunion.

Snowball sampling also occurred when a former Waiuku College pupil gave me a list of names and contact details of 83 former Waiuku College pupils who had been part of a previous school reunion. I sent a mass email to those with email addresses or telephoned those who only had phone numbers to see if I could find some more people who knew Will. Those who replied were friendly and, as a result of this email and phone research, I was able to interview three more former pupils. A focus group member sent me details of another former pupil to interview, and I also heard of two more former pupils through a member of my extended family.

These different sampling techniques enabled me to interview one principal, eight teachers, and 11 pupils. However, I was only able to use data from 18 of those I spoke to due to two Release of Transcript forms not being returned. This number is consistent with Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontentot's (2013) recommendation to use 15-30 interviews for a single case study.

I had many positive experiences in my quest to find information. When reading about Jack Horrocks and his Commercial Practice textbooks that were used in the 1940s and 1950s and Will's connection with the author, I contacted the Archivist at his old school, Mount Albert Grammar School, to eventually make contact with his son, living in Auckland. This led to in-depth discussions about the need for textbooks generally and teacher initiative. In trying to find copies of Will's own textbooks (one such book is held in the Potter Family archive), I traced the previous owner of the New Plymouth printer, who remembered Will and showed a genuine interest in my thesis topic. Such incidents of happenstance, although not directly related to my project and thesis, allowed me to share in and around my topic, which was useful in articulating my ideas, and enabled me to (virtually) meet some really nice people.

### **Data analysis**

Babbie (2016) suggests that qualitative analysis is more of an art than a science and has greater reliance on the researcher's insights than any other methods used. Although qualitative researchers look for themes within their data, Creswell (2009) argues that with case study analysis, a detailed description of the individual or institution needs to be offered first, followed by careful consideration of the data for themes. I also used Rosenwalk's (2003) suggestion of a focal approach that looked at differences or inconsistencies in Will's life. These differences are easier in some ways to define as people are often intrigued by some puzzling incident in a person's story.

Analysing data means classifying and interpreting language and/or visual material to extract meaning, both literal and inferred (Flick, 2014; see also Merriam & Tisdall, 2016). In keeping with Flick's descriptions, my aims for qualitative data analysis were to describe Will's teaching in greater detail and to look for explanations for the different themes. Tesch (1990) adds that researchers make decisions as they go

regarding what is of significance and what is not, depending on their interpretations and their research focus and questions.

For me, data analysis began early. For example, originally, I thought that I would tell Will's story as a chronology, but then I decided that this could sound too clinical and opted to take a thematic approach instead. Later, transcribing the focus group discussion and contemplating its content, I realised that themes related to both positive and negative portrayals of Will were necessary in order to enrich Will's story, and I sought both in later interviews.

In case study analysis, the main focus needs to be on the research questions (Yin, 2006). My role was to enlarge and generalise theory rather than making what I found generalisable to other cases or populations (Denscombe, 2014; Yin, 2009). For example, I used sociocultural–historical theory to expand on my Research Question 2 about Will's motivation to go teaching. Members of the FGD all agreed that Will was motivated by money. However, I felt that to stay teaching for 19 years, there must have been other factors that influenced Will's decision to go teaching. Further background research of Will's memoir and other literature showed that there were four other possible reasons that influenced Will's decision to teach (see more in Chapter 5). Therefore, although money was a crucial factor, I interpreted that it was not the only one. Other teachers may not have had the same motivations to go teaching, thus my findings could not be generalised, but they could develop greater understanding of such aspects as the post-primary conditions of the day, the experiences of immigrants of the time, and the characteristics and the eventual social history of the NEI Dutch.

The interview data and Will's memoir were initially analysed using *NVivo* software. However, I found *NVivo* difficult to use, so I transferred the information to *OneNote*. Both forms of software allow large volumes of data to be stored in one place and accessed relatively quickly and easily. I coded the information as “coding is analysis” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Because some of my codes were dual purpose (Saldana, 2013), I used simultaneous coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For example, one of my codes was ‘Onewhero DHS’ where anything to do with the school was

stored; however, as Will was at the school in the 1950s, such information was also coded under ‘1950s Characteristics.’

In developing my codes, I initially checked with my research questions to ensure a clear focus on the purpose of my thesis. For example, Table 4.1 shows examples of some of the codes and sub-codes that I developed in response to Research Question 1. I was still left with a large number of codes, which I then set up as a visual representation on a noticeboard for comparison, links, and my own personal reflection. However, I became stuck in a void, trying to make sense of the data in almost a quantitative way until I came to realise that coding in this way would not answer my research questions but was the scaffolding that allowed me to do so (Hopwood, 2017). In addition, not all qualitative data can be analysed in the conventional sense of coding. Hence, I went back to thematically analyse what was emerging from the data.

Table 4.1.

*Example of Coding Associated with Research Question 1 in the Study*

Research question	Examples of codes and sub-codes
1. What key life experiences shaped Will before he began teaching?	Indonesia – History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dutch colonial life</li> </ul> – Internment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• camp conditions</li> <li>• effects</li> </ul> Immigrant – Dutch characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEI Dutch</li> </ul> Language – was English a problem for Will? Age – did others consider him to be old?

Thematic analysis—often used in educational research—consists of finding themes that intertwine through the data, allowing information to come through (Glesne, 2016). I followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-stage analysis matrix that involved (i) familiarising myself with the data: I transcribed the data myself, and I also made notes immediately after each interview and also highlighted parts of the transcripts that I

thought could be useful; (ii) generating codes; (iii) searching for themes, especially as they related to my research questions; (iv) reviewing themes; (v) defining and (re)naming themes; and (vi) writing the thesis. One theme was Will's telling of stories, but another related to what was not said—for example, negative things about Will were rarely mentioned.

Will's teaching story cannot be studied in isolation. In a case study, the focus is on the "complexity within a case, on its uniqueness, and on its linkages to the social context of which it is part" (Glesne, 2016, p. 290). Therefore, with Will, the data were analysed through the lenses of sociocultural and sociocultural–historical theories so as to be aware of the social, cultural, and historical influences of the time. Rogoff's (2003) three foci of analysis were used—looking at the person themselves, their interpersonal interactions, and the cultural or institutional aspects (see Chapter 3). In the case of Will, apart from looking at him and his background and teaching experiences, aspects of his relationships—with colleagues, pupils, and family—were also considered. These two foci could then be set against the historical 1950s post-primary education system in New Zealand and Will's past experiences in the NEI (Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa, & Goldsmith, 1995). One example of this is Will's camp experiences (history): not only did they affect him personally (being more anxious due to life-threatening situations) and interpersonally (lack of trust and faith in others due to trauma), but these experiences informed his teaching pedagogy in his storytelling in his classroom (community). Hence, the importance of personal, social, cultural, and historical factors cannot be underestimated within this case study.

### **Validity and reliability**

Validity is checking whether the information obtained is correct. In qualitative research, this is often known as credibility (Denscombe, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010) in order to check that the data are "*reasonably likely* to be accurate and appropriate" (Denscombe, 2014, p. 297; italics in the original). Focus group discussions allow for good interpretive validity in that details and ideas can be checked and discussed (Johnson & Turner, 2003). However, there were instances in the focus group when details were talked about that I believed to be

incorrect; hence, there is the added importance of checking findings. For example, there was some discussion about the various schools Will applied for before he began teaching, and no consensus was reached. I later checked the actual schools Will applied for in his memoir.

There are three types of validity: internal, external, and construct (Gray, 2014; Yin, 2014). Internal validity relates more to causal relationships in quantitative studies so is not applicable to Will's case study. External validity refers to a study's generalisability; however, not all qualitative data needs to be generalisable (Stake, 1994), and, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, case studies are not usually carried out to generalise but to study a particular case in depth (Stake, 1995). Some readers may be able to relate to Will's story and, therefore, instead of it being applicable to a range of teachers, this thesis still has some relevance for a wider audience. Construct validity refers to looking at and analysing what the study purports to do. Although there is difficulty in ensuring validity in case studies due to their subjective nature, I carefully chose data collection methods, took diary and reflective notes, and member checked the interview transcripts (Gray, 2014). To further add to the validity or credibility of the thesis, I carried out all the interviews and transcribed them myself. Being self-reflexive and by making my researcher role transparent also means the findings can be more credible.

Reliability refers to the consistent nature of results and more often is applied to quantitative data (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015). In qualitative studies, reliability is more often referred to as dependability (Denscombe, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010). Reliability within this case study has meant having a clear audit trail and keeping a detailed record of methods and procedures as well as reflections. As reality in qualitative studies is subjective, it is hard to replicate results. This uniqueness of data, such as information gleaned about Will, is what defines qualitative research. Guba (1981, cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316) further adds that as there is "... no validity without reliability ...", a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter." Part of the study's reliability means that biases should also be made clear—an important caveat in this study of my father.

It is important to have a “chain of evidence” (Yin, 2014, p. 45) or having an audit trail, so triangulation—or ensuring that information can be verified from at least two sources (Flick, 2018)—was also used. For instance, triangulation was used when teachers from both Paeroa and Spotswood Colleges stated that while Will was friendly, he did not seem to have close friends on staff. Conversely, in his memoir, Will stated he got a grading of 39/100 in 1958, but a formal letter from the Department of Education stated he got 58. Therefore, Will’s final inspection grade was not mentioned in Chapter 5. Such aspects of checking and honesty relate to ethics in this thesis.

## **Ethical considerations**

### ***Gaining informed consent***

In order to carry out this research, it was necessary to gain the consent of the people who participated. This consent meant sending them information so that they could understand what was expected of them prior to giving their informed consent to participate (Massey University, 2017b). This study received ethical approval from the Massey University Ethics Committee (Massey University, Northern, 2016/08; see Appendix C). As part of the requirements of this approval, I first contacted each of the prospective participants by telephone and then sent them an Information Sheet (see Appendix D, 1 and 2), telling them about myself and this study, along with a relevant Consent Form (see Appendix E, 1 and 2) that they were asked to sign and return to me. This process was followed each time I heard of a potential participant. Included in this information were their rights to withdraw from the research at any time and an assurance of anonymity. The focus group were also asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement (see Appendix F). A hand-written note was also included, explaining the research process. The returned Consent Forms were kept in a locked strong box. After transcribing the interviews—the soft copy of which I retained on my computer that has a coded entry and any hard copies kept secure in the locked box—I sent them to the respective interviewees for member checking and asked that they return to me a signed Release of Transcript form (see Appendix G, 1 and 2) that I also kept locked. I also included a personal, hand-written covering note, again thanking the people for allowing me to interview them. I included their information in the data set only if the Release forms were sent to me. At the end of the thesis, I will send each of my

participants a copy of the Abstract as well as a link to the thesis, should they wish to read it.

### ***Anonymity and privacy***

Anonymity means not using people's names or any other forms of identifying them (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011) in order to protect their privacy, which, when assured, allows participants to be more honest with their answers. I promised to keep the people in my study anonymous and, therefore, their details private. Although a few people stated that they did not mind my using their real names in the thesis, I decided to not name anyone. Instead, I gave each person a code. Each of the focus group participants had the 'FG' prefix, followed by a number: '01,' '02,' or '03.' The other interviewees had various codes, depending on the school they were associated with and their role there, and a number. The school codes were: 'ON' for Onewhero DHS; 'WA' for Waiuku College; 'PA' for Paeroa College; 'SP' for Spotswood College; and 'MM' for Mount Maunganui College. For each of the roles represented, I gave 'P' to the Principal, 'T' for teachers, and 'S' for students/pupils. Each person was then assigned a number within that school and role category. Each of the email participants, who were all pupils, was also given a code: WAS-6, WAS-7, WAS-8, WAS-9, and SPS-3.

### ***Rapport and empathy***

Added to the practical aspects related to ethics is the notion of relationship in research (Huber, Clandinin, & Huber, 2006). It is important to have a rapport with interview participants so as to glean valuable data; however, this can be suggestive of using people for the researchers' own ends. I was cautious of this sentiment, trying to be friendly but not too overbearing or insincere. Despite protestations that some people did not feel they had anything to offer me, I encouraged them to share anyway. I also made personal small talk with each person when entering their home or office, wanting to know about them as people and not just as givers of data. However, I am also aware that confidence and enthusiasm can become pride and arrogance if not kept in check.

Empathy is also very much part of the Social Sciences (Josselson, 1995). I mentioned earlier that tears were shared with people I spoke to as they told me stories of Will.

Josselson (1996) also notes that interviews can often be cathartic for interviewees, but, as she cautions, I tried to listen attentively and be affirming. As the interviewer, I also believed that I needed to show my human side and to answer their questions and show my feelings so as to gain “a greater spectrum of responses and greater insights into the lives of respondents” (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 658). In many ways, Will being my father made this sharing relatively easy to do: sometimes people I spoke to wanted to know what had happened to Will after he had taught them, and some got quite emotional remembering Will’s influence in their lives.

### ***Bias***

Bias is an issue within this thesis. This can be true of any research: all researchers have some form of preconceived ideas, and “value-free interpretive research is impossible” (Denzin, 2001, p. 43). However, certain negative information could be compromised as I sought to protect Will’s memory and name as well as my own. I could believe that my memories are more correct than those of some of the people I spoke with or that my story would be too subjective for such a thesis. Some might even argue that as Will’s daughter, I have no right to even write this thesis. In stating these possible concerns, I hope that I can go some way towards vindicating myself. It was also important that I note that Will was my father and allowed for transparency. Added to this, Will was also the father of each of the focus group members. Therefore, before I commenced doctoral study, I asked verbal permission from each of my siblings to write about Will. In addition, about twice per year, I sent them an email, outlining my doctoral progress.

Researchers can also write themselves into the document as biases can then be made clear and, thus, enhance the thoroughness of the research (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). When others’ lives are revealed, it is fair that the researcher’s is as well. The information would also add to the analysis of the study and the rigour of the thesis (West, 2010). As mentioned earlier, the ongoing process of self-reflexivity also helped to counter potential bias. There were parts of the thesis where I dared to add some of my own observations about Will. It is important, too, to be truthful and to verify details of people’s lives (Denzin, 1989). While this verification was not possible with Will, I was able to triangulate data with other sources to confirm details.

## **Summary**

The first part of this chapter explained my worldview that influenced this research. The chapter then went on to discuss the case study methodology that guided this thesis, including story and biography, and the use of teachers' stories. This methodology section ended with a description of self-reflexive techniques that are important in qualitative research. The second part of this chapter described the methods of data collection that were used—document analysis, focus group discussion, and semi-structured interviews. Data collection issues such as sampling, analysis, validity and reliability, and ethics were also explored. Chapter 5 now reports Will's teaching story.

## Chapter 5

### WILL'S TEACHING STORY

*“The subject matter of interpretive research is meaningful biographical experience”*  
(Denzin, 2008, p. 117).

Will's teaching story includes some of his meaningful biographical experiences, and this chapter tells this story, outlining the key themes arising from my research. The first section of the chapter describes Will's five teaching positions, and particular features of these schools are identified to show the development of Will's teaching career. The second section examines Will's motivation to become a post-primary school teacher (Research Question 2), and the third section explores the range of Will's teaching approaches (Research Question 3). The final section of this chapter looks at Will's contribution to Commerce teaching in New Zealand between 1958–1976 (Research Question 4).

#### **Will's Teaching Positions**

Will's positions at five different schools during his 19 years of teaching are listed in Table 5.1. Initially, he was a classroom teacher without any specific responsibilities, but he became the Head of the Commerce Departments in his subsequent three schools. He was a part-time pro rata teacher (teaching more than 16 periods per week) in his final teaching position at Mount Maunganui College. Will's experiences at each of the five schools are briefly outlined.

Table 5.1.  
*Schools at which Will Taught*

<b>Year started</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Estimated post-primary school roll</b>
1958	Onewhero District High School	85 pupils
1961	Waiuku College	250 pupils
1965	Paeroa College	358 pupils
1967	Spotswood College, New Plymouth	1,000 pupils
1975	Mount Maunganui College	780 pupils

### **Beginning teacher: Onewhero District High School**

Will began his first teaching position at the then Onewhero District High School (DHS; now Onewhero Area School) on February 1, 1958. He had preferred to begin his new career at a smaller school (FG-01; Memoir, p. 219), perhaps because he felt more assured of getting a job. Onewhero had 614 inhabitants in 1956 (Department of Statistics, 1957), and it is thought that the DHS had approximately 85 post-primary pupils in 1958 (ONT-1). Onewhero DHS's staff comprised three full-time teachers, two part-time staff, two employed for Manual Training, and three relievers (*The Onewheron*<sup>16</sup>, 1958). There was even a horse paddock for the pupils who rode to school, and the village itself was so small that one could drive through it and miss it altogether (ONT-1). Will describes Onewhero in his memoir as being:

*... a delightful little village in a hilly area. It has—apart from the school—a Post Office, one shop, two service stations (or garages), a sawmill and the usual Community Hall ... It [Onewhero] is surrounded by a large farming area, both dairy- and sheep-farming [sic] ... there are a few tennis courts ... and a rugby field opposite the school ... provided with lighting for evening practice of this sport. The school itself has a small swimming pool for the Primary pupils ... (p. 221)*

Due to the teacher shortage of the 1950s, Onewhero DHS was keen to attract teachers, and some farming families donated land and erected homes as accommodation for prospective teachers (ONT-1). Will was offered a teacher's house as part of his position at a rental of £<sup>17</sup>2.10 per week (Memoir, p. 221). The rental home was part of the Farm Scheme<sup>18</sup>, but the Education Department leased one such house for Onewhero DHS teachers, also in keeping with the trend to provide housing to attract teachers to apply for rural positions (Marshall, 1989). To further attract and assist teachers, the Onewhero DHS parents also offered transport for the teachers to the nearby towns for shopping (Memoir, p. 226; *One Hundred Years of Education*, 1991).

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<sup>16</sup> An informal, cyclostyled school magazine.

<sup>17</sup> Until 1967, New Zealand's currency was in New Zealand pounds, shillings, and pence. New Zealand changed to the current decimal monetary system on the 10 July, 1967 (NZHistory, n.d.). One NZ£ was approximately NZ\$2.

<sup>18</sup> The Farm Scheme offered houses for farm workers, so Will's immediate neighbours worked on farms.

Will mainly taught Commercial subjects during his 19 years of teaching. He did not know what Commercial Practice was when he began teaching in 1958 (Memoir, p. 221), although other New Zealand teachers in the 1950s were not aware of the subject either (SPT-1). In his first year at Onewhero DHS, Will taught Commercial Practice for Forms 3–5<sup>19</sup>, but his first Commercial Practice classes were relatively small. At the end of 1958, he had 20 pupils in Form 3, 13 pupils in Form 4, and 4 in Form 5 (Will's Marks Book<sup>20</sup>, 1958–1961). High roll turn-over saw numerous pupils leave part way through the year and a low pass rate. Of the four pupils in Form 5 who sat School Certificate Commercial Practice in 1958, only one passed with 60 per cent (Will's Marks Book, 1958–1961). This seemingly low pass rate (25 per cent) could have been because of a lack of student motivation due to the issues, such as years spent at school, present in 1950s post-primary school education.

Three contextual issues affected Will's teaching at Onewhero in 1958. First, the 1950s was a decade of almost full employment (McClure, 1998), so there was an abundance of jobs and a lack of workers. An Onewhero pupil stated: "*Employers were looking for people to go and work for them. There was one guy in my class, he had six firms—local firms—wanted him to go and work there*" (ONS-1). There was not the same need to stay on to pass examinations because jobs were plentiful. Second, the average length of post-primary school education for pupils in 1958 was two years and eleven months (Statistics New Zealand, 1960); therefore, the focus of post-primary schooling, particularly at Onewhero DHS, was not on attaining School Certificate, which originally was intended to be sat after four years of post-primary schooling and three years for the more able pupils. Third, many Onewhero DHS pupils were waiting until they could leave school at age 15 to work on the family farms and were not too concerned about schoolwork (FG-01). Therefore, it may have taken Will some time to adjust to the teaching world of the 1950s with its emphasis on examinations and the cultural realities of life in the New Zealand classroom.

Teachers at DHSs had to teach whatever subject where there was a need (SPT-1; see Figure 5.1). Thom (1950) explains that the district high school teacher was often a

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<sup>19</sup> Years 9–11.

<sup>20</sup> Will's personal Marks Books contained hand-written details about his pupils.

“general practitioner” (p. 103) and could not be a “semi-specialist” (p. 103). Therefore, Will also taught Social Studies at Form 3 and Form 4 level at Onewhero, and he had not heard of this subject either as it was a relatively new one, having been introduced during the 1940s (Middleton, 1998). However, although it is a subject about the “social side of people” (Middleton, 1998, p. 57), Will understood it to be a mixture of History and Geography (Memoir, p. 222).



*Figure 5.1.* Will’s form class at Onewhero DHS in 1959.

Source: Potter Family Archives.

Later in 1958, Will taught Core Arithmetic to Forms 3 and 4 (FG-02; Will’s Marks Book, 1958–1961) and, although he states the pupils were considered to be mathematically challenged, they were keen, had a good retention of basic facts, and treated the completion of correct sums a competitive enterprise during the 40-minute periods (Memoir, p. 222). Will also taught a Basic English class, and the Senior Secondary

Assistant<sup>21</sup> at Onewhero DHS noted that Will taught French (White, 1960—see Appendix H, 1) while he was there.

Will's first classroom at Onewhero DHS was the supper room in the local community hall (FG-02; Memoir, p. 221), tying in with the noted lack of school facilities as a result of the growing post-primary school rolls (Cumming & Cumming, 1978; G. D. Lee, 2003; H. F. Lee, 2005; Marshall, 1989). However, extracts from Inspectors' Reports claimed that the Onewhero hall was used as a 'temporary' classroom as early as 1949 (*One Hundred Years of Education*, 1991), suggesting that money spent on country school facilities may not have been a priority for the Department of Education at that time. Alternatively, it is possible that the school may have been feeling the effects of the school leaving age being raised from 14 to 15 years in 1944 (McKenzie, Lee, & Lee, 1996). The lack of classrooms in 1958 meant the Onewhero principal had to find a "temporary solution" (Memoir, p. 221). At one end of the supper room were three blackboards on easels and a teacher's desk; the rest of the room was taken up with pupils' desks and chairs, which Will lined up in rows (FG-01).

Teaching in a community hall meant that Will faced other non-teaching-related challenges. One was that other people and organisations also used the community hall as this was its main purpose. Twice per week, the Women's Division of the Federated Farmers had their meetings in the hall, and members often came into the supper room to prepare the tea. Will explains that it was hard to teach when:

*... every pupil has more interest in the pikelets, scones, sandwiches and other goodies being prepared, practically under their noses. And the worst part comes when they show a film, with the sound turned to its highest level of decibels and it becomes impossible for me to even think, let alone to make myself heard.* (Memoir, p. 222)

At such times, Will would tell the pupils in a modified form of sign language to either read or do homework. Allowing the pupils to do other work suggests that Will was intrinsically aware of the learning moment: the pupils could not concentrate or even hear the information being talked about if their senses of smell and hearing were being assailed by other, perhaps more inviting, distractions. By 1959, the Onewhero

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<sup>21</sup> A Deputy Principal today and one usually in charge of the post-primary department of a DHS.

“accommodation is now adequate” (*One Hundred Years of Education*, 1991, p. 33), although it is not clear what this means.

Will also had his first experience of inspectors’ visits at Onewhero. In the 1950s, inspectors regularly came to check the quality of teachers’ work. They would assess teachers’ abilities in the classroom and then decide a teacher’s grade. Will explains that the inspectors came to watch him teach in an Onewhero class: *“They looked at exercise books, open on pupils’ desks, walked around, observed your teaching methods, and disappeared”* (Memoir, p. 244). They then repeated this at another class that Will taught. Later, a letter would come, giving the teacher (Will) allotted marks for his teaching skill (see Appendix I for Will’s 1958 and 1966 letters). Will explains the grading system at the time that was:

*... split into three parts: Qualifications (up to 20 points), which I do not possess; Service (up to 20 points, of which I am allowed 12: maximum 10 for previous Executive positions and 2 for full-time University study at Rotterdam); and Teaching Ability (up to 60 points) ...* (Memoir, p. 223)

In early 1958, because Will was a beginning teacher with no credentials, he could lose his position with an unfavourable inspection report: *“... until such time as the Inspectors turn up to grade me, or to confirm my provisional grading, I can still be kicked out and be jobless again!”* (Memoir, p. 222). However, instead of this assessment by the inspectors being welcomed for job security as much as establishing a benchmark for his teaching skill, Will thought it a *“dreaded visit”* (Memoir, p. 223). Teachers did not always know the timing of the visits by inspectors, who often lacked expertise in the teacher’s subject (ONT-1). However, after three weeks as an *“embryo teacher”* (Memoir, p. 221), two inspectors came to see Will teach. They spent time in his various classes, sometimes stopping to talk and ask how he found teaching. One suggested he not *“act like ‘a tiger in its cage”*” (Memoir, p. 223) because he walked around the classroom too much. This movement could have been due to nervousness having the inspectors present or perhaps he felt more relaxed in circling the classroom and interacting with his pupils. The inspectors also told him that he held the class’s attention (Memoir, p. 223).

Will continued to have inspectors come to grade him for many years. Eventually, he reached a level where he could not progress to the higher levels of 'C category' senior teachers, most often Principals and Deputy Principals who had a degree (PAP-1). Despite this invisible barrier to career advancement, Will still had inspectors' grading visits, which he considered to be "*most degrading*" (Memoir, p. 244).

### **Head of Commerce Department: Waiuku College**

In the middle of 1960, Will decided to move to a full post-primary school and applied for a Head of (Commerce) Department position at Waiuku College (FG-02; Memoir, p. 231). At this time, he was 54, still unqualified, and a "*bloody foreigner to boot*" (Memoir, p. 231). He received word that he had won the job two days before the applications closed and began this new senior position—with accompanying increase in pay—at the beginning of the 1961 school year. Waiuku was a small town and, at the 1961 census, had a population of 1,611 people (An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, 1966; see Figure 5.2). Previously a DHS, Waiuku became a College at the beginning of 1960 and moved to its present site in 1962 (Aitken, 2010). In 1964, Waiuku College had the principal and 15 teachers on staff, with a roll of 250 pupils (*Waiuku College Magazine*, 1964). In the 1960s when Will started at Waiuku, there were professional, general, practical, and commercial classes, and Will taught within the last group (FG-02). Despite the prevalent shortage of teacher accommodation at this time, Will found a rental home privately and then went on to purchase his own home in Waiuku.

Will took an interest in the construction of the new College buildings. Included in the Commercial section was a model office for the use of senior Commercial girls, who could type outgoing school letters and answer phones. However, as the office was not entirely separate and was therefore not soundproof, Will never used it as an office during his four years at the College (Memoir, p. 233). The new classrooms had blackboards across the front and also 'new' roller blackboards at the back of the rooms, which became useful when Will was timetabled to take two different classes at the same time. He also had extra display boards added as he felt these were particularly important for Commercial Practice. Will had two other female teachers in his department to take Shorthand, Typing, and the lower forms for Commercial

Practice (Memoir, p. 233). He decided to leave Waiuku College after incidents to do with his role as Treasurer for the Board of Governors (see more on page 136) and having no successor for the textbook scheme (see more on page 137) that both left Will feeling disillusioned with his principal.



Figure 5.2. Waiuku township, c. early 1960s.

Source: Potter Family Archives.

### Head of Commerce Department: Paeroa College

Will took up a position as Head of the Commerce Department at Paeroa College (see Figure 5.3)—after having previously met the principal—at the beginning of 1965. The school did not have many applicants for the position as there was still a teacher shortage throughout most of the 1960s (McLaren, 1974; PAP-1), but the principal was “delighted ... to have somebody with [Will’s] qualifications and undoubted ability” (PAP-1). There was also a shortage of rental properties in Paeroa, but Will and his family were offered the adjacent Caretaker’s Cottage until such time that Will could find an alternative house to rent or buy (Memoir, p. 235). The housing shortage that was a result of the two world wars and the Depression had still not kept up with demand by the 1960s (McClure, 1998). Paeroa was also a small town and, in 1965, had an estimated population of 2,920 people (Statistics New Zealand, 1966). That same year, Paeroa College had 18 full-time and six part-time teaching staff, and a roll of 358

pupils (*The Ohinemuri*, 1966). Will taught Commercial Practice and Bookkeeping for Forms 3 to 6<sup>22</sup> at Paeroa College. When he left the school at the end of 1966, Will was at a Position of Responsibility (PR)A level (FG-02).



*Figure 5.3.* Paeroa College from the air, date unknown.

Source: Potter Family Archives.

Will only stayed at Paeroa College for two years. He decided early in 1966 to leave as he had missed out on one of the two new teacher houses being built in the town and to which he believed he was entitled. Because of the scarcity of rental houses, in 1965, Will suggested to his principal to apply to the then Department of Education for such teacher rental housing to be built in Paeroa and, when the application was successful, believed that one of the two houses was meant for him and his family (Memoir, p. 236). This belief could have been a case of miscommunication as Will had only just moved into a rental home in the town at the beginning of 1966 and, presumably, the allocation of the teacher house to Will had not been recorded. Nevertheless, I recall that this was our third rental in two years and was only a short-term tenancy until the

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<sup>22</sup> Form 6 is Year 12.

end of that calendar year. Will's decision to leave Paeroa College was because, in his opinion, he again felt let down by his principal.

### **Head of Commerce Department: Spotswood College**

In 1967, Will took on his fourth teaching position as Head of the Commerce Department at New Plymouth's Spotswood College, which was then one of the three largest post-primary schools in New Zealand (SPT-2). Will again visited the principal before applying for the position, despite assurance that interviews at that time were not required (Memoir, p. 238). Will explained his rationale for the visit—to know if he and the principal could work together and if he might be "*someone to go fishing with*"<sup>23</sup> (Memoir, p. 238). Will was concerned about having strong collegial relations in his new school and also being able—in his opinion—to trust his boss. Thus, despite Will's concern about his working future at the age of 60 and having only had nine years teaching experience, he still applied for and got the position at Spotswood ahead of three other younger teachers who could also coach sporting teams (Memoir, p. 239), so his sense of uncertainty was misplaced.

New Plymouth was a bigger population centre than the other places where Will had taught. The 1966 census recorded its population as 31,843 people (Statistics New Zealand, 1967), so it had many more amenities and four other post-primary schools in 1967, but Spotswood College was the only co-educational post-primary school in the city. It was set in spacious grounds with mainly two-storeyed buildings, and views to Mount Taranaki (then Egmont) on one side and the Tasman Sea on the other (Memoir, p. 238).

In 1967, Spotswood had almost 1,000 pupils and over 45 staff members (Magazine of Spotswood College, 1967), and Will had eight teachers in his Commerce Department (Memoir, p. 238). At Spotswood, he taught Commercial Practice, Bookkeeping, and, later, Accounting from 1967 until 1974, inclusive. In 1969, Spotswood was subdivided into three schools: East and West—each with its own Deputy Principal—and Senior, run by the Principal (Memoir, p. 241; SPT-1).

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<sup>23</sup> A Dutch saying related to congeniality.

Will taught at Spotswood beyond the normal retirement age of 65 years for monetary reasons. He had not registered with the teachers' pension scheme at the time he began teaching in 1958 because his age would have meant that he had to contribute 10 per cent of his salary, thus negating a large proportion of his pay increase (Memoir, p. 240). In addition, Will was not eligible for the government superannuation until the age of 70 years due to immigration laws requiring that he reside in New Zealand continuously for 20 years before he was eligible (McClure, 1998). Will's six years in Western Samoa were not counted as part of the 20 years, despite him working for the New Zealand Reparations Estates there (FG-02). Will "*worried about the fact of not getting any younger*" (Memoir, p. 240) and was concerned about being able to financially support his wife and dependent child (Memoir, p. 240). Just before he turned 65 in 1971, Will asked his principal if he could continue teaching as he had read of another older New Plymouth teacher doing. The Board of Governors allowed him to remain teaching provided that the principal annually certified that Will was mentally and physically fit to remain teaching. This fitness test was conducted until mid-1974 when a new school policy meant teachers had to retire at the end of the year in which they turned 65 years (Memoir, p. 240). Will therefore resigned from his position at Spotswood College, effective at the end of the 1974 school year, and he and his wife, Loes, made plans to move to Tauranga.

#### **Pro rata teacher: Mount Maunganui College**

In anticipation of his departure from Spotswood College at the end of 1974, Will wrote to the four post-primary schools in the Tauranga area at the time, asking if there were vacancies for any teaching or relieving positions (Memoir, p. 242). At the age of 68, Will eventually secured a pro rata position at Mount Maunganui College for 1975. Mount Maunganui had an estimated population of 10,650 inhabitants in 1975 (Statistics New Zealand, 1976). The College was established in 1957 (Mount Maunganui College, n.d.) and, in 1975, had a roll of 780 pupils (Mount Maunganui College, 1975). Will taught Commercial Practice and Accounting at Mount Maunganui

and also what became known as Economic Studies<sup>24</sup> (Potter, 1976a). He only taught at the school for two years and retired at the end of 1976 due to discipline issues affecting his health (Memoir, pp. 248–249); however, by then, he was 70 and so much older than his pupils, and he may not have been as patient or tolerant of younger people as he had once been.

Having offered a description of the five schools where Will taught, the next section of this chapter will examine the reasons for why Will became a teacher in the first place. The following section addresses Research Question 2.

### **Will's Motivation to Teach**

Analysis of the data from Will's memoir, other documents, and the focus group discussion revealed five reasons that contributed to Will's motivation to begin a career in teaching in 1958 at the age of 51. In keeping with sociocultural and sociocultural–historical theories, these reasons are classified as: personal, interpersonal, familial, economic, and historic, and are discussed under the following headings.

#### **Personal reasons**

A range of personal reasons prompted Will to become a post-primary school teacher. These interpretive personal reasons relate mainly to his previous work roles and character traits.

#### ***Previous work roles***

Will's previous work roles influenced him before he went teaching. He had not been content in his auditing work with the Education Department—a job he had been doing in Auckland since the family's return from Samoa in 1956 (FG-01; FG-03). The role involved checking about 6,000 teachers' and 2,000 student teachers' salaries (Memoir, p. 214) and began at a salary half that of his executive position with the Treasury Department in Apia. His experience in commercial and managerial roles prior to teaching meant he was familiar with the world of money and business (Potter, 1950b).

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<sup>24</sup> Economic Studies was a generic subject to come out of Commercial Practice and Bookkeeping, and included a mixture of Economics, Social Studies, and Accounting, but it later evolved into Economics (E. Rowden, personal communication, July 4, 2018).

Even his audit clerk position at the Education Department meant that he could use his commercial acumen and, at the same time, familiarise himself with aspects of New Zealand's education system. Will enjoyed working with numbers and was a motivated man as the following excerpt shows:

*Will was not the sort of person, after his life, to just sit in a corner by a desk and be called a clerk ... he'd always been the boss of adults and ... been the boss of people who'd literally tipped their cap and said, 'Yes sir, no sir, and three bags full sir.'* (FG-01)

Will was not new to teaching or tutoring when he applied for a teaching position in 1958 either. He privately tutored the daughter (Ada) of his plantation boss in Tanyong East in South Batavia (now Jakarta) on Java in the mid-1930s (see Chapter 2). Will, then in his late 20s, recalled:

*He [his boss] would pay me f25.– a month, and there would be a bonus of f100.– if she passed to a higher class at the end of the school year. There existed no system of 'Social Promotion' as there is here [in New Zealand] ... So from then on I saw Ada from seven to nine in [sic] the veranda of her big house. It started off with Geometry, but then came Algebra, Physics, Chemistry, and even foreign languages. The only subject her father helped her with was Bookkeeping! ... as for receiving my annual bonus ... I earned that three years in a row.* (Memoir, p. 279)

At that time, Will earned f108 per month in his plantation job, working seven days a week, so the extra money was welcome, especially as he had to pay off his student debt to his uncle. This experience of tutoring Ada would have given Will some insight into teaching adolescents and would certainly have made him aware of how to relate to young people and of being well prepared, both important attributes in teaching.

### **Character traits**

Will had certain character traits that would have motivated his decision to teach, two of which were determination and tenacity. Will's experience of losing his possessions, lifestyle, and country during World War II (WWII), being effectively unemployed for two years while waiting to be recalled to his plantation position in Indonesia, and his move to New Zealand all indicate that Will had fortitude (FG-02). His determination could also be attributed to his cultural background as the Dutch are considered to be hard working as well as stubborn and determined to do well (Peters, 2012). Because he

had no country to go back to and his advancing age, Will had to make a success of his new country and his new career as a teacher.

Will was also versatile, another attribute suited to teaching. Will never thought that he would be a plantation manager in Java, be interned during another world war, and end up being a teacher in an English-speaking classroom (FG-01). He was able to adapt to his circumstances and his surroundings. For example, Will worked two jobs when he got to Auckland to earn enough money to support his family—his audit clerk position as well as parking cars at the stock car races, a pastime that was new to Will (Memoir, p. 216). His versatility could also have been attributed to his Indonesian Dutch heritage. As Smith (2003) notes, the Dutch from the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) were refugees as they were forced to leave their homeland and go to a place that was foreign to them. Teaching was one opportunity for Will to make a success of his life in his new homeland, but part of his versatility was having to make situations—like teaching—work, simply to survive.

Will's nature also favoured his teaching of Commerce subjects. He enjoyed working with numbers and statistics (FG-01; FG-03; SPT-1; SPT-3). Therefore, subjects such as Commercial Practice and Bookkeeping, where there was formulaic learning and right or wrong answers, suited Will's personality and would have helped him to settle into his new teaching role (FG-01). One member of the Focus Group explained this aspect of his nature:

*He loved anything to do with ... figures and statistics, and the books were the same. ... essentially, it's like, you have to learn these formululi because if you don't ... and these formululi are how accountancy is done, how our banks are run, whatever. You just had to learn them and learn them and learn them. (FG-01)*

Will had other dispositions, some of which were suitable for teaching. He had a conservative nature and old-fashioned ways (FG-01, FG-02). He was also very particular and considered. One Onewhero pupil remembers Will as being:

*... very precise and very careful. I can remember he had a copy of the textbook that we were using, and it was pristine. When he held it, I can remember he held it so carefully so that he didn't bend it back too far... (ONS-1)*

Will was also hard-working and was goal oriented as the following excerpt shows:

*... [Will had] capability in figures, documentation, setting goals, reaching them, come hell or high water. So he was a very focused, a seriously focused man on whatever he chose to be doing and do not, heaven help you, try to interrupt that ... But he did it well. (FG-01)*

In contrast, Will was not always so confident. While Will showed resilience and saw challenges rather than obstacles, he inwardly still felt a degree of self-doubt and inadequacy. The following excerpt shows this uncertainty about his teaching role on his first day at Onewhero DHS:

*And looking down the still empty room—the morning assembly of pupils had not yet taken place—I am asking myself, “What in blazes is an ex-rubber-planter (and many more odd jobs besides) doing in this joint? Have I done the right thing in burning my bridges behind me and taking on this brand-new job which is totally strange to me; not to mention the complete absence of any prior training for it.” As well as many other disturbing thoughts. (Memoir, p. 221)*

Will may have felt especially unprepared because of his lack of a degree or formal teacher training. Being a migrant did not help either. He also doubted his ability to win the Head of Department role at Spotswood College, a position he applied for at the age of 60 years (Memoir, p. 238). Will’s lack of self-confidence was also apparent to others:

*... because [Will] was so stern, you got this impression that he was a very confident man, a very ‘I know where I’m at man.’ But, I don’t think he was deep down. I think he had worries about some things that never worked out ... (FG-01).*

Will worried excessively—perhaps about doing a good job in the classroom (FG-01; FG-03) and driven by his Dutch desire to succeed. His need to be organised and systematic may have been an outcome of his need to control his fears and self-doubt. It is possible that Will not only needed to prove to the schools and staff that he could be a good teacher but also to prove to himself that he could do it and do it well (FG-03).

### Interpersonal reasons

Two people were instrumental in Will's decision to go teaching. The first person was his immediate boss in the Education Department in Auckland where Will had found work as a clerk, who suggested that he might like to become a teacher (FG-01). His position at the Department was temporary and relatively low paid, so Will hoped for a higher-paying position in a government department, but this opportunity did not eventuate (Memoir, p. 218). Knowing Will's desire for a better-paying job, his boss suggested teaching, which Will considered to be a "*miracle*" (Memoir, p. 218) of a new career opportunity in his life:

*... [Will's boss] comes over to my desk and asks ... whether I would like to take up a position as a teacher of Commercial subjects at a High School! He has just read through my original Application for my present job—which he personally uplifted from the office archives—and has noticed that I have attained three good University passes in Accounting and Commercial Law, which will qualify me for such a position. Teaching? Ye Gods, what next! (Memoir, p. 218)*

It is interesting that Will was so open to the idea of teaching. Will may have described the idea of teaching as a 'miracle' as his experience was that jobs for those in accounting over the age of 50 in New Zealand were not that easy to find (Potter, 1956). That Will's boss specifically checked Will's credentials suggests that he knew Will reasonably well and thought he held promise as a teacher, and, by making the suggestion, could see if Will was keen. Also, being in the Education Department, Will's boss would have been aware of the post-primary school teacher shortage in New Zealand at that time and showed initiative in seeking out prospective staff to fill the vacancies. Will's boss left an 'Application for Teaching' form on Will's desk and encouraged him to apply, suggesting that Will was not completely opposed to the idea of teaching or perhaps just needed time to think about it.

The second person who influenced Will's motivation to go teaching was his wife, Loes. After the suggestion put to him by his boss, Will discussed the opportunity with Loes, who—Will records—responded with a sense of incredulity:

*"How can you manage a lot of youngsters in a classroom when at times you even lack the necessary patience with your own children!" [sic] And my only*

*weak response is that things may be different with other people's kids.*  
(Memoir, p. 219)

Interestingly, Will's response suggests that he was open to the idea of teaching, despite acknowledging his own impatience at times. This exchange is the only reference to Loes's reaction to Will going teaching that is recorded in his memoir, inferring that he felt it was important enough to note some 25 years later when he wrote his memoir in 1982. Will also felt it necessary to defend the possible decision to teach, so he was taking the idea seriously and wanted her support.

Will applied to teach, his decision either made despite Loes's concerns or because she later gave her blessing and, when permission was granted, applied to four different schools. The first was Avondale College where he was the preferred applicant, but the principal felt obligated to employ a female as he had too many males on his staff. This desire to redress the gender imbalance was an interesting scenario in 1950s New Zealand post-primary education. Second, Will applied to Pio Pio District High School but never received a reply to his application. Third, he applied to Te Kuiti High School and, finally, he applied to Onewhero District High School where he eventually began his teaching career. Will was keen on Te Kuiti High School and, while again being the preferred applicant, declined the offer due to a lack of rental properties in the town. Despite not having applied, Will was also offered a position at Rotorua Boys' High School and was told by the principal to "*Fill in an application form and the job is yours*" (Memoir, p. 219). However, he declined this offer as the house rentals were too high.

### **Familial reasons**

Will was not the first in his family to become a teacher. His grandfather, James Henry [sic] Potter, travelled to Java in the then NEI to be a tutor for the Etty Family who owned a plantation there (Potter, 1946). Further, Will's great uncle, Edwin Potter (Henry's brother), was a Schoolmaster and owner of a private boys' school called Highfield House in Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire, England, in 1891 (Porter, 2008). Whether or not Will was conscious of it, there was a family history of teaching in the Potter family, and their stories may have helped to influence Will's own teaching story.

This familial involvement in teaching has continued in the Potter family with three of Will's four children becoming teachers.

### **Economic reasons**

Will notes that money was the prime motivator for him to go teaching. He confessed in his memoir that he began teaching “... *purely for mercenary reasons*” (p. 240) and often talked about the increase in income that prompted his move to teaching (FG-01; FG-03). Will's reality was that his income as a clerk was not sufficient to support himself and his family of nearly four children. He was also conscious of getting older and having to make changes to improve his financial position. As was often the case in the 1950s, Will's wife, Loes, was not in paid employment, although she did supplement the family income by sewing clothes and selling crafts. Will needed a new job with better pay to be able to meet his financial obligations.

In 1957, Will's salary was NZ£830 (Memoir, p. 218). In his first year of teaching, Will expected to receive NZ£1064 per annum; his Salary Card for that year states that on February 1, 1958, his base salary was £995 with an extra allowance for being married and having a family (see Appendix J). In October 1958, Will's teaching salary rose to £1,015, and, a year later, it rose to £1,055. Therefore, his teaching salary was higher than his income as a clerk.

Money was also a motivator for Will's departure from the NEI. In 1950, in a letter written from Djakarta<sup>25</sup> in the United States of Indonesia to his prospective employer, Will stated that his reasons for migration to New Zealand included the increased cost of living in Indonesia, higher life insurance premiums, and the fact that any savings had been reduced by one third due to Foreign Exchange regulations (Potter, 1950b). At that time, Will was 44 years old yet was motivated to put money aside for his eventual retirement, probably as there was no social welfare system in Indonesia at the time. Having had a large student debt to pay off and losing his worldly possessions during WWII would also have heightened his money concerns.

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<sup>25</sup> The capital city of Indonesia is today spelt Jakarta. Previously Batavia when under Dutch rule, the city was spelt 'Djakarta' from 1949–1972 (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Jakarta>).

Will continued to be concerned about money. He could not claim a teacher's pension, nor was he eligible for the Universal Superannuation at age 65 (see p. 100). He talked about this perceived injustice to some of his pupils, mentioning to a third form class at Spotswood College that he had to keep teaching as he could not afford to retire (SPS-1). In my own memory, Will made sure that all spending was accounted for and often talked about money and the lack thereof. These money concerns reflect his Commerce background and teaching as well as his Dutch heritage, a group known for their thriftiness (Comello, 2012; Donaghey & Papoutsaki, 2008; Peters, 2012; Schouten, 1992; Schubert-McArthur, 2014).

### **Historical reasons**

Will entered teaching at a time when post-primary teachers were in short supply (FG-01). The school leaving age had been raised to 15 years in 1944 (McKenzie, Lee, & Lee, 1996) and, because pupils were staying at school longer, post-primary school rolls grew rapidly. As can be seen in Figure 3.1, the numbers of pupils at New Zealand's post-primary schools almost doubled between 1950 and 1959. In 1950, the average length of post-primary education was two years and eight months (Statistics New Zealand, 1952) but, in 1958 when Will started teaching, the average stay was two years and eleven months (Statistics New Zealand, 1960). The historical narrative associated with the increasing school rolls was that there were not enough teachers during the 1950s in the New Zealand post-primary sector.

Another historical reason for Will's decision to become a teacher was the publication of the Thomas Report (1944) and its subsequent policies, which had considerable impact on the nature of the curriculum offered by post-primary schools in the 1950s (see more on the Thomas Report in Chapter 3). Despite the advances in post-primary education in the 1930s, including such things as the establishment of the School Library Service in 1938, Clarence Beeby (Director of Education) and Prime Minister Peter Fraser were concerned that post-primary schools were not making provision for less academic pupils (Shuker, 1987). In brief, the Thomas Report recommended separating University Entrance and School Certificate and developing a compulsory 'common core curriculum' for the lower forms. However, because schools still had to

offer qualifications for the labour market, a greater emphasis on credentials developed, notably School Certificate, which, in turn, meant individual differences were not always catered for. The core subjects recommended by the Thomas Report included ones such as English language and literature, General Science, and Elementary Mathematics but also others like Music and Physical Education. Commercial Practice, which Will went on to teach, was offered as an optional new subject.

Commercial subjects were highly desirable in the 1950s. Most DHSs offered a Commercial course as many parents thought it to be a good grounding for office work (Thom, 1950). Some DHSs had highly qualified Commercial Practice teachers while others were served by travelling itinerant teachers. Sometimes, people from local firms taught the commercial subjects on a part-time basis. DHSs, as their name suggests, were situated in small and sometimes remote locations and not always desirable places for teachers and, in particular, Commerce teachers to live (FG-01; Marshall, 1989), which meant that there was a greater likelihood of Will securing a position in these schools.

These five interpretive reasons why Will began post-primary teaching offer an answer to Research Question 2 about Will's motivation to begin post-primary teaching in 1958. The next sub-sections expand on these motivations by addressing Will's lack of teaching qualifications and how he was able to relate to other staff and pupils. The first focus of sociocultural theory looks at the individual, and his lack of credentials was a personal concern for Will. Sociocultural theory's second focus, interpersonal issues, links to Will's ability to relate to others in his wider social (and community) setting.

### **Lack of qualifications**

Despite Will's strong motivation to become a post-primary school teacher, he was concerned about his lack of formal teaching qualifications. He wondered how he could even be considered for a role at Spotswood College, one of the largest post-primary schools in the country (Memoir, p. 238). During his teaching career, he also felt discriminated against in that he earned less than some of his peers yet held a similar senior position and, sometimes, increased responsibilities (Memoir, p. 242). In some

cases, he earned less than some teachers in his departments. He also felt let down and offended by the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA), which, to him, seemed to support degreed teachers within its organisation rather than the high percentage of teachers for whom a degree was not necessary, such as those for Shorthand–Typing and Woodwork (Memoir, p. 244; see pp. 134–135 and Chapter 3 for more about the PPTA). Will also believed that his lack of a degree was a reason that he was not appointed to be a School Certificate Examiner for Bookkeeping in the early 1970s (Memoir, p. 254).

There were also others who came to teaching without appropriate teaching qualifications. One began his career in the 1970s when he was in his 30s and noted how hard he had to work initially to come to terms with teaching and the requirements of the role, practising his blackboard writing and trying different disciplining techniques (SPT-3). This teacher added that in regard to Will's experience in the 1950s, *"If it was physically, emotionally, and mentally exhausting to a thirty-year-old, imagine its effect on one twenty or more years older"* (SPT-3).

Others thought differently about Will's lack of formal qualifications. A previous principal mentioned that although Will did not have a degree, he had done a lot of private professional learning and was able to pass on that knowledge to his pupils (PAP-1). He went on to say: *"A lot of people will study at university, but they won't have very full knowledge and ... ability."* Similarly, Will was known to have credibility and *"knew what he was talking about"* (SPS-1) as he *"... had lived outside the education system, and he was able to bring that experience into the education system and keep us engaged in what we were doing"* (MMS-1). Such comments about Will's knowledge—and ability to share that knowledge—emphasise the true vocation of being a teacher, despite his not having formal qualifications.

Part of a teacher's role is being able to communicate or connect with others. Will had various interpersonal relations with his principals, colleagues, teachers in his departments, and with his pupils. Some of these interpersonal examples, including a sub-section about his English language ability, are now described.

## Interpersonal skills

Although not previously involved with adolescents in a formal way, Will had dealt with people as a manager on Indonesian plantations and in Samoa (FG-03), working with those of various nationalities and from different backgrounds (FG-02). These experiences helped Will to relate to his colleagues and pupils. Will seemed to get on well with his colleagues. At Paeroa College, Will was very sociable and mixed well with the staff (PAT-1) and was a “popular colleague” (Twaddle, 1966—see Appendix H, 2). At Spotswood College, some knew him as being “gregarious” (SPT-2) but another teacher thought him to be quiet in the staffroom (SPT-1). He was polite (SPT-2) and interacted well with staff but did not have any real close friends among the teachers (SPT-2; SPT-4). Will would sit in the same chair in the Spotswood staffroom, and others would come to talk to him but they felt comfortable doing so (SPT-4; see Figure 5.4). Will was also considered to be a very private man (FG-01; SPS-2).

Will did feel that some of his teaching colleagues were jealous of him because he was a Senior Teacher (from Waiuku College onwards) without a degree, was a foreigner, and, in the early days, without much teaching experience (Memoir, p. 233). Will also had differences with some of his principals at Waiuku College (p. 137) and Paeroa College (pp. 98–9). By the time he got to Spotswood and Mount Maunganui Colleges, he also was considerably older than some of his colleagues.

A Spotswood teacher in Will’s department said

that she considered Will to be her “mentor” (SPT-4). He was very respectful and, despite her being a second year teacher, did not treat her as “somebody who really knew nothing.” She said she could always go to him for advice, and he would make suggestions but not stipulate what she had to do. Other HODs would be watching staff, but Will had confidence in her and was always there to listen and help if needed. Will

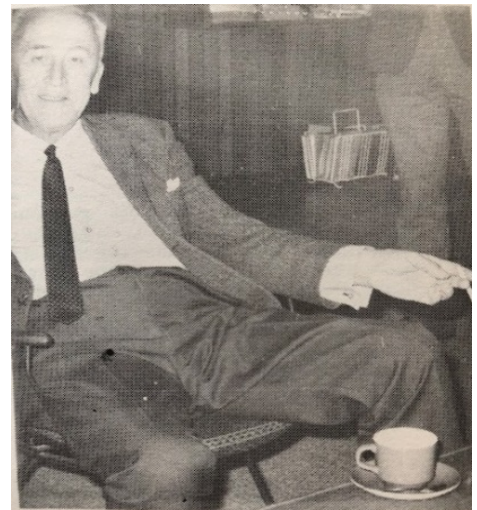


Figure 5.4. “End of the day”: Will in the Spotswood Staffroom, 1974.

Source: “Magazine of Spotswood College” (1974, p. 36).

also expected the teachers in his department to deal with discipline issues themselves. She would not have sent unruly pupils to Will as other young teachers did to their HODs, "... not because he wouldn't back me up, but because I would have felt that he would have expected me to sort it myself. That wasn't a bad thing at all" (SPT-4). Another "great joy about being in his department" was that they only had meetings if they were necessary. She added:

*I had huge respect for him. He's one of those people who I felt made a big impression on my life about fairness and honesty. He never lectured you or anything like that, but I felt that it was a privilege to work with such an honest, fair man. I probably wouldn't have been able to articulate it like that at the time, but I'm sure it influenced me as a teacher too. (SPT-4)*

Will felt that he got on well with most of his pupils. They thought that Will was very kind (WAS-2) and very special (WAS-3). One former Paeroa College teacher did state that Will was one of the:

*... old type teachers who maintained the distance whereas these days, the students and teachers are much closer in their day-to-day mingling and discussions and things like that. Will kept the professional distance. (PAT-1)*

However, at his last assembly at Spotswood College, with the pupils cheering after his farewell speech, Will remarked:

*I am sure that I had to wipe a few blasted tears away—it just won't do for an old crock like me to become sentimental. (p. 241)*

In keeping with Will's interpersonal skills, Will was called by a few different names. He was addressed as 'Mr Potter' by a young Onewhero teacher (ONT-1), although that may have been part of the social etiquette of the 1950s. At Waiuku College, he was often referred to as 'Willy George' (FG-02; FG-03) by the pupils, although not to his face. In class, two of his children who were taught by him called him 'Mr Potter' (FG-03) or 'Sir' (FG-02). Another Waiuku pupil called him 'Bally Will' (WAS-5) in reference to the adjective he often used when talking, while others referred to him as 'Pete's Sake' (WAS-3; WAS-4) because of his continual comment of 'For Bally Pete's sake!' It is not known if he was aware of these nicknames. At Spotswood College, most of the

staff knew him as ‘Bill Potter’ (SPT-1; SPT-2; SPT-3), although one of the younger teachers who was in his department always called him ‘Mr Potter’ (SPT-4).

Whether it was arrogance or confidence, Will knew who he was—or portrayed that image. One former Spotswood College teacher stated: *“so you had the young guard, and then you had the old guard, and then you had people like [Will], who was absolutely his own person”* (SPT-4). A former Spotswood pupil stated: *“... but Mr Potter, he was Mr Potter”* (SPS-2).

### **“English not being quite normal”**

Part of Will’s interpersonal skills related to his English language ability. Despite English not being his first language, Will was proficient in English (FG-01; ONS-1; SPS-2; WAS-5). There were some idiomatic issues, however, and *“there was a quaintness in the way that he spoke because of his English not being quite normal”* (PAP-1; see also SPT-2; SPT-3). Some of his phrasing could even be amusing as it was not always strictly grammatical (PAT-1). However, Will did have an accent (MMS-1; ONT-1; PAS-1; SPS-1; SPT-1; WAS-1; WAS-3; WAS-4), which was somewhat of a novelty (WAS-3) and interesting to listen to (SPS-2). Despite his English being a little different, the pupils could understand him and *“the diction and the delivery that he gave was very measured, controlled”* (SPT-2). This same teacher explained that accents matter more to pupils than to adults, who are often more attuned to language variations, and pronunciation and enunciation. Everyone knew Will was different, but his speaking was *“easy on the ear”* (SPT-3).

There were also positive aspects of Will’s accent. Some considered that his quirky or amusing phrasing made their lessons more interesting (MMS-1; WAS-3; WAS-4), especially when his accent became more pronounced and humorous when he was angry (PAS-1; SPT-4). Pupils also wondered where he came from (MMS-1), and it was *“probably quite fascinating to have someone that spoke English with a ‘other than a Māori sort of’ accent”* (WAS-1). Will’s accent contrasted with the local vernacular as New Zealand in the 1960s and early 1970s was quite insular, despite the numbers of British and Dutch immigrants in the preceding decade (SPT-3; see more about Dutch immigration in Chapter 2). People did have to listen more carefully to what he was

saying (PAT-1), but doing so ensured they understood the point being talked about and meant that the class was more attentive, lessening the need for Will to use discipline (WAS-3). No interviewee had trouble understanding Will's English.

Having established why Will began teaching (Research Question 2) and noted his lack of qualifications and some of his interpersonal skills, including his English language ability, the next section addresses Research Question 3 about the approaches Will used in his teaching. These pedagogical and management approaches paint a richer picture of his teaching practice.

### **Will's Teaching Approaches**

Finding out some of what went on in his classes helps to build a more detailed picture of Will the teacher, especially as he had no formal education of teaching pedagogy. The following sections look at his style, use of stories, disciplining, and various classroom practices.

#### **"Mr Potter was a gentleman"**

When asked about how Will taught in the classroom, one Spotswood College pupil said that it was best to look at him as a person, and this description of Will is presented verbatim in Vignette<sup>26</sup> 1.

#### **VIGNETTE 1**

*His teaching style was ... No! Let's talk about his style because it was reflected in every part. Mr Potter was a gentleman. He was always dressed ... 90% of the time he had a white shirt on with a tie, a narrow tie, and if it wasn't a white shirt, it would be a light blue shirt ... He would normally wear grey pants that were not tight fitting, ... but they obviously were pressed ... creases absolutely perfect. He'd normally wear brown shoes, but they were the shoes that often had the big, thick soles, so they were not the leather soles with heels; they were all combined. And he would just walk graciously, just smoothly along. He'd walk back from his classroom to the staffroom, and he'd be just singularly*

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<sup>26</sup> Although 'vignettes' are often regarded as fictional illustrative narratives, within this thesis, a vignette is considered to be a quote from a person I interviewed that offers a brief yet enriching story related to Will and his teaching.

[gestures a straight line with his hand] *focussed. He wouldn't be swayed if there was a scrap going on or ... he'd probably only change his vision if somebody said, 'Hi Mr Potter!', but he wouldn't go out of his way. He always had a smile and, when I say a smile, ... there was always a happiness in his face, and you could steal a smile from him every now and again.* (SPS-2)

This pupil's picture of Will's personal style was endorsed by others (SPT-2; WAS-5) as well as his being a gentleman (WAS-3). Will's teaching style was also "*something of a legend*" (SPT-3).

Will had an engaging personality (SPT-2) and also had charisma (WAS-4). He had a calm manner (SPS-1) and was kind yet authoritative (WAS-2). He was a fair teacher who treated all pupils the same (SPT-4; WAS-2) and was a just disciplinarian, as the following quote explains:

*You'd hear him shout every now and again if somebody upset him, but I think that was it ... I don't remember him ever pursuing kids ... he wouldn't hold a grudge. Some teachers, I'm afraid, were vindictive and quite brutal ... no child I don't think would ever have felt that with him as long as they did their work.* (SPT-4)

This consistency and fairness helped one Waiuku College pupil whose home life was not so structured (WAS-2). She noted that "*He was the captain of the ship. We sort of didn't have a captain of our ship at home.*"

### **Will the 'raconteur'**

For someone who had no formal teacher training or awareness of effective pedagogies, Will was creative in his teaching as evident in his storytelling. Will's stories were mainly about his personal experiences. He was renowned as a storyteller or "*raconteur*" (SPT-2), simultaneously teaching and entertaining pupils through his stories. All but two of the people interviewed for this thesis brought up Will's storytelling acumen, usually about his time in the NEI and his internment during WWII. However, one pupil from Onewhero (ONS-1) mentioned Will's car in Samoa—a Ford Popular—and others talked about the Indonesian plantations (PAT-1; WAS-3), but the war stories may have been more impressionable or more memorable (SPS-2). Will was conscious not to frighten his audiences with some of his war experiences, especially

those in the concentration camps. He treated these stories “*from a humoristic point of view in order not to distress the faint-of-heart ones with gruesome reminiscences of my mal-treatment [sic] by the Japanese—or rather Korean—guards*” (Memoir, p. 241). Will privately told one member of the Focus Group that:

*... the Koreans even got these guys to dig a hole in the middle of the road, and then they'd cover them up to the neck and just leave them and wait for the traffic to do its own thing—all that sort of thing which the average person wouldn't think of. (FG-02)*

Despite Will censoring some of his stories so as not to frighten impressionable adolescents, his storytelling was “*interactive*” (SPT-2). Furthermore, everyone (at Spotswood College) knew about the gravity of being in a concentration camp (SPT-2; see also SPS-1). Pupils were moved by Will's stories, and the tales left an impression on them—one of “*understanding and respect*” (SPS-2), both positive social attributes. Another Waiuku pupil said she felt the students respected Will for telling his war stories as it could not have been easy for him, especially having to answer some of the pupils' questions (WAS-4). Such respect would also have helped Will with his behaviour management.

Although the stories may not have frightened the pupils (WAS-3), they were fascinated (WAS-1; WAS-2) and “*intrigued*” (WAS-3) because the stories were “*seriously interesting*” (WAS-3). Pupils often were disappointed when the bell went and the stories had to end (FG-02; PAS-1), and one (PAS-1) still remembers some examples over 50 years later:

*He told us things like one day there was a collie dog came into the camp, and the next day there was meat on the menu [see also MMS-1; WAS-3].  
And how the people smuggled their jewellery and hid it from the Japs ...  
If you misbehaved in the camps, they'd put bamboo shoots under this thing and spread you out. The bamboo shoots grew fast!*

Thus, the impact of the war stories has been remembered all these years by this and other pupils. These wartime incidents had happened not that long before—when Will started teaching at Onewhero, it was only 13 years since WWII had ended (FG-01). However, for some of the teenagers listening, these stories took place a “*long, long time ago*” (WAS-1).

Pupils sometimes relayed aspects of Will's stories to other teachers (SPT-4), saying how he became emotional telling some of his anecdotes (SPS-2; WAS-3). One such story was told to me and is quoted in Vignette 2. This same pupil tells of Will and the prisoners not having enough to eat so were somewhat skeletal in their appearance. They ate vermin, such as rats, and also removed their gold teeth to sell for money to buy food from the local population.

### VIGNETTE 2

*... one of the things [Will] said was that he never saw his wife, what was it, for three years? ... He and a friend came up with this idea. The Japanese were mad over cleanliness—them themselves; couldn't care about the prisoners. Your father and this other man convinced them that all that rubbish, which was cans and food scraps and bits and pieces that smelt, was bad and that they should dig a hole and bury it. They convinced whoever was in charge of the Japanese to dig a hole and they would bury it. They dug it hard against the ladies' compound ... Whether they went out to do that or whether they were on their own, that little detail I am not quite sure of. What I remember is they dug it and they dug it slowly—they knew they were better there than going off with the other poor beggars, so they dug it slowly. They made the sides—sticks with me—made the sides so square, like they'd been shaved, and they dug hard against the fence. They were then able to get messages to the ladies by talking through the fence. Then, they got your Mum to come and they dug underneath the fence. And they were able to kiss each other under the fence. I get emotional just thinking about it. Pretty special, eh? (WAS-3)*

Will did not just tell his stories in his classes. One teacher from Spotswood College made special note about Will's ability to speak in front of a large audience: Will was *"the first person that I ever came across that seemed completely at ease ... one thing that will stay with me until I die about Bill [Will] is his ability to speak in a public forum"* (SPT-2). He cites one example (see Vignette 3) when Will spoke to the whole school to keep the pupils entertained when there were some timetabling problems in the three-school system at Spotswood College.

### VIGNETTE 3

*Bill! How would you like to go and tell a story to the kids? So, we'd pile all the kids in the assembly hall, and Bill would stagger up the front there, as he used to walk with that gait that he had, sort of portly in a way, but not portly. And off he'd go! And the kids would just be spellbound, and he'd tell all these stories. A lot of them about his experiences in the Dutch East Indies, the Japanese invasion, his time in the concentration camp, how he used to smuggle stuff out by sticking it up his bum—and the kids would just love this stuff ... At the time, every kid in the school knew who Bill Potter was, and he was held in a sort of awe—by the staff too. ... You know, as a teacher, it sounds easy ... It's not easy; not everyone can do that ... (SPT-2)*

It was relatively easy to sidetrack Will from his teaching to tell his stories (FG-02; FG-03; PAS-1; SPS-1; WAS-1). However, Will would only tell his stories if all the required work had been completed and if the class was “lucky” (FG-03) enough for him to respond to requests from the pupils, who would ask, “Please, Mr Potter, tell us about the war!” (FG-02). One pupil said Will did not tell stories that often—perhaps once per month—and only when in the mood (SPS-2). Will sometimes shared his experiences at the end of the term (SPS-1; WAS-3). One time he did so when he relieved for a sick Physical Education (PE) teacher on a wet day at Waiuku College (WAS-3).

Will's stories had a Social Studies component. He talked about how to tap rubber, and one pupil explained the process to me as I interviewed him (WAS-3). Will's stories introduced his pupils to a world beyond their small town (WAS-1) and to “*be taken back into this live history*” (FG-01). As teenagers, they had never experienced anything like what Will had been through, and his stories brought out aspects of war that rarely were mentioned in Social Studies or History textbooks of the time. Although many pupils had parents or grandparents who had fought in WWII or even been interned, they usually never spoke about their experiences (WAS-1). In contrast, Will shared his war stories too often as the following excerpt states:

*His continued speeches about Indonesia was just ... I don't know what that was. There must be some explanation of that repetitive going back in his life—perhaps the injustices of all of that. (FG-01)*

### **Will the disciplinarian**

Will was a strong disciplinarian and reacted quickly to what he considered to be a discipline problem (FG-02). He gave the impression that he was there to do a job and that there would be no interruptions (FG-01; PAT-1). He also felt that it was his responsibility to teach his pupils and that when they were in his class, they would learn (FG-01; FG-02; SPT-1).

Will liked to have an ordered classroom, and one of his daily routines was to make sure it was so. Even in his first ‘classroom’ in the community hall at Onewhero, he liked to have the desks set in rows (Memoir, p. 221; see also SPT-4). Will had a set morning routine:

*[Will] would come in the morning. He would set his classroom up: every desk was in line, and he would have a chart for every class with all the desks in a row and the names on the desks so he would know who that person was. He said he didn't have a good memory and woe betide if you sat in the wrong seat. (FG-03)*

Will was a firm teacher (FG-01; FG-02; PAP-1; SPT-1; WAS-04). He had high expectations of his pupils (FG-01; FG-03; SPT-4), and he was “*in charge of the class, and they didn't step out of line*” (PAP-1; see also FG-01; SPT-1). The solemnity of his disciplinary actions was noticeable: “*When your eyes start popping out of your head about half an inch, people know that you're pretty serious!*” (FG-02). Even family members were not allowed to get away with talking or misbehaving in class (FG-02, FG-03). Will's class was one of the few where pupils knew they were there to work—one of Will's expectations—and pupils respected him for not being able to get away with behaviour that was accepted in other classes (FG-02).

Will did not stand “*shenanigans*” (WAS-03), and he has also been described as “*old school*” (WAS-5). However, Will had control in his classes as summarised by one Spotswood College pupil:

*When you came into the class, ... he didn't demand your attention, he actually commanded your attention ... it's not what he said, it was just ... he was there. He didn't yell or scream, seldom yelled or screamed, it's just his whole demeanour ... but just his mere presence, you respected. What happened in the class, when the bell would go, it almost went quiet. He didn't have to whack the*

*ruler ... He'd just stand there. Probably the only teacher I ever knew who would ... do that. (SPS-2)*

In analysing Will's disciplining, one of the former Spotswood teachers suggested that Will's background was such that misbehaving teenagers were not that much of a problem:

*I often thought that somewhere in the back of his [Will's] mind, he must have said, 'Shit! What I've been through, this is a sinecure! What can these little buggers do to me?' You know? (SPT-2)*

Will liked to establish behavioural boundaries early in the school year. His reasoning for doing this is explained in the following excerpt:

*... even if it took him a whole ... term ... to have control of the class, then he would start teaching them. And once you got control of the class, you can condense three terms into two. (FG-02)*

Will established and maintained discipline in his classes in four main ways through his physical attributes, expectations, personal characteristics, and rules. While some of Will's physical attributes were that he had a stern demeanour (SPT-1, FG-02; ONS-1; SPS-1; WAS-3; WAS-4; WAS-5) and was very direct (WAS-4), he also had a "dignified presence" (SPT-2) and was always impeccably dressed (MMS-1; SPS-1; WAS-4). Furthermore, Will had a clear and forceful voice (PAP-1) but did not "rant or rave" (WAS-2). He portrayed confidence: "his natural body style was such that he just assumed that they [the pupils] would do what he wanted and that they would follow the teaching that he provided" (PAP-1). Will stood tall and "towered over you" (SPS-1), and he had the class "under his thumb"<sup>27</sup> (PAP-1), comments suggestive of intimidation. When Will got angry with his pupils, they sat up and listened and, although he often got angry, it was justified anger (PAS-1). This same pupil also laughingly mentioned that Will would also go red in the face and his accent would become more pronounced.

Will had certain expectations for behaviour, and he explained these to his pupils early in the year (FG-02; WAS-5). He was also prepared to stand and wait for the class to be

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<sup>27</sup> A colloquial expression for domination.

quiet (SPS-2). At Spotswood College, Will was known to wait at the top of the stairwell for the pupils to arrive each lesson and tell them, “[you] *stinking blinking kids with your stinking blinking attitudes!*” (SPS-1). Will also expected his pupils to be punctual (WAS-5) and wanted them to have good manners (Memoir, p. 227). Most staff and pupils at Spotswood College seemed to know that Will demanded attentiveness (SPT-3). This latter teacher explained: “*Accountancy and Commerce dealt with facts, and they weren’t debatable. That was it! So, he required that and so he had that demand factor*” (SPT-3).

One Spotswood College teacher commented on Will’s personal characteristics and experiences that he thought affected Will’s disciplining, and these are noted in Vignette 4. Will was consistent in his punishment. If he did need to address an issue, it was usually a verbal reprimand, although delivered quite sternly (FG-03; PAS-1; SPT-4; WAS-3; WAS-4; WAS-5). However, Will could also intimidate pupils as shown in his calling pupils ‘stinking blinking’—though not swear words, they could frighten certain pupils. Will also had credibility in that he had had life experience, including business and war, and these helped with disciplining (SPS-1).

#### **VIGNETTE 4**

*I never, ever heard of Bill [Will] having any trouble with his kids in class. My assumption is this easy, engaging sort of personality that he had ... I mean, I’d be staggered if he wasn’t like that because he was like it all the time. I mean, I never saw him get angry; he just cruised along.*

*My impression is because of his demeanour and the way he was able to relate to kids is... He had a dignified way of presenting himself. He always dressed appropriate. ... He didn’t seem to ever offend anyone, so I presume that sort of thing carried over to his classroom. I’m sure that the kids ... he couldn’t turn that off and on. That was the way he presented himself. I often thought that this confidence that he had was going back to his time during the war ... Those people that had undergone traumatic events in their life had either set them on a path that was not nice—illness, alcohol, and violence, all that sort of stuff—or they became very quiet and calm ... I always felt that Bill [Will] ... when he talked to these kids, ‘What can these kids do to me? I’m very comfortable here.’ (SPT-2)*

Will was strict about homework too. He usually gave homework to his pupils and, if it was not done, they would have to complete it during lunchtimes (FG-03). However, Will also showed empathy for his pupils. At Onewhero DHS, Will did not set any homework as “... *he didn’t believe the teachers should have to make the kids work at home. They should be able to learn it in the class*” (ONS-1). Will adds a further practical reason for his no homework philosophy: many of his Onewhero pupils had to help with milking the cows on the family farms, often beginning their day at 4 am. Will states: “*They just wouldn’t have the time to do any homework, the poor kids*” (Memoir, p. 222), exemplifying a concern for his pupils as well as a practical approach to their individual needs.

In keeping with his ordered personality, Will had strict rules in his classroom (FG-03), this setting clear behavioural boundaries for his pupils (PAP-1). However, some of the pupils (PAS-1; SPS-1) and even the (younger) staff (PAT-2) were scared of him. Will used physical force on one occasion to ensure control when he began teaching in Onewhero (Memoir, pp. 222–223). One of his third form pupils threw a chair’s tube cap toward Will when he had his back to the class while writing on the blackboard. Will immediately asked who was responsible, and one boy started to raise his finger just above his desk. When Will challenged him as to why he had thrown the object at him, the boy denied it was meant for Will but, without thinking, Will struck him across the head and the boy was knocked off his chair, “*much to the embarrassment of everybody else*” (FG-02). Afterwards, Will regretted his actions and reported them to the principal, who warned Will that if the boy’s parents complained, Will would lose his job, explaining:

*You may strap a Primary boy on his hand with a leather thong (up to 5cm wide and fairly thick), or beat a High School one with a cane (on his behind), but you are not supposed to lay a hand on them!* (Memoir, p. 223)

Will never forgot this incident, despite there being no repercussions from the pupil or his parents. None of the participants interviewed mentioned Will using physical punishment in class, although corporal punishment was not banned in New Zealand schools until 1987 (Swarbrick, 2012). Prior to that, they were “*great caning days*” (SPT-4).

Will was given a leather strap for strapping pupils when he first started teaching, but he was not sure what to do with it (FG-03). The strap remains in the family archives and still looks brand new (see Figure 5.5). Although the cane was usually used at post-primary schools, Will may have been given a strap as he was teaching at a DHS that followed the primary school regulations. He may not have used corporal punishment as he had seen enough violence inflicted on other people during his internment (WAS-03). Some interviewees (PAT-2; WAS-3; WAS-4) considered that young people were better behaved in the 1960s, but this could have been because of the threat of the strap or the cane.



Figure 5.5. Will's strap, unused.  
Source: Potter Family Archives.

Another way that Will disciplined his classes was to send unruly pupils out to see the Deputy Principal (DP) or, in the case of Onewhero DHS, the Senior Secondary Assistant. Will considered that pupils who were disruptive would affect the rest of the class (FG-03), but this ousting could mean others would inflict corporal punishment. However, sending pupils out did not always work: when he sent a boy to the Senior Secondary Assistant at Onewhero for insolence, nothing was done because the boy in question was *"the full-back of the First XV"* (Memoir, p. 226). Whether this lack of punishment was due to the boy's standing as part of the school's top rugby team or whether the boy was physically bigger than the Senior Secondary Assistant is not made clear. At Onewhero and Waiuku, pupils would be sent to sit in the corridor if they misbehaved, but they would be given a verbal warning first (FG-02; FG-03). Those who were sent out usually only did so once as they knew the boundaries (FG-02). However, by the time Will got to Mount Maunganui College, he stopped sending unruly students out to the DP as nothing was ever done, and he felt that the system undermined both his and the school's authority (Memoir, p. 249).

Will maintained discipline in other ways. One was to keep the pupils engaged in what they were doing: if they were interested in what he was teaching, they were less

inclined to misbehave (MMS-1; SPS-2; WAS-4). Another way was through respect. Students respected Will (FG-02; FG-03; PAS-1; WAS-03; WAS-04; WAS-05), and he “*earned [their] respect ... because he commanded respect, and expected respect*” (FG-02). Pupils respected him because he shared his wartime experiences with them, and they knew he had not had an easy life (WAS-3). Will also had *mana* (prestige; WAS-4), thus inviting pupil respect.

Will also used humour in his disciplining and in his teaching. For example, if a pupil arrived late, Will would make such comments as ‘*It’s not a bally evening class you know!*’ (SPS-2). In response to someone yawning in class, Will would comment “*I am claustrophobic. I cannot bear looking into that big cave!*” (WAS-3). Another example of Will’s humour and quick wit is described by a Waiuku College pupil:

*She came in late to class for whatever reason. She wasn’t naughty ... and didn’t stay out of class deliberately; it was just how it worked out .... She came in and [Will] was talking about mail—overseas mail, airmail—and then he called her a late ‘fee-mail’ when she came in because you could pay extra money for an extra fee for ... mail that was late to deliver. And he said, ‘This is a perfect example of a late fee mail’. I thought, ‘That’s clever!’ (WAS-3)*

Will was stricter with his own children. When comparing test marks with friends, one child received a slightly lower mark for essentially the same answers (FG-03). This could be somewhat discriminatory, but Will might not have wanted to be accused of favouritism and, in an effort to prove impartiality, possibly exaggerated her shortcomings. She also commented that other teachers in the school sometimes reported to Will on her behaviour, which she found an annoying practice. Will would have made mention of this—otherwise, she would not have known—but he may have disregarded some comments from other teachers as well.

Nevertheless, disciplining was not always easy for Will. He got impatient with those who “*couldn’t follow his line of teaching*” (PAP-1), but this could have been true of all teachers, especially in smaller schools without streamed classes where students of all ability levels were taught. In addition, at Mount Maunganui College, Will attributes his age to not being able to cope so well with disciplining. When a new ruling about

sending pupils out required that the teacher concerned accompany the pupils to the DP's office, Will remarked that had he done so with pupils from one particular class then the state of his classroom could have been severely compromised when he returned (Memoir, p. 248). Like any teacher, Will had to work hard to make sure that his pupils were attentive and well-behaved in class.

### **Will's classroom practices**

The following section reports on the variety of Will's teaching practices that he used on a regular basis. They are noted under the following sub-headings: preparation and planning, chalk and talk teaching, teaching to the examinations, providing relevant exemplars, scaffolding learning, and his ethic of care.

#### ***Preparation and planning***

Like any teacher, particularly those new to the profession, Will spent long hours in planning and preparation for his classes. He prepared notes and did marking (PAP-1) and was often doing school work until midnight (FG-03). At Onewhero, Will:

*... would come home from school, have his afternoon tea, and ... he'd have a little story time with [myself as a toddler] and ... read the Time ... then, he'd be marking till all hours, stop for tea, and then he'd be marking again. He just worked long hours in preparation ... (FG-03)*

Also while at Onewhero and having to teach Social Studies, Will ordered books from the National Library Service on History and Geography and made notes for his pupils, a pedagogical characteristic of teaching at the time (the 1950s) and beyond, and one that Will followed.

#### ***Chalk and talk***

As was common in the 1950s, 1960s, and even the 1970s, Will, like most post-primary teachers, often 'taught' by writing information on the blackboard for students to copy and rote learn (WAS-3). This approach to teaching was referred to as "*chalk and talk*" (ONS-1; PAT-1; SPT-4; FG-02; ONS-1; PAS-1; WAS-5). However, after having copied down such information in most of his classes, one Focus Group member often wondered what he had actually learnt (FG-02), suggesting that such 'chalk and talk' pedagogical practices did not always inspire learning.

The classrooms of the day suited or were built to accommodate this chalk and talk approach. Will even had three blackboards set on easels in his first classroom—the supper room at the Onewhero community hall (Memoir, p. 221). There was also a large blackboard and display space in the new Commerce classrooms at Waiuku College (Memoir, p. 233). His blackboard writing was also very neat (SPS-2; WAS-5).

The nature of the subjects Will taught meant that his teaching was very structured and encouraged rote learning (FG-03; PAS-1; SPT-2). However, Will did allow pupils to work at their own pace, and he checked on how work was going and offered help if he thought the pupils needed it (SPS-2). Will seemed to sense when students needed assistance and was *“instinctive without being aggressive”* (SPS-2). Although this type of chalk and talk teaching was regarded as being fit for the purpose of the time, it could also inhibit thinking, as one teacher mentioned:

*You would go into the classroom, the kids would stagger in, teacher would be on the board writing and the board would be full of notes, and the kids would take the notes. The danger of it was they would pass the exams quite well, but they were automatons in the sense that they couldn't think for themselves.*  
(SPT-2)

The pupils were not encouraged to think creatively or even to challenge some of the issues being taught, hence the reference to ‘automatons.’ This system of teaching would also reinforce the emphasis on school examinations, such as School Certificate, that developed as a result of the Thomas Report in 1944 (see Chapter 3).

### ***Teaching to the examinations***

Will often gave the pupils tests throughout the year (ONS-1; PAS-1; SPS-1; SPT-3; WAS-5). These tests would not only help them recall the information but also gave senior pupils practice for the real examinations at the end of the year. Will therefore encouraged the importance of examinations through his chalk and talk teaching.

Will also helped pupils to prepare for their School Certificate Examinations. During his 19 years of teaching, *“It was the days of what School Certificate was like: ‘Learn these’ and ‘Tell us all that’; it was a very effective teaching method for the style of examinations”* (SPT-4). Will’s authority in regard to examinations was also respected

because he regularly marked School Certificate papers. He began marking School Certificate Commercial Practice Examinations in 1965 while he was teaching at Paeroa College (Campbell, 1965) and Bookkeeping School Certificate Examinations in 1969 while he was at Spotswood College (Scambary, 1970). In addition, Will's knowledge of the examination marking gave pupils and staff confidence in knowing that if they did what was in his textbooks (see more about Will's textbooks on pp. 130–133) and followed his advice, pupils would have a better chance of passing the examination (SPT-4). Will also taught his pupils examination skills, suggesting that if they ran out of time in the examination or were not sure how to write in paragraphs, it was better to quickly jot down some notes, even just in bullet points, than to have nothing at all on the paper or spend time composing prose (SPS-2).

### ***Providing relevant exemplars***

Apart from blackboard information, Will also gave pupils practical examples to help their understanding (FG-02; FG-03). For example, if the lesson was on invoices or cheques, Will would get the class to draw them and fill them out (FG-02; SPS-1; WAS-3; WAS-5). Will also prepared suggested answers for previous examination papers and offered these to the pupils to help their study (FG-02; SPT-3). He also wrote solutions for exercises listed in the Bookkeeping and Accounting textbooks and made these available to his pupils (Memoir, p. 250).

Apart from the practical exemplars that Will offered, he also tried to make the learning relevant. Will sometimes told his pupils about the benefits of learning such commercial skills and knowledge:

*... some of you may not want to go to university, some of you may not want to further your education, but you still need to live in the world where we have cheques, where we have to buy things, we have to pay for things, we have to budget ... (FG-03)*

This explanation ties in with Jack Horrocks' (1947) statements about the necessity of learning subjects like Commercial Practice so that such knowledge would help prevent another economic depression. A number of Will's pupils continued to use the skills they had learnt in his classes, both in their careers and in their personal lives (MMS-1; ONS-1; PAS-1; SPS-1; SPS-2; WAS-2; WAS-5), suggesting that Will's teaching for

learning had a lasting impact. One also used some of Will's teaching techniques, such as underlining main points and revising work at the beginning of subsequent classes (SPS-2), in his own teaching. Will made what was a relatively boring subject (Commercial Practice) interesting (FG-02; SPS-1; WAS-3), thus allowing pupils to come to understand that the content was relevant and useful (FG-01). By noting his subjects' importance and providing exemplars of this relevance through model answers, Will did all he could to ensure his Commercial pupils passed their examinations, and he had good examination results at Paeroa College when he was there from 1965–1966 (PAT-1). Will also explained (Commercial Practice) business terminology so that it was understandable (MMS-1). When he began using his own textbooks in his teaching at Spotswood College, these also included current examples, such as a Profit and Loss Account dated 1973 (Potter, 1973).

### ***Scaffolding learning***

Will also designed and made visual aids to support his teaching. For example, he spent considerable time preparing for his Social Studies lessons at Onewhero:

*... he spent hours doing these charts on how they did rubber and tapped the rubber, and he ... did lots of visual projects to show [the pupils], which showed me anything he did, he went to the nth degree to get it out there to make it clearer for the kids. (FG-03)*

His efforts to design visual aids show that Will was aware that his pupils learned in different ways. Making visual representations helped them to picture the concepts being taught as well as assisting them to build on what they already knew in terms of forestry and farming. Despite no formal teaching education or qualification, Will's teaching exemplified the Vygotskian constructivist processes of scaffolding learning (scaffolding is also talked about in Chapter 3).

Will used scaffolding in his Commercial Practice teaching (MMS-1; PAS-1). Scaffolding is a process teachers use to assist pupils to learn by providing a "supporting structure" (Drewery & Claiborne, 2016, p. 16). It involves breaking down concepts into smaller parts that relate to the pupils' prior knowledge. Will explained concepts, helping to link to prior knowledge. He also knew the importance of reinforcing prior learning: at the beginning of each class, Will would spend about five minutes revising what he had

taught them in the previous lesson (SPS-2; WAS-5). He would also repeat some of the “golden rules” (SPS-2) in Commerce subjects, such as those to do with debits, assets, and liabilities (see also PAS-1). Will also used authentic tasks, such as writing cheques and invoices, in his teaching to promote learning—part of constructivist teaching (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). He was also passionate about his subjects, so his teaching of them just flowed (SPS-2).

Will’s commitment to teaching included using different resources. Ironically, at Onewhero, Will—as a Dutch-speaking immigrant—was asked to teach a Basic English class, the principal having confidence in Will’s ability to do so (Memoir, p. 221). Will taught such things as basic grammar, verb tenses, and spelling using a detective novel or thriller as his resource and held the pupils’ attention by predicting the culprit in the stories. This approach not only demonstrates his use of different resources but exemplifies his scaffolding techniques to support his pupils’ learning. It also exemplifies building on his pupils’ interests and thinking of ways to motivate his pupils (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008; see more about pupil motivation in Chapter 3).

### ***Ethic of care***

Will knew there was a difference between telling pupils what to do and educating them (FG-02). He cared about his pupils’ learning and was committed to doing his part to ensure their success. Similarly, Will was not afraid to stand up for the pupils in his class as he did for some at Onewhero. Some pupils there showed real potential, although most, when they turned 15, would leave school to work on the farm, in accordance with parental expectations (FG-03). Schoolwork did not always have a high priority for those pupils waiting to leave school (FG-01). Will, however, wanted to see his pupils, especially the more able ones, at least be given a chance to sit School Certificate. He was not against farm work but felt that they could be better educated for this. Will advocated on behalf of pupils as described here:

*I remember him intervening and going to see parents of two [pupils] to say ‘Your kids have got potential, let them finish their school, give them a chance,’ but didn’t succeed. He felt really saddened by that, so he did go the extra mile ... battling on behalf of the kids I guess. (FG-03)*

Having looked at some of Will's teaching approaches, the final part of this chapter will look at the more general question of what Will's teaching has contributed to Commerce teaching in New Zealand (Research Question 4).

## **Will's Contribution to Commerce Teaching in New Zealand**

Will made a contribution to Commerce education in New Zealand in three key ways: through the textbooks he wrote, the Commerce subjects themselves, and his membership of teaching associations. These various contributions are noted under the following headings.

### **Contribution through writing textbooks**

The main contribution Will made to Commerce education in New Zealand was through his textbooks. His initial interest in textbooks began in Onewhero. As he was unaware of Commercial Practice when he began teaching in 1958, Will engaged in his own self-directed professional development by reading the 1947 school textbook, *Commercial Practice in New Zealand*, by Jack Horrocks. This text was the basis for the curriculum and School Certificate Examinations (ONS-1), and he compared its contents to the previous ten years' School Certificate questions for the subject. Exemplifying Will's attention to detail and his desire to learn more about this subject that he was required to teach, Will sent his summary of the information missing from the text to the author, who subsequently incorporated the changes into the eighth edition (J. Horrocks, 1960; Memoir, p. 221). While not initially conversant with the New Zealand Commercial Practice curriculum, Will soon understood what was missing from the textbook, which motivated him to contact the author, both to inform him of his findings as well as to upskill himself as to what was expected in the School Certificate Examination. Will was able to draw upon his knowledge of commercial systems, shown in his university passes in the early 1950s, his audit clerk work at the Education Department, and also his previous experience as a plantation manager. Alerting the author to what was missing was Will's first sign of interest in writing texts.

Will started writing and self-publishing his own Commerce textbooks while he was at Spotswood College (McPhail, 1974—see Appendix H, 3; Memoir, p. 242). In September

1967, Will read Wheeler and Smyth's latest textbook, *An Introduction to Accounting*, and decided to use it for his sixth and seventh<sup>28</sup> form pupils (Memoir, p. 250). As mentioned earlier, Will provided model answers for exercises in the textbooks, both as notes for himself and as prompts for his pupils (PAP-1; SPT-3). In a subject like Accounting, "if a question was put in an examination, it would take a teacher quite some time to work out a totally perfect model answer, but Bill [Will] had done it!" (SPT-3).

Will knew one of the authors, Mr Smyth, from his days as a clerk at the Education Department, and Will sought his advice about Commerce teaching in 1957 (Memoir, p. 250). Will discovered the authors did not have answers to their exercises, but they suggested that Will write a textbook that provided these additional resources and advanced him the printing costs to do so. This was the start of Will's writing career, and he went on to produce his own series of Commercial Practice textbooks: *Study Notes*, *Revision*, and *Suggested Answers*. In 1972, when Wheeler and Smyth's second edition of *An Introduction to Accounting* was published, the authors again asked Will to publish a full set of suggested answers. Will then had "the temerity to publish [his] own set of Accounting books" (p. 250), with three—*UE Accounting: Theory and Practice*, *Tests and Exercises*, and *Solutions*—published in 1974. In 1977, Wheeler and Smyth published their third edition and, yet again, asked Will to write the suggested answers, this time in his first year of retirement from teaching.

Will's initial notes and model answers for his subjects later became the basis for his books. He was "one of the first ... to publish model answers for the previous year's exams" (SPT-3; see also PAT-1). These were very useful for teachers as some of the examination questions had very detailed answers, but Will had clarified these for the teachers. Examinations were very important, and Will (and all teachers) wanted to ensure that their pass rates were maintained (SPT-4).

Financially, Will did well from the sale of his textbooks. In 1970, he made more money from his books than from his teaching. Table 5.2 shows the numbers of books sold and money earned over the nine years up until Will's memoir was written in 1982. In

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<sup>28</sup> Form 7 is Year 13.

keeping with Will's concern about money, both personally and in terms of his motivation to become a teacher, such extra income would have been gratefully received.

Table 5.2.

*Will's Textbook Earnings Compared to his Teaching Salary*

a)	Suggested Answers to "An Introduction to Accounting" (1968 Edition)	1968
b)	Suggested Answers to "School Certificate Bookkeeping"	1969
c)	School Certificate Commercial Practice - Study Notes	1970
d)	" " " " - Revision	"
e)	" " " " - Suggested Answers	"
f)	Bookkeeping - The WHY and the HOW	1971
g)	Suggested Answers to "An Introduction to Accounting" (1972 Edition)	1973
h)	U.E. Accounting - Theory and Practice	1974
i)	" " - Tests and Exercises	"
j)	" " - Solutions	"
k)	Suggested Answers to "An Introduction to Accounting" (1978 Edition)	1979

Year	Books	Money earned	Profit	Salary <sup>29</sup>
1968	a)	\$1,112.50	\$326.62	\$4,080
1969	a) b)	\$4,070.00	\$1,744.57	\$4,355
1970	a)b)c)d)	\$9,606.50	\$5,498.58	\$5,254
1971	a)c)d)e)f)	\$4,997.80	\$2,315.68	\$5,969
1972	a)b)c)d)e)f)	\$7,209.30	\$3,302.51	\$7,347
1973	b)c)d)e)f)g)	\$5,698.45	\$2,605.18	\$7,587
1974	b)c)d)e)f)g)h)i)j)	\$7,424.45	\$3,880.03	\$8,783
1975	b)c)d)e)g)h)i)j)	\$2,663.95	\$1,324.14	\$5,518
1976	b)g)h)i)j)	\$3,073.75	\$1,503.97	\$6,206
1977	g)h)i)j)	\$2,674.50	\$1,032.89	_____
1978	g)h)i)j)	\$2,164.25	\$795.04	_____
1979	g)h)i)k)	\$2,503.00	\$821.22	_____
1980	h)k)	\$2,172.00	\$731.38	_____
1981	h)k)	\$1,118.00	\$95.66	_____

Source: Memoir, pp. 252–3; Ministry of Education Archives (received 2016).

Will's textbooks were used by a number of post-primary schools throughout New Zealand as well as in some Pacific nations, such as the Cook Islands (M. Melvin, personal communication, August 2, 2018). Paeroa College used the books because

<sup>29</sup> The amounts shown here are from Will's official Salary Cards (received from the Ministry of Education Archives in 2016) and differ slightly to those noted in Will's memoir.

they *“covered the syllabus very well ... [and] ... were excellent textbooks”* (PAP-1). Spotswood College also used them (SPS-1; SPS-2) as did Mount Maunganui College (MMS-1). Will’s books were easy to read and almost self-explanatory, and *“the main points were underlined and he focussed on key words”* (SPS-2). Will’s books were *“very much in his style—not a spare word; ... headings; subheadings; sub-sub headings; a,b,c,d,e; 1,2,3 ... That was Bill Potter—really. It was cut and dried”* (SPT-3).

A Spotswood College teacher in Will’s department felt that Will’s books gave teachers confidence to teach (SPT-4). She commented that teachers knew if they taught to Will’s textbooks, then the pupils had a greater chance of passing School Certificate. She added that she herself did not have to prepare Commercial Practice content because it was all in the books. In Bookkeeping, the pupils used the set textbook, and Will had written all the model answers. The hand-typed (with one finger) books that Will wrote and self-published are quite amateurish and dense compared with today’s glossy and more professional publications, even from a home computer. However, Will’s knowledge of the Commerce subjects meant that he was respected in the profession (PAT-1; PAT-2), and his later publishing of books helped build this reputation as well.

### **Contribution to the standing of commercial subjects**

Will also contributed to Commerce teaching by helping to remove the bias often associated with Commerce subjects and in developing the Spotswood College Commerce Department. Prior to Will’s arrival at Spotswood, *“... it had been ‘quote, quote’ Commercial Division, which was girls doing Typing and Shorthand—basically that”* (SPT-3). Commercial subjects did not have the same standing as other subjects until the 1970s, and those choosing to take Commercial subjects did not have a *“fully rounded curriculum”* (SPT-3). Will helped to remove this *“built-in bias”* (SPT-3) against Commercial subjects and to raise people’s appreciation of them.

### Contribution to teaching associations

Will became a member of the New Zealand Commerce Teachers' Association<sup>30</sup>, which was established in 1959 (NZCETA, n.d.), while at Onewhero when the organisation had first formed (Memoir, p. 231). Each summer holidays, the Association ran Refresher Courses for post-primary teachers at various post-primary schools around the country, and Will attended these courses regularly up to and including 1974. Will's joining of the Association suggests a desire to improve his knowledge of Commerce subjects and the teaching of them as well as perhaps a desire to share his developing knowledge and resources—and selling his books. Through the local branch of the Commerce Teachers' Association<sup>31</sup> (CTA), Will also made available the notes he had made for the new subject of Economic Studies for the third and fourth formers that he taught at Mount Maunganui College in 1975–1976 (Potter, 1976a), thus exemplifying his willingness to share resources.

Will also contributed to another teacher organisation, the Post-Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA). He joined the PPTA—the post-primary teachers' union—when he was at Onewhero. He often referred to the PPTA as a union but was told by his colleagues that it was a “*professional organisation*” (Memoir, p. 243). The PPTA wanted to improve teachers' salaries, the biggest issue for post-primary teachers, as they were not on a par with other professions, and to ensure that teachers were well qualified (Grant, 2003). In the late 1950s and early 1960s, teachers aged 70 or older had to teach at hard-to-staff schools in response to the increased number of pupils who stayed at school longer and the decreasing supply of teachers. Like Will, many of these teachers were untrained. The PPTA considered teachers without degrees as “*bodies in front of the room*” (FG-01), which left Will feeling unsupported by the PPTA.

Will took a moral stance against the PPTA. When Will was at Spotswood College in the 1970s, the PPTA threatened to strike in their demands for a pay rise<sup>32</sup>. Will refused to attend a meeting to discuss strike action, telling his principal that he “... *regarded the*

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<sup>30</sup> Later the New Zealand Commerce and Economics Teachers' Association (NZCETA).

<sup>31</sup> I could not confirm this through the teacher mentioned in the letter or NZCETA, but Will's directing the teacher concerned to the appropriate NZCETA representative and his school would suggest its authenticity.

<sup>32</sup> The actual date of the stop-work meeting in New Plymouth could not be verified.

*PPTA to be an organisation of Professionals ... and that Professionals did not strike*" (Memoir, p. 243). Instead, he stayed at Spotswood College until the end of the school day and made sure that all the pupils had vacated the school grounds by midday. This action showed his ability to stand up for his principles. Eventually, the teachers got an increase, with the degreed teachers getting a larger increase than the non-degreed PPTA members. Will eventually resigned from the PPTA when he discovered that his continued grading visits by inspectors were at the PPTA's insistence (Memoir, p. 244).

As most other teachers would do, Will also contributed to the general life of the schools at which he taught. He did this through his involvement in extra-curricular activities and the systems he helped to develop. These further contributions are noted under the appropriate headings.

#### **Contribution to extracurricular activities**

Like other teachers, Will carried out extracurricular aspects of teaching, such as duty before and after school, morning interval, and lunch time, and supervising the Onewhero DHS bus students before and after school (Memoir, p. 223). In the area of sport, he coached a girls' hockey team at Onewhero. There, the school field was reserved for the boys' rugby and to use it for hockey practice would have been "*sacrilege*" (Memoir, p. 225). Will came to learn that "*rugby indeed is a religion in this country, and not only just a sport*" (p. 226). Instead, Will coached the girls on a small section of the field, and the girls' blazers were used to demarcate the goal posts. Practices were at lunchtimes and after school and, despite the inadequate conditions, in 1960, Will's team beat the Manurewa High School girls' hockey team 11-0, much to Will's delight. At Waiuku College, Will coached the boys' hockey teams, attending practices dressed in his white shirt, tie, and trousers (FG-02).

Will also contributed to music at some of his schools. His self-taught musical talent, developed while he was on remote plantations in the NEI, was later able to be used in his teaching role. During the winter months at Onewhero DHS, the Senior Secondary Assistant instituted ballroom dancing lessons and social etiquette at lunchtimes with Will playing waltzes, foxtrots, and quicksteps on the piano as accompaniment (FG-02; *The Onewheron*, 1958). Will did not experience such lessons at the other schools

where he taught but noted such “‘*education for living*’ ... [was what] ... *the Education Department considers to be so important in teaching*” (Memoir, p. 227), a sentiment encouraged by the Thomas Report of 1944 with its emphasis on the education of the whole pupil. This comment from Will shows his endorsement of education beyond the classroom as well as his knowledge of what the then Department of Education considered important in schools. Will also played the piano at Waiuku College at various teacher functions (FG-02; FG-03) and assemblies, and once at an informal jam session with two pupils playing the saxophone and trumpet (WAS-3). At one Waiuku College Assembly, Will played a saw—wobbling it to make a tune—and received a standing ovation from the pupils and staff (WAS-3). Will also played the piano at Spotswood College (McPhail, 1974—see Appendix H, 3).

In his second year at Onewhero DHS (1959), Will became the Careers Advisor (Memoir, p. 228–229; White, 1960—see Appendix H, 1). He updated and alphabeticised the system of career option pamphlets, and pupils could then see him for further information. In those days, two Careers Advisors from the Department of Education annually came to Onewhero to interview prospective leavers about their career choices. In preparation, Will asked pupils for two preferences before the visit and then forwarded the list to the Advisors, who arrived with the relevant career information in paper format. Will also spent one week in Waiouru as one of 45 invited post-primary school Careers Advisors being hosted by the New Zealand Army in the hope of receiving new recruits from suitably impressed Advisors. Teaching to Will was more than just standing in front of a class, and he was motivated to contribute to his pupils’ future lives beyond the classroom.

### **Contribution to school administration systems**

Will also made a significant contribution to administrative systems. For example, at Waiuku College, he worked as a Treasurer. The principal asked Will to take on the nominally paid position of Treasurer to the Board of Governors in addition to his teaching (Edwards, 1963—see Appendix H, 5; Memoir, p. 234). This role involved Will paying the full- and part-time teachers’ and ancillary staff salaries as well as the school’s bills. He also had to sign all cheques, make bank deposits, write letters to

various businesses, and keep all the accounts, including a 27-column cash payments journal (Memoir, p. 234). Eventually, he decided that the position was too time consuming, and, although he sought a raise from the Board of Governors for the work he did, the principal and some Board members were not in favour (Memoir, p. 234). Perhaps if Will had had more support from his principal, he might have gone on to make an even greater contribution to the school in this area. Will also served as Treasurer to the Paeroa College Board of Governors for three months in 1965 (Twaddle, 1966—see Appendix H, 2).

Will also contributed administratively to his schools by establishing a textbook scheme. Textbooks were an important part of education, particularly in the 1950s (ONS-1), and Will organised the textbooks for the three years he taught at Onewhero DHS. He devised a system of grading the textbooks—for example, 'A' meant 'brand new,' 'B' was a '1-year-old book,' and so on—and these grades were noted on the issue slip on the inside front cover of each book. Each allocation of a textbook to a pupil was noted on Will's master list, and he checked the condition of the returned books, even if pupils left during the year. If an 'A' book was returned in what Will considered was a 'C' (2-year-old) condition, the pupil was fined 20 per cent of the new price as he considered that they had not taken proper care of the book. He had the same fine if the book was an 'E' and had been lost (Memoir, p. 228). The storeroom had separate shelves set up to hold the various A (new) to E (five-year-old) books so that in-stock books could be seen quickly and easily. Even the inspectors were impressed by his textbook scheme (Memoir, p. 228), and its main aspects were to be adopted by the Auckland Education Board for DHSs (Shepherd, 1959—see Appendix H, 4).

Will also ran the textbook scheme for the four years he was at Waiuku College (Edwards, 1963—see Appendix H, 5). A misunderstanding with his principal regarding who, if anyone, should take over handling the textbooks for the 1965 school year led to Will resigning from his teaching position at Waiuku College, effective at the end of 1964 (Memoir, p. 235). This might appear to be a trivial reason to resign from a teaching position, but Will could have felt he had organised and run the textbook scheme long enough (seven years in total) and did not feel heard or valued. Combined with the opposition to his increase in the Treasurer stipend, Will lost trust in his boss. It

is not known if Will looked after the textbooks at Paeroa College, but he did so at Spotswood College from 1967–1974 (McPhail, 1974—see Appendix H, 3; SPT-2).

Will contributed to Spotswood College by administering the stationery scheme for the pupils (McPhail, 1974—Appendix H, 3; SPT-3). He devised the pupil order forms, organised the purchases, and enlisted the help of some of his department staff as well as sixth and seventh formers to issue the stationery in one school day (Memoir, p. 239), a precise undertaking considering the school grew to about 1,400 pupils. The profits from the stationery scheme were invested back into the school as well as the staffroom, with part of the money being used to upgrade the floor covering from lino to carpet and to replace the plastic cups and saucers with china ones (Memoir, p. 240). Will also oversaw the payment of the students' school fees at Spotswood (Memoir, p. 239), the proceeds of which were used for such things as purchasing sports equipment or subsidising pupil trips. These roles to set up and run schemes for the distribution of textbooks and stationery, as well as sorting school fees, exemplify Will's characteristics of being organised in his dealing with systems and money. His service also shows his preparedness to contribute to the wider life of the school, despite not being able to actively engage in such physical activities as sport coaching due to his increasing age.

A further way in which Will contributed to the schools he taught was to keep school records. One example of these records was of the senior pupils' examination results. He began collating such records in 1959 while he was at Onewhero DHS (Will's Marks Book, 1958–1961) and continued to do so at Waiuku College (Edwards, 1963—see Appendix H, 5), Paeroa College (Twaddle, 1966—see Appendix H, 2), and at Spotswood College (McPhail, 1974—see Appendix H, 3). Will also collated records for various sports days at Spotswood College (SPT-1) and helped out generally on the day (SPT-1; SPT-3). Therefore, Will contributed to the general life of the schools where he taught through these administrative systems.

## **Summary**

Chapter 5 began by describing the five schools at which Will taught from 1958 until 1976. It also looked at the reasons why Will went teaching in New Zealand, thus addressing Research Question 2. Five main reasons that motivated Will's entry into

post-primary teaching have been interpreted from the data. Further comment on Will's lack of qualifications and interpersonal skills were also noted. Research Question 3 about Will's teaching approaches examined a number of issues related to Will's teaching practice, including his use of story and classroom management, summarised according to the relevant themes that emerged from the data. The last part of Chapter 5 explored Will's breadth of contribution to Commerce teaching (Research Question 4) and other aspects of teaching in general. The next chapter, Chapter 6, will discuss the main findings of the thesis.

## Chapter 6 DISCUSSION

*“...someone’s life is only raw data until they are given analytical shape by the biographer” (Angrosino, 1989, p. 3).*

Will Potter was a post-primary school Commerce teacher in New Zealand from 1958 until 1976. This thesis tells his teaching story, with four research questions guiding its development and focus. This Discussion chapter draws out and discusses some of the major findings of my biographical research, giving Will’s story some ‘analytical shape.’ The chapter begins by assessing the period in which Will began teaching—the 1950s—and the nature of post-primary education in that decade. The chapter then addresses the four research questions, including sections on Will’s upbringing in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI), his internment experiences, and his storytelling. Also included is a section on Will’s lack of academic and teacher qualifications.

### **The 1950s Post-Primary School Landscape**

Loewen (2007) believes that only in history is “accuracy so political” (p. 333). This political accuracy is also true of education in the 1950s. Looking back, the post-primary school landscape is not so much about the 1950s, as told now in the second decade of the twenty-first century, but more of what the 1950s story reveals about such aspects as the people, culture, and beliefs of the 1950s. Teaching in the 1950s and 1960s, and even into the 1970s, was mainly ‘chalk and talk’: the teacher talked about concepts while writing notes on the blackboard (with chalk) that the pupils copied. Will taught this way. Such a traditional style meant that the emphasis tended to be on rote learning of material. It also meant that pupils would be like “*automatons*” (SPT-2) or robots, seemingly incapable of thinking creatively or thinking for themselves, a situation that Ausubel (1958) noted applied to New Zealand post-primary pupils at this time. This chalk and talk teaching style was prevalent then, and indeed useful when the focus was on content recall for school examinations (SPT-2). McLaren (1974) suggests that the older post-primary school teachers in the 1950s could not get used to the new way of teaching (encouraged by the Thomas Report of 1944) that acknowledged individual differences in pupils and catered to their varied interests.

Although Will taught using the chalk and talk method, he did not have a background in the New Zealand 'system' and could come to teaching with a different approach; however, he may have been taught in the chalk and talk way himself.

Will did not rely solely on chalk and talk, using visual aids to help when he taught Social Studies at Onewhero DHS (FG-03). He also offered practical examples of commerce, such as writing invoices and cheques. In addition, he made study notes for his various subjects and allowed his pupils to use these to assist their learning. These notes were again in keeping with the emphasis on examinations in 1950s post-primary education. However, Will also used thriller novels to teach Basic English, an innovation that allowed for individual differences in his classes. In this way, Will was enforcing the tenets of the Thomas Report that encouraged teachers to work out their own ways to meet the needs of their pupils (Whitehead, 1972). It is not known if Will had read the Thomas Report or was aware of its existence, but, as G. D. Lee (2003) and Whitehead (1972) have noted, most teachers in the 1950s had not seen it, so it could be assumed that Will was not conversant with it. Despite this presumed lack of awareness of the Report, his teaching modelled some of its recommendations.

The 1950s was a time of burgeoning post-primary school enrolments due to the raised school leaving age and the post-World War II (WWII) baby boom. During the 1950s, the number of pupils almost doubled (see Figure 3.1), and the accompanying teacher shortage meant that some schools had no choice but to employ unqualified teachers such as Will. Ausubel (1958), Choi (2014), and Farber (1995) all mention the conservatism of teachers and the tendency to teach as one was taught. While Will did not explain the pedagogy that he was accustomed to in his own schooling in the 1920s, it would have been formal with an emphasis on academic subjects. Therefore, it is interesting that in his own teaching he appeared open to using new and innovative methods.

Post-primary schooling during the 1950s can be likened to Freire's (1972) educational notion of 'banking.' Some of Freire's attributes of the banking method include the teacher, who is all knowledgeable, teaching, and the 'ignorant' pupils being taught. The teachers also think for both themselves and their pupils, and do all the talking

while the pupils listen submissively. Hence, pupils are not encouraged to challenge or to question the information or the teacher—conditions prevalent in 1950s New Zealand post-primary school education.

Freire's (1972) banking method presumes that people are malleable. The more pupils accept 'deposits' in the form of information and facts then the more likely they are to become apathetic and not develop critical thinking skills, thus also tying in with Ausubel's (1958) claim about New Zealand post-primary school pupils in the 1950s. Pupils then tend to passively adapt to the world, their creativity also stifled. Implicit in the banking method is that people are merely spectators *of* life, not *in* it. Although there are similarities here between the banking model of education and the situation in 1950s New Zealand post-primary schools, these traits could also be true of 1950s society in general as it was a conservative time, perhaps in reaction to the suffering and uncertainty of WWII in the previous decade. When describing 1950s New Zealand, Palenski (1987) suggests that it was not only an "age of innocence, or perhaps ignorance" (p. 14) but also a decade of comfort, prosperity, and contentment.

Examinations were emphasised as both a teaching and an assessment tool in the 1950s. Whitehead (1972) notes that the Thomas Report supported democratic ideals and prioritised personal and social needs above economic principles. The Thomas Report's philosophy was in response to the economic depression of the 1930s as well as the upheaval of WWII, and these sentiments endured throughout the 1950s. While the Thomas Committee wanted teachers to acknowledge individual differences and offer new ways of teaching, it also recognised the need to offer a benchmark or examination/s that had the dual purpose of preparing some pupils for entry to university study as well as providing a 'leaving certificate' (School Certificate) for school leavers wanting to go into other forms of employment (Whitehead, 1972). The pupils themselves were also focussed on passing examinations due to the pressure from their teachers and parents. Possibly, the emphasis on School Certificate or examinations in general could be seen as a determinant of an equal or democratic education system. In an effort to cater to pupils' individual needs and encourage the democratic principles embedded in the Thomas Report, schools tended to fall back to traditional standards of achievement (Clark, 2005; Renwick, 1980). Renwick (1980)

adds that the supply and demand associated with equality in a democratic society means that people need to be:

... dealt with fairly, according to their deserts, [therefore] public examinations, rank orders of distribution, grades of pass, and sharp distinctions between 'pass' and 'fail' have come to be seen as the most equitable way of administering these public goods. (p. 44)

Hence, perpetuating the reliance on the School Certificate Examination was one way to enforce the democratic ideals of the Thomas Report.

Examinations were part of the New Zealand educational identity. Meikle (1961) notes it was common for pupils to take a subject only if it "leads to an external exam or a lucrative position" (p. 11). Parents often reinforced this idea in their children by questioning the utility of some subjects, such as French or History, thus emphasising the subjects' practical relevance in the pupils' lives. Will was fortunate in that his Commerce subjects had an obvious value to pupils and parents in that they involved skills, such as balancing ledgers, that were directly relevant to the labour market. Will also reinforced this practical value to his pupils, telling them that they would always need to budget or (in those days) write a cheque. Perhaps unwittingly, Will helped to continue this emphasis on examinations—to a degree—in his teaching, study notes, and through his textbooks.

I add the proviso 'to a degree' because the evidence suggests that Will did demonstrate democratic ideals in his teaching. Democracy suggests 'power to the people' or, in this case, 'power to the teachers' to present a curriculum that would meet the needs of their pupils. Will did this by using thriller texts to teach English and using stories about the tapping of rubber (as he himself experienced on the NEI plantations) when teaching Social Studies. Although he had no formal teacher training nor qualifications, Will still had a passion for his subjects as noted by his previous pupils. This enthusiasm for subjects resonates with Westaway's (1940, cited in Murdoch, 1944, p.3) comment that the "trained teacher has usually had knocked out of him the prejudice which he (very naturally) felt for his own special subject, whether mathematics, classics, or what not." As Kunter and Holzberger (2014) note, teacher enthusiasm (and passion for their subjects) is one of the main characteristics of

teachers who assist pupils to learn, so to have such ‘prejudice’ removed from a teacher would appear to challenge the very nature of teaching itself.

As a sequel to post-primary education in the 1950s, the present situation (in 2018) is not so different. Just as there were teacher shortages in the 1950s, so, too, there is a lack of teachers today. In a recent survey that included data from about one third of New Zealand post-primary schools, the Post Primary Teachers’ Association (PPTA, 2017) reported that more teaching jobs are being advertised yet applications for these jobs are dropping, with some positions attracting no applicants at all. In addition, non-specialist teachers are having to teach subjects for which they are not qualified, and classes have been cancelled or offered at a distance as qualified teachers could not be found. Of particular interest to Will’s story is the fact that, currently, some schools are actively recruiting for teachers overseas. The 2017 PPTA report does not mention if those whose first language is not English—like Will—are involved in this recruitment, which involves stringent rules for language proficiency (Education Council<sup>33</sup>, n.d.) that Will did not need to observe. Relative to other New Zealand positions, post-primary teachers’ pay is low, and around 45 per cent of post-primary teachers are over 50 years of age (Fyers & Kenny, 2017b). In addition, the PPTA has threatened strike action in 2018 if salaries do not increase, and teacher trainee numbers are in decline, adding to the current teacher shortage (Fyers & Kenny, 2017a). One Auckland post-primary school is planning to refurbish and convert a school building into ten flats for teachers to help with the housing crisis in the city (Te, 2018). These industrial situations echo what happened 60 years ago, and I am reminded that “there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9, Revised Standard Version).

Having discussed aspects of 1950s post-primary school education, the next section will discuss each of the four research questions that guided this study.

### **Key Life Experiences that Shaped Will’s Life Prior to Teaching**

Will had a variety of life experiences that would have influenced his decision to teach and his actual teaching. He was brought up in a colonial culture of wealth and social

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<sup>33</sup> The Education Council was renamed the ‘Teaching Council’ in September 2018.

position in the NEI, then lived in Europe for a time, faced internment, became a refugee, immigrated to New Zealand (living in Western Samoa for a time), and adapted to various social changes, such as decreased income and social status. Most of these experiences were adverse ones that served to strengthen his resolve to achieve. Schouten (1992) argues that the Dutch collective thinking was such that they desired to assimilate because of their hard work ethic, keenness, conservatism, and their desire to be 'perfect' immigrants. Peters (2012) adds that the Dutch also had a "fanaticism to succeed" (p. 55) while Willems (2003) mentions the resiliency of the Indonesian-born Dutch. Therefore, in keeping with his cultural and social background, as well as his own personal character traits of versatility and tenacity, Will faced the new challenges of teaching.

Will's background affected his personal sense of identity. According to sociocultural-historical theory, a person's past shapes their present identity. Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa, and Goldsmith (1995) explain:

When a person acts on the basis of previous experience, that person's past is present. It is not merely a stored memory called up in the present; the person's previous participation contributes to the event at hand by having prepared it." (p. 56)

Dewey (1916) emphasises the importance of a person's past and adds that people grow up in a social medium so that what they learn is set within "accepted meanings and values" (p. 344). Will was also brought up in a particular social and cultural environment—Dutch colonialism in the NEI—that influenced his learning and personality development, and WWII and internment also had a profound effect on Will. These two past experiences are shown to be the main factors to shape Will's identity and practice as a teacher.

### **Will's Dutch upbringing in the NEI**

Will was brought up in a Dutch colony at a time of Dutch supremacy (first decades of the twentieth century). He was also part of the generation of Indonesian Dutch who fondly remembered the times of *tempoe doeloe* and the idealisation of the colonial times of the early twentieth century (de Mul, 2010; Gouda, 1995; Knight, 2001; Peters, 2008). Nevertheless, Willems (2012) notes that it was "suspect" (p. 142) in the 1950s

and 1960s to look back at Dutch colonial history in the NEI with the Dutch preferring not to talk about it. Pattynama (2012) refers to this as “colonial amnesia” (p. 176). Will came from a privileged background in the NEI where he was part of a culture where the Dutch were in control in the hierarchical society (Gouda, 1995). When Will began teaching in the 1950s, however, he was not afraid to talk about his colonial past to his pupils. This willingness may have been because he had a personal need to inform them of his lost homeland or because he felt that the next generation of New Zealanders needed to be aware of the lifestyles of different people. Whatever his reasoning, Will continued to share his past experiences with his pupils and colleagues. Despite Schouten’s (1992) comment that New Zealanders were suspicious of immigrants in the 1950s, Will was proactive in accentuating his different experiences. In turn, this focus on his different upbringing may have further confirmed his perception that others always thought of him as a foreigner.

Although, officially, Will was part of the elite in the NEI, he knew times of poverty. Usually, parents or family members during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries paid for students to attend university but, as Will’s father was not able to do this in 1924, Will had to ‘borrow’ money from relatives who later expected to be paid back. When Will married in 1941, he was not a wealthy man, despite having three servants. He was then interned as a prisoner and had to endure physical, mental, and emotional hardships. When he was interned, Will also had to bow and pay homage to the Japanese—an act that J. G. Taylor (2009) states was sometimes expected of Indonesian servants to the Dutch. Therefore, Will was no longer part of the privileged class and was forced to adjust to a lower social standing as well as facing racial discrimination: his being white meant he was interned in the NEI during WWII.

Having lost most of his possessions during WWII, he was not a wealthy man when he arrived in New Zealand either. He had also lost his homeland (the NEI), thus stripping Will of his ethnic and cultural identity. In addition, Will’s work as an audit clerk at the Education Department in Auckland in 1956 would have been a step down socially. Therefore, by the time Will went teaching in 1958, he might have regarded the professional role as more in keeping with his background and status, an added impetus for him to succeed.

When Will and his family arrived in New Zealand, they were labelled ‘displaced persons’ or refugees, having had no choice but to escape the violence and uncertainty of Indonesia (Beaglehole, 1988, 2013; Bonisch-Brednich, 2002). Interestingly, Beaglehole (2013) refers to Māori as being refugees in that, prior to colonisation, they were a sovereign people with a right to the land, whereas after colonisation, they were powerless and displaced. If this is so, the same could be said of the Indonesian people under the Dutch. Later, after the Republic was proclaimed, Will’s refugee label meant both the Dutch and the Indonesians each sought to dominate the other. Will’s teaching stories did not allude to such dominations, possibly because he had some personal misgivings about Dutch control in the NEI, he did not harbour any resentment toward the Indonesian people, or because he chose to remain apolitical.

### **Will’s experience of internment**

Being an innocent prisoner during WWII also shaped Will—the teacher. Peters (2010) notes that the Dutch immigrants to Australia were expected to forget their past and wartime experiences, and this could be true of New Zealand as well, particularly in regard to assimilation. New Zealanders were not so familiar with Asian ways in the 1950s, and few had experienced Japanese concentration camps. Therefore, such disinterest or ignorance of his past and his war experiences, or even himself as a person, could have been isolating for Will. There is no record of Will having shared his internment and NEI experiences with work colleagues until he went teaching, thus enforcing this expectation that he forget or suppress his memories of his wartime experiences.

Three consequences of Will’s internment experience are evident. The first is Will’s propensity to worry, perhaps triggered by fear and anxiety, that is part of what Bramsen (1995) and Potts (1994) suggest is one of the effects of concentration camp internment. Will mentions in his memoir the trauma of: being imprisoned wrongfully; the fate of loved ones who were also interned—especially his wife and son; the uncertainty and fear that internment and the War would never end; and how long his “*animal existence*” (Memoir, p. 78) would continue. He also pondered what would happen after the war: if his family would still be alive and what his and his country’s

future would be. Such anxiety-causing issues would have affected Will's personality and self-confidence, thereby showing his determination and resilience, and, possibly, Dutch fortitude in later beginning a new life in an English-speaking country and taking on a career of teaching at a relatively late age in life.

A second effect that internment had on Will's role as a teacher was his preoccupation with the past, exemplified in his constant stories about this traumatic occurrence that he relayed to his pupils and others who would listen. I can recall him telling these stories in our home when people came to visit and, although people seemed genuinely interested, he would talk for hours at a time. When Will retired from teaching at the end of 1976, 31 years after the end of WWII, he continued to relate stories of his camp experiences, thus exemplifying the profound effect internment had on him. Further, Will's New Zealand teaching colleagues, while possibly knowing about some of the WWII Japanese atrocities, would have been removed from them and perhaps shown little interest or empathy for what he endured, adding to the third effect of internment on Will—his feelings of alienation.

The evidence points to Will sometimes feeling that he did not belong. This was seen by staff comments about his keeping to himself in the staffroom and not having any close friends on staff. When he arrived in each of his five schools, feelings of loneliness or disconnection may have reinforced his feelings of not belonging, as well as encouraging his resolve to share his personal stories with others, particularly his pupils. In addition, he often referred to himself as a 'bloody foreigner,' but it is not made clear if anyone called him that or whether he self-labelled. Being in a new culture with a different language would no doubt have aided this alienation. In 1950s New Zealand, people were also not so open to people from other countries, ethnicities, or language (Schouten, 1992).

However, Will was part of the large number of Dutch people who immigrated to New Zealand in the 1950s (Schouten, 1992; Schubert-MacArthur, 2014; Thomson, 1970). There were even a number of Dutch people living in Onewhero at the time Will was there (ONS-1). Therefore, New Zealanders would have become accustomed to having Dutch people in their communities. In addition, one Waiuku College pupil mentioned

that his father had assisted two Dutch workers to immigrate to New Zealand to work on his farms so was familiar with Dutch people (WAS-1) and another stated that the Dutch had been “*wonderful people for this country*” (WAS-3). In Paeroa, the previous principal noted:

We had quite a number of immigrants. And ... they just were accepted as they were, particularly in a small community like Paeroa where, you know, all sorts came and went. (PAP-1)

It was unusual in New Zealand in the 1960s to have a Dutch person as a teacher (WAS-3), yet a later teacher at Waiuku College in the 1960s was also Dutch. Therefore, perhaps Will’s sense of being a stranger in a foreign land was either unfounded or due to his personality.

Will may also have been particularly sensitive to his differences as an immigrant. Alternatively, differences in communication, innuendo, and humour may have been factors as to why Will felt different. Such thoughts about being an ‘outsider’ in New Zealand society may also have influenced Will’s decisions to resign from Waiuku College over the disagreements regarding his remuneration for his Treasurer to the Board of Governor’s role and lack of support to secure a replacement for the textbook scheme, and from Paeroa College for missing out on a staff house.

When discussing Holocaust survivors, Langer (1991) suggests that their stories were not coherent or that their lives, in general, made no sense, perhaps an outcome of the dehumanising existence of the camps. Will’s memoir reads as a collection of disjointed parts held together by a semblance of chronology, thus making it difficult to locate particular themes. He often spoke this way as well, with one story leading on to several others that were not always directly applicable. It is possible that Will constructed his wartime experiences this way too: aspects were relayed to listeners to entertain, inform, or even to explain, but they were in no particular order, and the audience would not always be aware of the sequence of events or even the context and background in order to ask questions. Relaying his internment stories to his pupils may have been a way for Will to make sense of his own disturbing experiences.

After WWII, people, generally, were less interested in the Japanese internment camps as they were about the European camps (Emery, 2010; Peters, 2008). Even the Netherlands people were more concerned about rebuilding their own country after German occupation than to care very much about the NEI and, later, its civil war (Locher-Scholten, 2003). Few Japanese records have survived (most having been destroyed), and there are no geographical markers or monuments to show where the camps were (Emery, 2010). Although Willems (2003) notes that some from the NEI had anti-Japanese sentiments, Will actually admired the Japanese (FG-02), regarding the Korean guards to be more sadistic (Korea was under Japanese rule from 1910–1945). Will would also have been aware of the lack of remembrance or acknowledgement of what he and other NEI Dutch had endured. He may have harboured resentment for this lack of concern by other nations and possibly felt that it was his responsibility to inform others—in this case, his own and other pupils—about what happened.

A further effect of Will's internment would have been his personal anguish regarding his family. Will had to leave his wife of just over one year (my Mother, Loes) and their infant son, just five weeks old, not knowing when or if he would see them again (Memoir, p. 16). Will talks about saying goodbye to his son and what a "*messy one it is—on my part*" (Memoir, p. 16). They were not reunited until his son was over three years old. Will later risked punishment (or worse) and latrine duties—cleaning out pig sties and human waste by hand—to get to see and touch Loes and their son (see Vignette 2, Chapter 5), his "*dearest possessions on earth*" (Memoir, p. 65). He considered the dangers involved to be worthwhile and stated that by "*...shutting my eyes at night I can see and hear them over and over again*" (Memoir, p. 65). These worries and concerns about his loved ones would have affected Will's emotional state, particularly not knowing when or if the War would end and whether they could be reunited. It is possible that these extreme and sustained emotions and trauma served to shape his personal relationships, both with his teaching colleagues and pupils.

In contrast, Will did not seem to be concerned about his own son's lingering memories and repercussions of internment (FG-01), particularly of crying children after the war. This lack of empathy may have been because Will thought that his son had been too young to remember, but Loes explained that their son would mimic the guards and

shout instructions in Japanese and Korean, that he had no concept of what a ‘father’ was, and that he thought that all men marched (FG-01). Camp children admired the Japanese and Korean camp guards, who seemed to teach them right from wrong (Potts, 1994). As Will was not reunited with his son until he was over three years old, bonding difficulties may explain this situation. In addition, Will speaks of his own father in his memoir in a detached manner, suggesting he did not have a close paternal bond growing up either.

Will did not have close professional relationships with his pupils either (SPS-2), but this would have been the norm at the time Will began teaching. These relational issues could be personality traits of Will’s or they could relate to Matussek’s (1975) comment that Nazi concentration camp internees could suffer worsening interpersonal relationships the longer they were imprisoned. Hence, the effects of over three years of internment on Will were not only physical but also social and emotional. As a survivor of the camps, Will refused to remain a victim and sought to build a new life with his family in a new country (Eger, 2017) and to enter a new (teaching) profession.

### **Will’s Motivation to become a Teacher**

Although five reasons were found to shape Will’s motivation to teach (personal, interpersonal, familial, economic, and historic), his main motivation was shown to be economic—to receive a greater income to support his growing family. People enter the teaching profession for many different reasons. Heinz’s (2015) meta-analysis of student teachers’ motivation to teach examined data from 23 countries, including those from Europe such as the Netherlands, the Americas, and Asia, although New Zealand was not included in the analysis. Heinz noted that there were extrinsic motivations, such as pay and job security; altruistic reasons, such as wanting to contribute to society; and intrinsic motivations, such as job satisfaction and creativity. Heinz further suggests that other factors, such as families’ and others’ influence, as well as sociocultural issues, may also sway decisions to become a teacher.

The extrinsic motivation of money strongly motivated Will in his choice to become a teacher. It is interesting to note that the average national wage (as opposed to salary) in New Zealand in 1958 was £750 (Vosslamber, 2012). Will earned over £200 more

than this, even as an initial teacher. However, by this stage, Will was 51 years old and at a stage when many wish to enjoy more luxuries in life. This was not true for Will due to a number of factors, including a later-in-life marriage (Will was 34 when he married in 1941), internment, and having to start again financially in a new English-speaking country. Added to this, he was aware that most civil servants in the NEI retired between the ages of 40–50 years (Imhoff & Beets, 2004), a time when Will was recovering from internment, shifting country, seeking new career choices, and developing some form of financial stability.

Again adopting a sociocultural–historical perspective, Will’s decision to teach was shaped by several interpersonal foci. Extrinsically, his previous experience of tutoring in the NEI in the 1930s, although prompted by money, did not hamper his later decision to teach in New Zealand post-primary schools. That he also tutored another pupil from a neighbouring school while he was in Waiuku further revealed his desire to help others (altruism), as did his lunchtime sessions teaching other non-Commercial pupils how to do practical commercial transactions, such as writing cheques. Will was also influenced by the suggestion from his boss at the Education Department that he consider post-primary teaching as a career, thus showing the power of others to impact his decision to teach.

Further sociocultural reasons, related to Heinz’s (2015) meta-analysis, include Will coming from a family of teachers and being the main breadwinner—the norm in the 1950s was for the father to earn the money to support his family. However, I would argue that teachers need to have some degree of intrinsic motivation to teach that transcends other extrinsic rewards and formal teacher training. Although Will initially came to teaching because of the money, his intrinsic desire to help young people was a key determinant in his decision to teach.

Using a cultural or institutional lens (Rogoff, 1996), Will had Dutch cultural characteristics that also partly shaped his motivation to teach. He valued hard work and was careful with money as the Dutch are renowned for (Comello, 2012; Donaghey & Papoutsaki, 2008; Peters, 2012; Schouten, 1992; Schubert-McArthur, 2014). He was also honest and direct and unafraid to say what he thought (Schouten, 1992). Such

characteristics suggest a cultural influence that shaped his personality. However, Will had to work hard at his new role as a teacher because of the high expectations of the role. He also had to choose a new career when he came to New Zealand—as did most Dutch immigrants to New Zealand (Pegge, 2006)—and he was driven to be successful at it as he began teaching much later in life. These cultural values saw his being conscientious, with a need to prove himself as a teacher and as a contributing immigrant in his new land. Although Peters (2012) and Schouten (1992) note the Dutch desire to succeed, this back-grounded issue in Will’s story needs to be set alongside the fore-grounded issue of Will himself: he knew he had to succeed in his teaching role and in his settlement in New Zealand as there was no other career or country to turn to.

Despite Will’s trouble finding an accountancy job in New Zealand after the family’s return in 1956, unemployment was relatively unknown in New Zealand after WWII (Bergstrom, 1958). This is because the 1950s was a time of economic buoyancy, full employment, and a burgeoning wool and dairy product trade (Marshall, 1989), thus suggesting that employers may have been reluctant to employ an immigrant, or that Will did not portray himself favourably during his employment interviews. Whatever the reason for Will finding it difficult to find a job in the mid-1950s, he was realistic enough to know that this teaching opportunity could be the ‘miracle’ he describes it to be. Job security would also have been prominent in Will’s mind, so, with the shortage of teachers in post-primary schools in the 1950s, job tenure was better assured. I also believe that teaching gave Will his *raison d’être*—or purpose—in later life. Teaching gave him a status, an identity, a profession, and a career, and allowed him to use his skills and abilities.

It is important not only to understand what motivated Will to *begin* post-primary teaching but also what motivated him to *stay* in teaching. Using a sociocultural perspective, motivation comes from within the person, but it is also set against the interpersonal backdrop of collegial interactions as well as the wider cultural sphere of schools, places, and the profession itself (Alexander, Grossnickle, & List, 2014). One key aspect of motivation is self-efficacy, which Bandura (1977) describes as “the conviction that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the

outcomes” (p. 193). In other words, self-efficacy is a person’s self-belief in their ability to succeed in the future. Zimmerman (2000) notes that self-efficacy has more to do with successful performance than personal capabilities, and looks to individual mastery as a fundamental source of efficacy belief as opposed to comparison with how others are doing. Teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to take risks in their teaching, believe they can help pupils to succeed, and persist in helping pupils with learning problems (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008).

Will was not so sure about his abilities when he began teaching in 1958; however, he did have enough self-belief to begin teaching in the first place and to agree to teach unfamiliar subjects, such as Basic English and Arithmetic, which were not that familiar to him, thus showing his willingness to take on challenges. As noted in Onewhero, Will wanted his pupils to do well and personally approached parents to allow their children to stay on at school. Will’s principal was not so sure that Will could assist pupils who were struggling academically, and this may have been due to his lack of pedagogical theory because he had not had any teacher education or qualifications. Interestingly, Klassen, Durksen, and Tze (2014) believe that teachers’ self-efficacy peaks after about 23 years of teaching and, as Will only taught for 19 years, it could be argued that his self-efficacy was still on the rise when he retired, enhanced through his successes in textbook writing and examination passes of his pupils.

However, when Will retired from teaching, he was 70 years old. He was tired and found behavioural management more challenging. In a letter to a colleague in 1976, Will mentioned he was feeling his years: *“the generation gap between myself and the youngsters—not to mention my colleagues—is growing year by year”* (Potter, 1976b). In contrast, Palmer (2007) suggests that teachers age exponentially so that mid-life for a teacher could be in their late 20s. Will began to prove his teaching ability through his pupils’ examination results, colleagues’ observations, Inspectors’ grading visits, and, later, promotion to Head of Department positions. These mastery experiences would have served to raise his self-efficacy beliefs, as would the publication of his textbooks. In addition, Will has been described as being *“his own person”* (SPT-4), a *“gentleman”* (SPS-2), and being comfortable in himself (SPT-2). He knew who he was, where he wanted to be, and what he wanted to achieve. This assurance of his persona is in

keeping with Erikson's (1980/1994) integrity stage when a person has adapted "...to the triumphs and disappointments of being ... [and is also] the originator of others and the generator of things and ideas" (p. 104).

Another aspect of Will's motivation to stay teaching is associated with goal setting. Butler (2014) believes that goal setting not only involves establishing and achieving aims in teaching but also in proactively seeking help when needed, such as through workshops or through talking with and learning from colleagues. There is no real evidence that Will conferred with other teachers for guidance and support, although he may have observed their teaching approaches. He did, however, attend Refresher Courses run through the (now) New Zealand Commerce and Economics Teachers' Association (NZCETA) that would have helped his content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge.

A further motivation to remain in teaching for Will was his resilience and stamina. Kobasa (1979) believes that people who are resilient have three personal characteristics: control over things in their lives; commitment to a belief system and a sense of purpose in their lives; and change being seen as a challenge, not a threat. Those who have been interned can either become fatalistic and even die, or, in the case of Will, they could adapt through discipline and self-control (Frankl, 1959/2006; Matussek, 1975). Such grounding for three years while enduring lack of food, sickness, and beatings in the camps would have built up Will's stamina, and his ability to persevere and his want to be in control. A side effect of this, however, is that he may have felt so much in control that he was unable to develop friendships with his colleagues or develop closer ties with his pupils.

In terms of Kobasa's (1979) reference to a belief system, Will had a faith, and found comfort from prayer and knowing the existence of God in the camps. Will talks of his relationship with God, and he prayed and continued to "*trust in a Higher Being*" (Memoir, p. 78). Will attended (Catholic) Mass for most of his life. He was also committed to the idea of being reunited with his wife and son, thus affirming a sense of purpose in his life. Later, he was intent on developing his teaching and writing careers.

Finally, Will accepted change in his life, further exemplifying resiliency (Kobasa, 1979). He endured many changes—in his life, his country, his nationality, his freedom, and his careers. Will showed the resiliency of the NEI Dutch (Willems, 2003), and, compared with the uncertainty of the previous years, changing countries (and other changes) may not have been such a big step for him (Hofstede, 1964; Schubert-MacArthur, 2014). Hence, Will learnt to cope with change and demonstrated post-traumatic growth where positive outcomes can come from traumatic experiences, such as internment and being a refugee (Tedeschi & Colhoun, 2004). Any such change is also based on motivation and “bias for action” (Fullan, 2007, p. 41). Will went teaching to improve his situation, and this action eventually led to his belief in the value of teaching as a transformational activity and, possibly, to a greater belief in himself.

Finally, money also motivated Will to stay in teaching. One of the PPTA’s concerns in the 1950s was the perception that teachers’ salaries were low (Grant, 2003; Middleton & May, 1997), and, even in the 1960s, most teachers would take a second job during the summer holidays to supplement their income (SPT-3). However, Will began teaching in the 1950s because he expected the salary to be higher than what he was getting at the time as a clerk. Over the years, his income increased, particularly from his textbooks.

### **Will’s Teaching Approaches**

Will used a number of different management and teaching approaches. However, he mainly used the ‘chalk and talk’ method of teaching that was prevalent at the time. As St. George and Sewell (2014) attest, teaching in the 1950s and 1960s involved rote learning and memorisation, reflecting behavioural and transmission theories of learning. As mentioned earlier, although these methods allowed pupils to pass examinations, they did not allow them to challenge ideas, to discuss the content of learning, or to gain valuable experiences from problem solving. However, with the emphasis on examinations at the time Will began teaching, transmission methods would have been “*fit for purpose*” (SPT-2).

Nonetheless, Will was also able to teach in other more enlightened ways. For instance, he gave practical examples to his pupils, in keeping with Jones, Palinscar, Ogle, and

Carr's (1987) dictum about teachers modelling behaviour and learning in the class. These examples would also have helped his pupils' retention of content (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008), a necessary aspect of teaching during the 1950s and for some time thereafter for examination recall. It is also possible that Will's own failures—not passing the high school leaving certificate the first time, nor gaining his degree—gave him a greater understanding of and empathy for his pupils' learning and how they learn, partly explaining his efforts to prepare his pupils to pass their examinations.

Although Will also linked his teaching to the assessments used at the time (Jones, Palinscar, Ogle & Carr, 1987)—examinations—his feedback was mainly summative in the form of grades and marks, a common practice at the time as formative assessment with more constructive feedback only came about in the late 1960s (for example, see Scriven, 1967). However, he also linked his pupils' prior learning to the current teaching by revising the work from the day(s) before. This repetition and revision echoes one of Jones et al.'s assumptions about how pupils learn: Will's recursive reminders allowed pupils to “think back” (Jones et al., 1987, p. 50) so as to build or scaffold their new learning. This concept is also encouraged in post-primary school pupils today and is termed ‘alignment’ where new ideas are built on previous knowledge in an attempt to reinforce the importance of relevance and connections (Ministry of Education, 2017).

Will also made the subject interesting by using humour and stories. He also made the material he taught relevant to his pupils (Ministry of Education, 2017), and he used visual aids to enhance pupils' interest and their motivation to learn (Ministry of Education, 2017; Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). However, Will's main teaching approach seen in this analysis was his use of storytelling.

### **Will's storytelling**

Will began using stories in his teaching of Social Studies at Onewhero DHS (his first teaching position), and the success of these meant he continued to use them as a teaching method. However, his storytelling mainly involved stories about his internment experiences and about life in the NEI, rather than as a means to develop

understanding of the Commerce curriculum. Hence, his focus on war stories could be a reactionary measure in that he might have felt that younger people—who may not have had such knowledge or experiences themselves—should learn about the past. Will may have wanted to introduce his pupils to real life stories so that they would continue to be engaged when he taught them his Commerce subjects, or to simply share a part of himself as a person, thus showing his honesty and lack of pretence. Alternatively, Will may have resorted to telling stories because, as McCourt and Rice (1981) observe, “stories kept the kids quiet and in their seats” (p. 7). Whatever Will’s motivation, his stories were popular.

For his pupils, Will’s stories were exciting and “*better than a Boys’ Own Manual*” (SPS-1) as, at that age, they “*had never experienced anything*” (WAS-1). This latter pupil also commented that people at that time seldom spoke about their experiences of WWII. Two recent (2018) informal conversations with other Dutch people whose parents had been interned by the Japanese in the NEI revealed that each of their parents had only ever spoken once about their experiences. This reticence to talk about wartime experiences is consistent with Peters’ (2010) caution about immigrants being encouraged to forget the past but also ties in with her comments that people did not know who they could talk to or who would be interested. In sharing with his pupils, Will had a willing or ‘captive’ audience (they were interested, but would also not have to do schoolwork) and a sanctioned outlet (the formal classroom and learning).

Will’s stories could also have been a cathartic experience for him, albeit an emotional one, when he was telling some stories. Peters (2008) states that stories of those who survived internment in the Japanese concentration camps in Asia need to be shared and asks, “Why had these stories never been told?” (p. 9). She explains that some Japanese concentration camp survivors had been recommended to talk to someone about their sufferings, but they questioned who they would go to who could understand their colonial life, and who would care. Will would also have wondered who in New Zealand could identify with his background and also with having been interned in Asia. Therefore, as he took opportunities to share with his pupils, he could alleviate some of his own trauma and try to understand his senseless captivity.

## **Will's Contribution to Commerce Teaching in New Zealand**

While Will contributed to education at the various schools he taught by assisting in such areas as sports coaching and setting up textbook and stationery schemes, his main contribution was to Commerce teaching through the publication of his textbooks. Commercial Practice was a new subject that was introduced as a consequence of the Thomas Report's recommendations. J. Horrocks (1947) notes that there were no adequate Commercial Practice textbooks for teachers and pupils in New Zealand at that time. He adds that although overseas textbooks were available, they did not address the conditions that were pertinent to New Zealand. Therefore, not only was a whole new Commercial Practice curriculum needed but so, too, were applicable textbooks, as well as trained teachers to implement the subject in New Zealand's post-primary schools.

It was not usual for teachers to write textbooks for their subjects in the 1950s and 1960s, but Will did this and was able to have a parallel career as an author and supplement his teaching salary. His textbooks came about because he usually wrote model answers for questions in the Commerce textbooks he used. His first book, published in 1968, was a set of model answers for the exercises in a textbook by Wheeler and Smythe called *Introduction to Accounting* that was suitable for sixth form pupils. In the preface of the book, the authors state that these questions and exercises were of an "examination standard" (Wheeler & Smythe, 1967, p. 5), thus emphasising the importance of examinations even in the 1960s. This then led on to ten further publications by Will, the last one being released in 1979 after his retirement from teaching. Will's last publication was a full set of solutions for the third (revised) edition of *Introduction to Accounting*, and, in the Preface, the authors note Will's name and address and that a full set of solutions to accompany the book could be obtained from Will directly, thus advertising Will's book as well as endorsing its usefulness (Wheeler & Smythe, 1978). Will had a talent for writing, and also the motivation and hard work ethic to collate such publications in his spare time.

The usefulness of Will's books reached beyond the post-primary school. In a private letter to a teacher, dated 2 October, 1979, Will noted that his textbook *UE Accounting:*

*Theory and Practice*, published in 1974, was still in use and often favoured by those taking (adult education) evening classes when students could work at their own pace without tutor assistance (Potter, 1979). Another letter in the family archives is from a grateful third form pupil, written in 1974, thanking Will for his books that helped him prepare for his School Certificate Examination as he came to Commercial Practice later than his classmates (Harrison, 1974). Thus, Will's books could be used for independent study as well.

Will's reputation as an author continued beyond his teaching career and was such that in 1985 Whitcoulls Publishers (previously Whitcombs and Tombs; Whitcoulls, n.d.) wrote to Will, asking that he write a 'solutions manual' for the next edition of Wheeler and Smyth's book, *Introduction to Accounting*, proposed to be published in 1986 (Izzard, 1985). However, by then, Will was 79 years old, and he decided against the idea. Having retired nine years earlier, he might have felt out of touch with accounting and teaching practice by then. Nevertheless, he still had an established reputation as an author of post-primary school Commerce textbooks.

Will self-published his textbooks, mainly because he was encouraged to do so by Messrs. Wheeler and Smythe. In the 1940s and 1950s, there were two main non-fiction publishers in New Zealand: A. H. and A. W. Reed, and Whitcombe and Tombs (Caffin, 2014). Therefore, there was not always the choice of publisher or the ability to attract the publishers' attention when writing textbooks. Will continued to self-publish all eleven of his titles (through a local New Plymouth printing company) and sorted the orders and payments himself, thus he was not charged royalties by the publishing companies and profited more from the sales of his books. Similarly, Jack Horrocks, who wrote the main Commercial Practice textbook of the 1940s and 1950s, *Commercial Practice in New Zealand*, also self-published his textbooks and had them printed by his brother, who worked at a printing company (R. Horrocks, personal communication, July 12, 2017).

Establishing a curriculum is one thing but providing the resources for its content is quite another. Both J. Horrocks and Will understood the need for more material for pupils in regard to post-primary Commerce subjects and set about compiling it. R.

Horrocks (1999) notes that subject changes tend to mainly revolve around the academic aspects of subject content whereas other issues, such as textbooks, also need to be developed but are often underestimated or overlooked. The development of these texts and resources also evolves over time. In addition, overseas textbooks, particularly Commerce ones, were not entirely relevant to the New Zealand context (J. Horrocks, 1947). For example, in the United States, 'Commercial Practice' was referred to as 'Business Education' and dealt mainly with Shorthand, Typing, and Bookkeeping (Forkner, 1947). In contrast, in his books, Will could use dollar amounts that correlated to New Zealand conditions and also included examples that related to New Zealand terms, such as "vans" (Potter, 1973, p. 48), and geographical locations, such as "Hamilton" (Potter, 1973, p. 53). The material, therefore, held more relevance to the pupils and supported their conceptual understanding.

Another interesting aspect of Will's contribution to Commerce teaching was his motivation to write textbooks. Will could see a better way of resourcing the curriculum, so he put together his collection of material in book form. Indeed, what started as Will's personal notes for teaching and model answers, both for himself and his pupils, evolved into the series of textbooks. Will can also be commended for taking the initiative to send suggestions to Jack Horrocks in 1958 about School Certificate items that he thought were missing from the author's books. Will's suggestions were included in the author's next edition. A new edition of a text suggests that improvements and/or additions have been made and that the book has not just been reprinted. In the Preface to the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of *Commercial Practice in New Zealand*, J. Horrocks (1960) acknowledges that "an attempt has been made to provide answers for some of those School Certificate questions not previously covered" (p. ii), although Will's (or anyone else's) name is not mentioned. Therefore, while Will saw an opportunity, he also was prepared to do the hard work and send suggestions to the authors, possibly as a way of helping them rather than of promoting himself as an author.

Indirectly, Will's textbooks affected and assisted the teachers in his department. One from Spotswood College noted that "*there wasn't a lot of lesson preparation*" (SPT-4). She mentioned that Will's notes and later textbooks meant that Will's hard work saved

his staff work and time as they could use his notes as the basis for their lessons. She commented that she would organise what she would do, when, and how in her classes, but the underlying lesson content had already been sorted by Will. For a teacher, particularly one relatively new to teaching, these resources would have been very helpful. After close examination of the Potter family archives, there is no evidence of Will's own lesson planning so, presumably, he relied on his own notes and, later, his textbooks.

Will also contributed to Commerce teaching by helping to build the reputation of Commerce subjects, especially in the Commerce Department at Spotswood College. At that time (the 1960s), Commerce subjects were not highly regarded. Although Will helped to raise the reputation of Commerce subjects at Spotswood, Commerce studies at tertiary level were becoming more popular around this time; for example, Massey University began teaching business courses in 1972 (Massey University, 2017a). This growing interest in a business career helped post-primary school pupils to make strategic decisions to study Commerce subjects to learn the business of business. Will was not a specific part of this shift but, rather, assisted in his own way at Spotswood College to ensure that the Department could keep up with the demands and standards required.

Will also contributed to Commerce teaching through offering practical skills to pupils that they could draw on in later life, including keeping cashbooks. One pupil even stated that Will inspired him to want to be an Accountant and noted the "*defining*" role that Will played in this person's career choice and ultimate success in the New Zealand business world (SPS-2). While such observations are complimentary to Will and his teaching ability, other Commerce teachers then (and now) would have similarly inspired their pupils.

These contributions to Commerce teaching came at a cost to his family. Some of his family members felt neglected, despite his love for them. Life at home revolved around Will and his teaching/writing commitments (FG-02). One family member even queried if Will felt comfortable being a father and described him as "*egocentric*" and "*self-absorbed*" (FG-01). Nevertheless, Will was concerned about the effect his role as a

teacher might have on his children. At Onewhero, his son was marked down in English by another teacher in the school examinations yet got the top mark for Onewhero in School Certificate, leaving Will to wonder about possible discrimination due to him being his son. This same son was not considered for a Prefect role either, despite having obvious leadership qualities, playing in the First XV rugby team, and being adept at tennis (FG-03; Memoir, p. 230). Will was new to teaching and to the New Zealand education system and had to adjust to the protocol of being the teacher–parent of a pupil at the school as well as negotiating the New Zealand cultural expectations, such as the importance of sport and other values.

Having discussed the four research questions, Will’s lack of teaching qualifications is also worthy of discussion as he often talked about his lack of credentials. Although it is important to have certified teachers who are familiar with pedagogical theory and practice—the PPTA were very concerned about credentials, even in the 1950s—formal qualifications do not always guarantee effective teaching.

### **Lack of qualifications**

Qualifications do not necessarily make a ‘good’ teacher. Alcorn (2013) asks what a skilled New Zealand post-primary school teacher looks like and wonders about defining “who is ‘fit to be a teacher’” (p. 45). In encouraging the need for trained teachers, Westaway (1940, as cited in Murdoch, 1944) suggests removing the ‘prejudice’ teachers may have for their own subject. However, such enthusiasm is infectious and may instil a desire to learn on the part of the pupils. Furthermore, if this prejudice is removed, the question then becomes, what might replace it? Westaway proceeds to argue that trained teachers understand that education is more than just teaching—that education is significant in terms of learning about life in general. Will demonstrated that he had the commercial knowledge and the ability to pass on that knowledge to his pupils, but he also shared with them about war and life in another culture, aspects of learning that endorse Westaway’s concept of education being more than subject facts. Consistent with this notion of being aware of teaching pedagogy—even if Will was not able to articulate it—was what a previous principal claimed: not all those who have degrees can teach. In the data collected for this thesis, comment was

made regarding how enthusiastic Will was for his subject and how he kept the pupils engaged. Often, those who are passionate about their pupils make the best teachers, not those with the highest qualifications (O'Sullivan, 2008). Although I do not believe Will was passionate about his pupils when he began teaching, he certainly was passionate about his subject. Despite not having a degree or a teaching qualification, Will was still able to teach or, more importantly, help his pupils to learn.

As noted in Chapter 3, Campbell (1951) suggested a number of dispositions that were highly sought after in teachers of the day, and each of these would apply to Will. He had integrity, and was honest and forthright in his teaching and dealings with his colleagues and pupils; such honesty was not only part of his Dutch cultural heritage but also of him as a person. Emotional poise suggests that emotion can be an endearing quality of teachers as, for example, Will exemplified in Vignette 2 (Chapter 5), the narrator of which remembered over 50 years later. Will also had a colourful personality, and teachers and pupils both talked of Will being a 'legend,' and that it was almost a "*rite of passage*" (SPT-4) to be taught by Will at Spotswood College. He was a fair teacher and also had energy as exemplified in his testimonial from his Waiuku College principal (Edwards, 1963—see Appendix H, 5). Will was an intelligent man as noted by his former principal, and he used his initiative, such as in making notes for himself and his pupils, setting up the textbook and stationery schemes, and also making the move to write textbooks. Will also had a sense of humour. Campbell cautioned that such personality characteristics were even more important than academic qualifications and subject knowledge. Teachers were expected to be upstanding citizens who could relate to people. Those I interviewed all spoke fondly of Will and his teaching—and his stories. In further elaboration of Campbell's description, Will also liked pupils to have good manners, and he, himself, had a good speaking voice, despite his accent. Therefore, Will fitted Campbell's criteria for a 1950s teacher, even if he did not have a degree or teaching qualification.

Despite Will's lack of teaching credentials, standards and qualifications are important. Looking back, it can be seen that Will was able to teach and teach well, but this may not be true of all who come to teaching without qualifications. In addition, if non-qualified people are able to enter the profession, this can belittle the qualifications of

those who study hard to have university diplomas and/or degrees. The PPTA also continually sought to enforce qualifications and teacher training (Edwards, 1960; Kapiti College Branch, 1960), probably as a way to maintain the professional status of teachers as well as to protect learners.

Although Will's beginning teacher situation in the 1950s cannot fairly be compared with today's teacher standards, it is interesting to note the different emphases. According to the Education Council (2017), there are six teacher standards used to appraise high-quality teacher practice. The first involves understanding and upholding the tenets of the Treaty of Waitangi. Interestingly, I recall Will having a copy of the Treaty (in English) in the 1960s that he had sourced, showing his interest in things Māori and his new homeland. The second standard is professional learning, which Will undertook in his own way, such as reading (and writing) the textbooks of the day and attending annual Refresher Courses. The third standard is maintaining professional relationships with colleagues, pupils, and parents—again, these are relationships Will modelled, despite not having too many close friends on staff. Will developed a learning-focused culture—the fourth standard—by noting the relevance of the concepts he taught as well as scaffolding pupils' learning through stories and visual aids, although his chalk and talk teaching methods may not have encouraged learner risk-taking, creativity, collaboration, and robust discussion and problem solving. Will may not have exemplified the fifth standard of design for learning with its emphasis on the Treaty of Waitangi and differentiating for individual learner characteristics, but he did use innovative texts to teach Basic English and did not enforce homework on his Onewhero pupils who had to work on the family farms, suggesting that he was aware of the need to treat pupils as individuals and recognise their differences. The sixth standard—teaching—encourages teachers to help pupils to learn, taking into consideration the specific needs of diverse learners, using a variety of teaching strategies to enhance learning, making connections to prior learning, and giving pupils feedback. Will tried to recognise individual differences, including culture, and taught for conceptual understanding, but his feedback was mainly summative—typical at the time—although he may have given more comprehensive verbal feedback in class. While the conditions of 'then' (the 1950s) cannot be related to 'now' (2018), such

comparisons help to highlight that some aspects of teaching pedagogy have not changed and that Will was using some of these aspects even if he was not aware of their educational advantage or could even articulate his teaching actions.

## **Summary**

This chapter has discussed key findings in relation to the literature. It began by noting the educational situation in 1950s New Zealand when Will began post-primary teaching. It then addressed each of the four research questions, within which were sections on Will's background in the NEI and internment in Research Question 1, his storytelling in Research Question 3, and his textbooks in Research Question 4. A further aspect of this thesis—Will's lack of formal qualifications—was also explored and discussed. Chapter 7, the final chapter, provides a conclusion to the story revealed in this thesis.

## Chapter 7

### CONCLUSION

*“The ultimate excitement and terror of a qualitative project is that you can’t know at the start where it will end.”* (Richards, 2015, p. 143)

The purpose of this thesis has been to tell Will Potter’s teaching story and, like Richards (2015), I was unaware when I began, where this doctoral journey would take me. The first aim of the thesis was to tell Will’s experiences as a Commerce teacher from 1958–1976, and I have done this by focussing on themes that emerged from the data gathered from documents, Will’s own memoir, a focus group discussion with my three siblings, and interviews with staff and pupils who had taught with or been taught by Will over the years. The second aim was to analyse how Will’s identity and experiences, including his immigrant status, impacted the roles he undertook in teaching. Two main areas—his life in the colonial Netherlands East Indies (NEI; now Indonesia) and his internment during World War II (WWII)—were explored to discover how these experiences and personal attributes helped to build a fuller picture of Will as a teacher. In meeting these two aims, my thesis addresses the third aim of adding to New Zealand’s emerging collection of stories of the everyday work of teachers, told through a sociocultural–historical lens.

These aims combine to tell Will’s story, producing a history of the past previously unknown. According to Stanford (1986), history can be an ‘event’ or an ‘account’ (or story), but these two are closely linked. For example, Will began teaching in 1950s New Zealand (history as event), but his account or story of his experiences will be different from another teacher who taught at the same time because other sociocultural factors, such as Will’s background, age, experiences, culture, and language, influence his particular story. This thesis can only offer a partial story of Will as a teacher in that it mainly focuses on his teaching. Echoing Stanford’s belief that history is a means to try to understand our past and also to explain it, Will’s story only partially explains what teaching was like for one New Zealand teacher in the 1950s to 1970s while also interpreting some of Will’s actions, thoughts, and intentions. These interpretations are mine and, if in the process of doing so I have offended some or misrepresented others,

it was not my intention. Instead, I offer now the key conclusions I have reached through a sociocultural–historical analysis.

The previous five chapters have introduced the thesis (Chapter 1); offered information about the NEI, Will himself, and Dutch migration (Chapter 2); discussed some of the literature pertaining to this thesis—namely, the theories associated with it and the conditions of post-primary education in the 1950s when Will began teaching (Chapter 3); described the methodology and methods used in this thesis (Chapter 4); told Will’s teaching story (Chapter 5); and discussed the main points emerging from the data (Chapter 6). This Conclusion chapter reinforces the sociocultural–historical idea that our lives shape and are shaped by personal, interpersonal, institutional (or community), and historical factors. Therefore, this chapter offers the overall conclusions through a sociocultural–historical lens, summarising and making connections through four foci identified in this theory. Following these conclusions, a section on self-reflexivity reflects the heightened need for self-analysis as an intrinsic aspect of being a qualitative researcher. The thesis’s significance and limitations will also be explained, and suggestions for further research offered. The chapter (and thesis) ends with some closing remarks.

## **Sociocultural–Historical Theory**

### **Historical lens**

Beginning outward and working toward Will the person, there are various historical issues that back-grounded Will’s story and his entry to teaching in 1958. As Rogoff (2003) notes, personal, interpersonal, community (institutional), and historical influences combine to shape a person’s life, and this is also true of Will. The first historical influence is the NEI—the country where Will grew up and where he lived for most of the first half of his life. Will had a privileged upbringing, having servants and enjoying a colonial lifestyle that suggests that the Dutch had a duty to govern the local population. He grew up with Asian influences, such as food and dress, and his family were wealthy when he was a child, both relating to his social and cultural influences but also affecting his personal development. Dutch was also Will’s first language. Another aspect of colonial culture was that Will went to the Netherlands for his

tertiary study, although he did not complete his degree, affecting his personal development but also influencing his community involvement in that he came to teaching without formal qualifications. Despite his historical background in a servant-filled colonial culture, Will worked hard at teaching, and this trait is a cultural one, serving to shape Will's personal identity. Will needed to prove himself.

Another historical aspect that shaped Will's role in teaching was WWII and, particularly, his internment in Japanese concentration camps for more than three years. Not only did this experience of wrongful imprisonment influence Will's personal development but also his interpersonal relationships were affected. Data from the focus group discussion and interviews with colleagues and pupils suggest that Will had trouble connecting with his son, did not have close friends on staff, and kept a 'professional distance' between himself and his pupils, although the latter would have been a cultural formality of teaching at the time (the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s). Will's internment had a further historical and institutional impact in that he used his internment experiences as the basis for his storytelling, an integral part of his teaching approach. The Dutch were not forthcoming in talking about their colonial past and little had been published in the 1950s–1970s about the Japanese WWII atrocities. Frankl (1959/2006) also talks of the need of liberated prisoners from concentration camps to talk about their stressful time, so Will's use of story in his teaching may have been a way to cope with his personal trauma.

These two historical aspects of Will's life—his colonial upbringing and internment—were the two main experiences shown to shape Will as a person (Research Question 1). Other historical aspects, such as working on remote Javanese plantations during the 1930s and early 1940s, being in debt to his uncle for his tertiary fees, having to leave the Indonesian republic after the civil war at the end of the 1940s, becoming a refugee and arriving in New Zealand, and taking a lower paid position as an audit clerk in 1956, all add to the historical influences on Will's development as an individual, and as a teacher.

### **Institutional lens**

An institutional factor that affected Will was the post-primary school landscape of the 1950s when Will began teaching. The dual historical and institutional influence of post-primary education at that time again exemplifies the links between the foci of sociocultural–historical theory. In the 1950s, post-primary school rolls were burgeoning due to the post-WWII baby boom and the raising of the school leaving age from 14 to 15 years in 1944. The increasing number of pupils was accompanied by a shortage of teachers, due also in part to the historical effects of WWII, with teachers losing their lives in the fighting, those returning not keen to return to the classroom, and the reduction in teacher trainees during the War period. The increasing pupil numbers meant limited school facilities, with Will’s first classroom in a community hall. The Thomas Report of 1944 (another historical–institutional influence) meant that teachers were expected to consider the development of the ‘whole pupil’—a very progressive educational concept—not just the academic transmission of knowledge. The Report also recommended the new subject of Commercial Practice that Will went on to teach.

As a consequence of these historical and institutional influences, Will was able to enter teaching without formal qualifications. However, his passing of three Stage I and II papers whilst living in Western Samoa in the early 1950s did allow him to teach. Will did not undertake any formal study while he was teaching. Despite his lack of formal qualifications, Will was able to pass on knowledge to his pupils and help them to learn. It would have been interesting to ask Will why he decided not to pursue any further teacher study in later years as one Spotswood College non-certificated teacher did in the 1970s (SPT-3). In addition, non-certified teachers often were seconded from business to teach Commerce subjects in post-primary schools (NZCETA, 1980) due to the difficulty recruiting specialist teachers, so Will was not the only person to enter teaching without qualifications.

Will’s teaching approaches (Research Question 3) can also be viewed through an institutional lens. Will taught using the commonly used ‘chalk and talk’ method, writing notes on the blackboard with chalk, talking about them, and instructing pupils to

dutifully copy them down. Nevertheless, he also provided practical examples, such as writing cheques. Will used other teaching methods, such as scaffolding, linking new concepts to known ones, and reiterating and reinforcing older ideas. He used humour in his teaching as a tool to interest his pupils. However, some pupils, such as the 'late fee mail' described in Chapter 5, might have found him to be more sarcastic than humorous. Will was noted for his storytelling, and he used stories, mainly about his NEI experiences and internment—again reflecting the historical influences that shaped Will—both to educate and entertain the pupils as well as to help discipline them and gain their respect. Will was developing his own personal teaching approach shaped by his historical and institutional experiences.

Will also made his contribution to Commerce teaching (Research Question 4). Will contributed to the various schools in which he taught through such actions as sorting the textbook and stationery schemes and coaching sport. However, he mainly contributed to Commerce teaching in New Zealand during the 1950s to 1970s by writing a series of 11 textbooks about Commercial Practice, Bookkeeping, and Accounting that assisted not just his pupils but many other Commerce teachers. Writing textbooks was not a common activity for full-time teachers in the 1960s; Will doing so exemplifies initiative and hard work (a personal and Dutch cultural characteristic). Like any new subject in education, a curriculum, along with textbooks and other teaching resources, needs to be developed as the subject evolves. Will self-published his textbooks, partly so that he could receive the royalties himself and also because there were few publishers in New Zealand in the middle of the twentieth century. Will also helped to develop the 'new' subject of Commercial Practice, recommended by the Thomas Report in 1944, that required the provision of classroom resources to be provided—an historical and institutional influence.

### **Interpersonal lens**

Although it has been noted in this thesis that Will had difficulty connecting to his older son and kept a 'professional distance' with his pupils, he did have collegial relations with his teacher peers and believed that he got on well with his pupils. Will was Head of Department at three of the five schools where he taught, indicating that he was

capable of managing people. These interpersonal skills were developed during his historic experience on plantations in the NEI and in Western Samoa in the early 1950s. Will gave professional support to other teachers, particularly those within his departments, so they could teach to his notes and, later, the textbooks that he wrote. Both forms of support assisted them with their lesson planning and content knowledge as well as giving them confidence to teach effectively, ensuring their pupils pass their School Certificate Examination. He was also regarded as a 'mentor' to one teacher interviewee, with most talking about his personable manner.

Will also helped his pupils by providing them with notes and model answers that assisted them to pass the School Certificate Examination, which was an historical focus of New Zealand's post-primary education at the time. Will's relationships with his colleagues and pupils are also connected to the institutional setting of the schools in which Will taught. Some family members suggested that Will's teaching career came at a cost to his family (another interpersonal factor), but these costs may have been attributable to personal characteristics, such as his propensity to worry and his desire to do well. These personal factors also relate to his Dutch upbringing, cultural characteristics, and his NEI Dutch historical influence of needing to succeed as he had no country to return to.

Will had a stern demeanour as a teacher and was known as a strict disciplinarian, as much due to his 'black and white' Dutch heritage as his own historical upbringing in the NEI. For some, Will could also be intimidating with his strong voice and stature. Conversely, others thought of him as caring and fair, dignified, and professional, and humorous and witty. His storytelling was well-known, but he tended to talk *at* the pupils rather than talk *with* them. Such a lecture approach was common for the day (historical influence) and was an acceptable way to teach.

### **Personal lens**

Will had many personal attributes that were shaped by the aforementioned interpersonal, institutional, and historical factors. As noted, Will was approachable and fair (interpersonal), but he also spent many hours preparing for his lessons, a feature of an effective teacher, and he also worked hard (a Dutch cultural characteristic). He

was also resilient, having coped with internment and being ousted from the NEI (historical), taking on various working roles, such as being an audit clerk, parking cars at the stock car races, and becoming a post-primary school teacher. Will's propensity to worry and his difficulty making close friendships are both attributable to his historical internment experience.

Part of Will's personal disposition motivated him to teach (Research Question 2). Will began teaching in 1958, principally to earn more money. However, there were other personal reasons. Will had an interest and ability in Commerce subjects, was determined and reasonably versatile in his previous work roles, and was also prepared to try a new career at the age of 51 years. Familially, his forebears had been teachers and, interpersonally, his boss at the Education Department in Auckland had suggested the idea to Will, believing that Will had the capability to teach in post-primary schools. Historically, school rolls were growing and there was a shortage of post-primary teachers in the 1950s, and Will himself had previously tutored a post-primary school pupil. Despite these main motivations explaining Will's decision to teach, or perhaps as a consequence of them, Will was also passionate about his teaching subjects. He developed a high sense of self-efficacy, although he still felt like an outsider at times. He set goals for himself, and took the initiative to develop teaching resources and had the tenacity and foresight to turn this material into published textbooks.

Will's Dutch characteristics also played an integral part in his personal development. Although New Zealand in the 1950s was not so accepting of foreigners (and Will himself always referred to himself as a 'bloody foreigner'), he may have misinterpreted the New Zealand social and cultural mores of the time. He secured teaching positions almost immediately and, later, promotions, and other Dutch people had settled in New Zealand too. Therefore, he may have been overly sensitive to his immigrant status. His Dutch culture meant he may not have always picked up on New Zealand social cues; he always spoke his mind. He may also have misconstrued comments from his Waiuku College principal who was unhappy about Will's increased remuneration working for the Board of Governors when, in fact, he may have wanted Will to receive more money or may have wanted to employ someone else in the Treasurer's role. Will assumed he would be able to live in one of the teacher houses being built in Paeroa,

but perhaps he could have made his thoughts clearer. Both of these interpersonal relationships and ‘misunderstandings’ led Will to resign from these two teaching positions, suggesting that he may have over-reacted to the situations.

Having summarised the conclusions associated with this thesis through a sociocultural–historical lens, the next section looks at more subjective issues. This teaching study of Will is a unique one in that he was my father. Although others (Bethell & Sewell, 2010; Sewell & Bethell, 2009) have undertaken academic studies of a parent, it is not common. From a personal point of view, the experience has been a rewarding one in that I have been able to find out more about my father, in addition to his teaching story, but the process can invite criticism as well as accusations of bias. Therefore, I have had to constantly be self-reflexive.

### **Self-reflexivity**

I am Will’s daughter. Because of this fact, within this thesis, I could be accused of bias (only wanting to write the best about my father), having preconceived ideas (I had a picture of what he was like and, accordingly, wanted to find information to confirm this), and being short-sighted (only seeing what I want or think I should see as his daughter). The fact that these issues are being raised now is evidence of my awareness of such considerations as I researched and wrote. Referring to my father as ‘Will’ throughout the thesis has helped me to position him as the object of the research as opposed to being my parent. As Moore (2012) notes, reflexivity is about looking at the wider perspective that includes personal, social, and cultural features, but there are also other aspects that I have been alerted to in being self-reflexive.

One such aspect of self-reflexivity relates to whose story this is. Foucault (1977) talks about the three people in the text: in this thesis, there is Will, and myself as both the researcher and writer of Will’s story. Like Freeman (1997), I consider that because I have presented my personal interpretation of Will’s teaching story, using evidence from my research data, I have somehow re-defined or perhaps even refined the truth of what Will really experienced. Paradoxically, in presenting Will’s semi-biographical teaching story in a cohesive and almost linear manner, I might well have falsified his life, just as Shotter (1993) warned.

Further, Stanley (1992) adds that stories about a life such as Will's can be somewhat simplified, so that the intervening language, thoughts, feelings, and miscellaneous experiences are not recounted or even remembered, or they may not be known. This simplification is what has happened here. I have highlighted events and stories about Will that I found or that were told to me, yet these are not all the parts of Will's life. Moreover, his story has been filtered by my worldview, gender, age, and modern-day experience. I have tried to tell his story chronologically, but Stanley (1992) explains that chronology—often the most important part of narration—can infer order, development, and causality. However, lives are not ordered or chronological: our past influences our present that influences our future, which, in turn, is affected by the past (Dewey, 1916). In addition, someone else writing Will's story may tell a different story.

Another part of my self-reflexivity relates to other people. It was only after the focus group discussion with my siblings that I considered Denscombe's (2014) caution of being aware of the interviewer effect whereby aspects, particularly age (I am the 'baby' of the family) and gender (and a female), could have had an influence on the group. Did they consider that this was just another of my 'interests,' such as running, that they accepted and humoured me by their participation? Perhaps somewhat insensitively, I did not consider if they were nervous or concerned about sharing with me as their younger sister in such a semi-formal environment, despite my trying to add to the family atmosphere with dinner and sharing. Hence, I am still developing my cultural empathy as a researcher.

In contrast, I believe that another form of bias made itself known in this study. I honestly stated in all my appeals for participants and on the Information Sheets that I was Will's daughter. However, I wondered if the potential for a reverse bias came about as any prospective participants may have been wary of answering my emails or letters because they did not have anything positive to say about Will. I noticed within the first few interviews that no one had anything negative to say about him. In subsequent interviews, I casually asked if participants had any concerns about anything he did or said, and, apart from saying he raised his voice or got angry sometimes, they had nothing else to add. Therefore, some who were perhaps disillusioned with Will and/or his teaching may have decided not to talk to me—as his

daughter—about them. Alternatively, those I did interview may have not wanted to be totally honest about their negative experiences with Will as they did not want to offend me as Will’s daughter.

The final issue regarding self-reflexivity that affected me was the emotional aspects of reading and writing about difficult situations that Will had faced. I read many books and articles about what happened in the NEI and during WWII and the ensuing civil war, making notes and writing thoughts as I reflected on these. However, when seeing Will’s name on the Kesilir camp list as well as my mother’s and relatives’ names on a Dutch camp list website, I became quite upset. Later, when I was writing about the beatings that Will endured in the camps, I again became emotional. Even now, as I write this paragraph, I am affected deeply. I now acknowledge that the personal connection that makes these events real and directly applicable to my loved ones is something that I failed to consider when undertaking this thesis.

Having reflexively considered my part in this research, the next section of the chapter acknowledges the significance of this thesis and looks at the ways it contributes to knowledge.

### **Significance of the Thesis**

This thesis makes significant contributions to knowledge in three main ways by adding to teacher stories, the history of teaching, and the chronicles of the Dutch who left Indonesia in the 1940s and 1950s. First, this thesis can add to the growing list of teacher stories of New Zealand teachers. Through such human interest stories, “the commonplace provides opportunities to explore the different means through which we can understand the everyday world of teachers” (Bethell & Sewell, 2010, p. 14). In addition, as an alternative to offering educational theories as being “... flat, or two-dimensional, ...” (Middleton, 1993, p. 129), stories such as Will’s allow all those involved with education to be “... positioned ‘inside’ the social and educational phenomena ...” (p. 129). Rather than simply describing the ‘new’ subject Commercial Practice recommended by the Thomas Report (1944), this thesis explores the nuances of the everyday reality for teachers; for example, Will had never heard of Commercial Practice and had to learn about it, both from the textbook and previous School

Certificate Examinations. Furthermore, aside from simply mentioning that there was a lack of facilities in schools in the 1950s, Will's description of his first 'classroom' (in the local Onewhero community hall) and his challenges of having to share that facility with local community groups makes the issue more real and personal.

Second, this thesis adds to the history of teaching in New Zealand's post-primary schools (1958–1976). History matters, and Will's story matters as part of that educational history. His story can give a face to one such teacher from one such time and offer additional insights into the history of post-primary education in New Zealand. The backward-looking story highlights the importance of social and cultural contexts, revealing what people were like and how others viewed them to offer a picture of life in the past to inform the present (Nelson, 2002). For Will, this meant revisiting how and when he started post-primary teaching in the 1950s and the context of increased school rolls, teacher shortages, and a lack of facilities, as well as Will's own experiences and background that shaped his teaching. This reflection was done using "biographical archaeology" (Brosterman, 1997, p. 108)—using whatever was at hand to tell Will's story. Such 'digging' produced letters, documents, and photos as well as formal records and the literature to build an historical backdrop to Will's entry into teaching. Nelson further explains that the forward-looking story, or the future outcome of this research, is action-guiding. Will's story adds to the cache of New Zealand's teacher biographies so as to utilise the "usable past" (Lerner, 1997, p. 120) and to learn from it.

A third significance of this thesis comes from what originally was to be a fifth research question: 'What can Will's story contribute to the history of the Dutch from the Netherlands East Indies?' Within the confines of Will's story in New Zealand post-primary education, this thesis does not purport to offer sufficient social, cultural, and historical background to trace the plight of the hundreds of thousands of Dutch people who were forced to leave their homeland after WWII and the Indonesian civil war. However, by default, it does support Willems' (2003) claim about the need to tell the social history of the Dutch who fled Indonesia in the 1940s and 1950s. What happened to these people? Again, this thesis does not delve into the political background that led to the establishment of the Indonesian Republic in 1945 and the end of Dutch colonialism in the Far East, but it does offer one person's story of what happened to

one such Dutch refugee. Although most of the Dutch re-settled in the Netherlands, many migrated to other countries, such as New Zealand. Willems (2012) adds that earlier in the 1950s and 1960s, the Dutch preferred not to talk about their colonial history but, in more recent times, there has been renewed interest in what happened to the NEI Dutch diaspora. Will's story helps to satisfy this interest.

Despite its significance, there are other aspects not covered in this thesis that could be researched in the future.

## **Further Research**

Not all aspects of a subject can be covered in one study. Further contributions might be made to the history of New Zealand education by conducting the following research:

- Stories could be collected of teachers from varying educational environments, including those from the early childhood, primary, and tertiary sectors.
- Such stories can be researched from teachers whose work was from the past, and others from the present where a life history methodology could generate first-hand information about teacher experiences today.
- Case studies could be carried out to find out what happened to other Dutch people from the NEI, particularly those who came to New Zealand, including teachers and also those who participated in other areas of life.

Alongside these suggestions for research comes an acknowledgement of the limitations of this thesis.

## **Limitations of the Thesis**

All studies have their limitations, and mine is no exception. On reflection, I believe that my study has three limitations: its guidelines, the methodology and methods used, and myself as the researcher. The first limitation is that this is not Will's complete story, but it never could be because it does not include a summary of his life experiences nor all of the aspects associated with his teaching story. Instead, it offers what I regard as a *partial* story with relevant and poignant points related to answering the four research questions that are associated with Will's teaching story. As noted in Chapters 1 and 4

as well as in the introduction to this chapter, this is a semi-biographical account of Will's teaching, but there are other aspects, such as fuller descriptions of day-to-day teaching, that have not been included.

The second limitation of this thesis is its methodology and methods. In line with my worldview and theoretical underpinnings, this thesis provides a qualitative account, using an interpretivist lens to look at, and analyse, the data sets. However, the interpretations are mine and are limited by their generalisability and subjectivity. This thesis is about one teacher and cannot claim to apply to other teacher stories, even if they offer accounts of other Dutch teachers in New Zealand, other Commerce teachers, or even other Dutch Commerce teachers in 1950s to 1970s New Zealand. Instead, this is one unique account of one unique teacher so the thesis's lack of generalisability can be both a strength and a limitation.

A further aspect of the methodology is the limiting impact of subjectivity in telling Will's teaching story. I have had to be aware of the familial link, but those I interviewed were also aware of this relationship. As mentioned, reverse bias might have been part of this study in that by being honest about my relationship, prospective interviewees might have been reluctant to come forward if they had negative memories of Will. One possible way to overcome this reverse bias would be to have had another interviewer carry out the interviews. In terms of methods, further semi-structured interviews and focus groups could have been carried out to provide a fuller picture of Will's teaching story.

The third limitation of this thesis relates to my own inexperience as a researcher and my social and cultural background. I have not carried out a research project of this type or scale before. However, the process of conducting this research has supported my development as a researcher. I have learned to carefully check aspects related to this thesis, both through documents and the literature. In the interviews, I sought to establish rapport and respect with interviewees and was organised using interview protocols. I learned to be prepared (I had two forms of recording devices) and remained professional yet cordial in my approach to punctuality, dress, and communication. However, other, more experienced interviewers might have been able

to: draw out more information from the participants, ask more pertinent questions, and probe responses. In addition, although I have made every effort to check document data and relate to interviewees, my interpretations inevitably are influenced by who I am—an older, middle-class, white, Western, second-generation Dutch, Christian female.

## **Concluding Comments**

This thesis presents a case study of one person—Will. He was chosen because he had not been studied before, and because of his story’s uniqueness and ordinariness (Schwandt & Gates, 2018). This is the first time that Will’s story has been told formally and in the context of a research thesis. Some people might not be keen to have their story told when they are alive but, as Will has passed away, this factor is not an issue. However, throughout the study, I did wonder what Will would have thought about my undertaking a thesis about him. While I believe that he would have been very proud that I have pursued doctoral-level study, I also believe that he would have taken every opportunity to correct, query, and elaborate on the data I collected and subsequent writings, and even contested the versions presented by others of what happened in his classrooms. He would also have wanted to edit the final manuscript. There would, therefore, have been some family friction as I tried to balance doctoral thesis rigour with our father–daughter relationship.

Will died on February 15, 1993. In the last few years of his life, he suffered from Alzheimer’s Disease, so, in many respects, he left us some time before that. In researching Will’s personal documents, letters, photos, and his memoir and talking to those who knew and were taught by him, I have come to know a different side of Will the man and Will the teacher—one that I never knew as his daughter. In writing about his teaching life, I have been inspired by his hardships and tenacity, his willingness to try any jobs and to work hard at them, and his courage in starting a new life as a stranger in a foreign land. Within the district high schools, in particular, Thom (1950) notes that “there have been remarkable people among them—a man here, a woman there, who have made a deep and lasting impression on the pupils they taught” (p. 100). Will is not remembered internationally, nor is his name synonymous with

national contributions to New Zealand and educational life. Nevertheless, he is associated with many whose lives he touched and who were able to relive a portion of their own past when talking to me about him. One such person—a Spotswood College teacher—felt a need to honour Will, and this thesis provided an opportunity for her to do so. She had this to say:

*When I saw your [advertisement] in the paper, I thought ... it's really important I will ring because he was an important person. I think too much in life, we respect the wrong sort of people: people with lots of money. He was a grassroots, honest person, and I feel like I've paid my respects to him today.*  
(SPT-4)

I, too, feel I have paid my respects to Will in this thesis.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Focus Group Protocol

1. Welcome everyone and thank them for coming.

Check that it is alright for me to record the interview using a Voice Recorder and my phone as back up.

Remind them that they can request that I turn off the recorder at any time.

2. Ask them to each fill in a copy of the Focus Group Confidentiality Agreement.
3. Remind the group that they may remain **anonymous** in the thesis and that information from the Focus Group may be **written up generically**. Ask them to please give **honest** answers.
4. Establish set 'rules' or guidelines of:
  - one person speaking at a time;
  - listening to each other speak; and
  - being open to others' disagreement or questioning.

Ask them if they can think of any other rules for the Focus Group.

5. Begin by allowing each member to have 2-3 minutes each to talk about how they remember 'Will the man/father' or 'Will generally'
6. Questions: **School**

a) What is your most vivid memory of Will the *teacher*?

.....  
.....  
.....

b) Do you think that he enjoyed teaching? Why do you think this?

.....  
.....  
.....

c) What would you say was his greatest achievement in teaching?

.....  
.....  
.....

d) Can you recall him sharing stories of his teaching experiences? Can you give an example?

.....

.....

.....

e) What difficulties do you think he might have experienced in his teaching?

.....

.....

.....

f) Did Will talk about his teaching at home? If yes, examples?

.....

.....

.....

g) How did his teaching influence life at home?

.....

.....

.....

h) Some of you were taught by Will: how did you feel about this?

.....

.....

.....

What were some of the teaching techniques/style that he used in the classroom?

.....

.....

.....

How did his teaching style compare to those of other teachers you had at the time?

.....  
.....  
.....

How did his being your teacher influence your role/relationship as his son/daughter?

.....  
.....  
.....

Did he/you talk about schoolwork at home?

.....  
.....  
.....

i) You all went to some of the same schools where he taught: What did you think of Will as a teacher?

.....  
.....  
.....

j) What did some of your friends/acquaintances think of him as a teacher?

.....  
.....  
.....

k) What do you think he contributed to Commercial teaching in New Zealand?

.....  
.....  
.....

l) Why do you think he began writing textbooks?

.....  
.....  
.....

If you had to describe 'Will the teacher' in one sentence, what would it be?

.....  
.....  
.....

7. Questions: **Personal**

a) Why do you think that Will went secondary teaching?

.....  
.....  
.....

b) Tell me what you know about Will's background before he came to teaching.

.....  
.....  
.....

c) What are some of his experiences that you know about that you think may have influenced or affected his teaching?

.....  
.....  
.....

d) Do you think that the fact that Will was an immigrant affected his teaching in any way? If so, how?

.....  
.....  
.....

e) English was not Will's first language. How did this affect his teaching do you think?

.....  
.....  
.....

f) As Will was a Dutch immigrant, how can his story or experience add to the history of the Dutch who came to New Zealand?

.....  
.....  
.....

g) If you had to describe 'Will the man' in one sentence, what would it be?

.....  
.....  
.....

8. What else can you add that would give some more insight into Will? (each person to speak in turn)

.....  
.....  
.....

*Thank everyone for their input.*

*Mention that they will each be emailed a transcription of the discussion for member checking; they may add to, amend, or delete information if they wish.*

*They are also asked to sign the **Authority for Release of Transcripts Form**.*

**Can any give me the name and addresses of any previous colleagues or students taught with or by Will?**

## Appendix B: Individual Interview Protocols

### 1. Former Principal

Interview Protocol (Date:.....)

Name: .....

School: .....

Years of being a principal here: .....

**Good morning!**

*Ask how long he has been retired? Does he enjoy living here? Can he tell me about what he enjoys?*

*Thank him for allowing me to interview him today.*

**As I mentioned, I would like to interview you regarding Will Potter as part of my EdD thesis.**

*Mention that I will respect his **privacy** and will **not mention his name or his particular school** if that is what he prefers – perhaps give him a **pseudonym**?*

**Are you happy for me to record our interview?**

– *If yes, turn on voice recorder AND phone*

– *Either way, mention that I will take notes.*

Warm up questions:

**1. How long were you a secondary school teacher?**

(Direct).....

**2. How many years were you a secondary school principal?**

(Direct).....

– **Have you only been involved in *secondary* education teaching in your career?**

(Probe; Closed) **Y / N / ...**

– **If N, What other areas of education have you been involved in?**

(Probe; Direct)

.....  
.....  
.....

**3. What were your specific subject areas of interest in secondary education?** (Direct)

.....  
.....

**What would you say were some of the highlights of your career in education?** (Open)

.....  
.....

*That is very interesting. Thank you for sharing.*

**Re Will Potter:**

As I understand it, you also began your time at Paeroa College in 1965.

**4. Were you involved with his appointment as a teacher at Paeroa College?** (Closed)

**Y / N / O**.....

**If yes, what was it about him that prompted you to offer him a teaching position at your school?** (Probe, Open)

.....  
.....

**If no, what were your first impressions of him?** (Probe, Open)

.....  
.....

**5. Please tell me about your first meeting with him** (Open)

.....  
.....

**6. How would best describe his teaching style?** (Open)

.....  
.....

**7. What extra-curricular activities, if any, was he involved in?** (Direct)

.....  
.....

**8. How did he relate to other teachers in the school?** (Open)

.....  
.....

**9. How did he relate to the students in the school, both in his classes and not?**

(Open)

.....  
.....  
.....

**10. Was there concern about him being an immigrant? (Closed)**

**Y / N / O .....**

**If Yes, how so? (Probe)**

.....  
.....

**11. Were there any issues with the fact that English was not his first language? (misinterpretation, etc.) (Closed)**

**Y / N / O .....**

**If Yes, can you explain these please? (Probe)**

.....  
.....

**12. What specific attributes do you think he brought to teaching and, in particular, the Commerce subjects? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**13. Please share with me some of his teaching techniques. (Open)**

.....  
.....

**14. What do you think prompted him to write the textbooks he did? (Open) *If applicable***

.....  
.....

**\*Did your school use any of the textbooks he wrote? (Closed)**

**Y / N / O.....**

**Why was this? (Probe)**

.....  
.....

**15. Did Will share about his background at school? (Closed)**

**Y / N / O.....**

**If so, how? (Probe)**

.....  
.....

**16. What can you tell me about his past? (Open)**

.....  
.....

*Thank you for these valuable insights. To conclude:*

**17. Is there anything else you would like to share about Will? (Open)**

.....  
.....

*Thank you again for sharing.*

*I will email/mail a hard copy of the interview transcription for you to check.*

*Please feel free to add anything on the transcription if you think of anything that could be useful. Also please fill in the Authority for the Release of Transcripts form.*

***\*Would you happen to know the names and contact details of some of Will's former colleagues who I could approach to interview?***

## 2. Former Colleagues

Interview Protocol (Date:.....)

Name: .....

School: .....

Years of being a teacher here: .....

**Good morning/afternoon/evening!**

*Ask how long s/he has been retired? When s/he retired? Does s/he enjoy living here?*

*Thank him/her for allowing me to interview him/her today.*

**As I mentioned, I would like to interview you regarding Will Potter as part of my EdD thesis.**

*Mention that I will respect his/her privacy and will not mention his/her name or his/her particular school if that is what s/he prefers – perhaps give him/her a pseudonym?*

**Are you happy for me to record our interview?**

– *If yes, turn on voice recorder AND phone*

– *Either way, mention that I will take notes.*

Warm up questions:

**1. How long were you a secondary school teacher?**

(Direct).....

**2. How many years were you at this school?**

(Direct).....

– **Have you only been involved in *secondary* education teaching in your career?**

(Probe; Closed) **Y / N / ...**

– **If N, What other areas of education have you been involved in?**

(Probe; Direct)

.....  
.....

**3. What were your specific subject areas of interest in secondary education? (Direct)**

.....  
.....

**Were you teaching in these subjects when you worked with Will? (Probe)**

**Y / N / O** .....

*That is very interesting. Thank you for sharing.*

**Re Will Potter:**

**4. How long did you teach with him? (Direct)**

.....  
.....

**5. Please tell me about your first meeting with him (Open)**

.....  
.....

**6. How would best describe his teaching style? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**7. What extra-curricular activities was he involved in? (Direct)**

.....  
.....

**8. How did he relate to the principal at the time (Name.....)?  
(Open)**

.....  
.....

**9. How did he relate to other teachers in the school? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**10. How did he relate to the students in the school? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**11. How do you think that his age influenced his teaching? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**12. How do you think that the fact that English was not his first language influenced  
his teaching? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**13. What specific attributes do you think he brought to teaching and, in particular, the Commerce subjects? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**14. Please share with me about some of his teaching techniques. (Open)**

.....  
.....

**15. Were you aware that he wrote textbooks for the Commerce subjects? (Closed)**

**Y / N / O.....**

**If yes, did you use them and why? (Probe)**

.....  
.....

**16. Did Will share about his background at school? (Closed)**

**Y / N / O .....**

**If so, how? (Probe)**

.....  
.....

**17. What can you tell me about his past? (Open)**

.....  
.....

*Thank you for these valuable insights. To conclude:*

**18. Is there anything else you would like to share about Will? (Open)**

.....  
.....

*Thank you again for sharing.*

*I will email/mail a (hard) copy of the interview transcription for you to check.*

*Please feel free to add anything on the transcription if you think of anything that could be useful. Also please fill in the Authority for the Release of Transcripts form.*

***\*Would you happen to know the names and contact details of some other of Will's former colleagues and pupils who I could approach to interview?***

### 3. Former Pupils

Interview Protocol (Date:.....)

Name: .....

School: .....

Years of being a pupil here: .....

**Good morning/afternoon/evening!**

*Ask how long s/he has lived here? Does s/he have fond memories of .....School? Does s/he have contact with many former teachers and/or classmates?*

*Thank him/her for allowing me to interview him/her today.*

**As I mentioned, I would like to interview you regarding Will Potter as part of my EdD thesis.**

*Mention that I will respect his/her privacy and will not mention his/her name or his/her particular school if that is what s/he prefers – perhaps give him/her a pseudonym?*

**Are you happy for me to record our interview?**

- *If yes, turn on voice recorder AND phone*
- *Either way, mention that I will take notes.*

Warm up questions:

**1. What years were you at ..... School? (Direct)**

.....

**2. What optional subjects did you take? (Direct)**

.....

.....

**3. What did you do when you first left school? (Direct)**

.....

.....

**4. What are your happiest memories of your time at..... College?  
(Open)**

.....

.....

*That is very interesting. Thank you for sharing.*

**Re Will/Mr Potter:**

**5. What subjects did he teach you? (Direct)**

.....  
.....

**6. How would best describe his teaching style? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**7. What was different about being in his class compared to other teachers' at the school? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**8. What was the same about being in his class as compared to others' at the school? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**9. How did he relate to you and the pupils in the class? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**10. What were some of his specific ways of teaching? Can you share some examples?(Open)**

.....  
.....

**11. Was he involved in any extra-curricular activities when you knew him at school? (Closed)**

**Y / N / O.....**

**If yes, what were these? (Probe)**

.....  
.....

**12. Do you think that English not being his first language was a problem? (Closed)**

**Y / N / O.....**

**Why do you think this? (Probe)**

.....  
.....

**13. How do you think his age influenced his teaching?**

.....  
.....

**14. How did he discipline his class? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**15. Were you aware that he wrote textbooks for the Commerce subjects? (Closed)**

**Y / N / O.....**

**If yes, did you use them and what did you think of them? (Probe)**

.....  
.....

**16. Did Will share about his background at school? (Closed)**

**Y / N / O.....**

**If so, how? (Probe)**

.....  
.....

**17. What can you tell me about his past? (Open)**

.....  
.....

**18. Do you have any negative memories of Will? Y/N**

**If so, can you explain?**

.....  
.....

*Thank you for these valuable insights. To conclude:*

**19. Is there anything else you would like to share about Will? (Open)**

.....  
.....

*Thank you again for sharing.*

*I will email/mail a (hard) copy of the interview transcription for you to check.*

*Please feel free to add anything on the transcription if you think of anything that could be useful. Also please fill in the Authority for the Release of Transcripts form.*

*\*Do you know of other previous pupils who I could interview?*

## Appendix C: Massey University Ethics Approval



Date: 26 April 2016

Dear Jacqueline Burne

Re: Ethics Notification - **NOR 16/08 - From colonial past to New Zealand classroom: The biographical narrative of Will Potter – Commercial secondary school teacher (1958 – 1976)**

Thank you for the above application that was considered by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: **Human Ethics Northern Committee** at their meeting held on **Tuesday, 26 April, 2016**.

On behalf of the Committee I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are approved.

Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Dr Brian Finch  
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

**Research Ethics Office, Research and Enterprise**

Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, 4442, New Zealand T 06 951 6841; 06 95106840

E [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz); [animalethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:animalethics@massey.ac.nz); [gtc@massey.ac.nz](mailto:gtc@massey.ac.nz)



discussed. At the beginning of the Focus Group, I will have an agenda of items to be discussed, and general talking and listening rules will be established so that everyone has a chance to share and each of the topics can be addressed.

#### **Data Management**

The interviews will be recorded and transcribed by myself, and the transcriptions sent to you for authentication before being returned to me. The information will be used as part of the study and analysis of Will's life and will be kept for a period of ten (10) years on my computer and securely in my possession, after which time it will be destroyed. Any family records used in the thesis will be returned to the Potter Family archive. Should you wish to view a copy of the completed thesis, ways to access one may be emailed to you. You may choose to remain anonymous, with information gleaned from the Focus Group written up in a generic way in the thesis. The names of the high schools at which Will taught will be made known in the thesis. The information gathered may also be shared at a conference or in another form, as well as in the thesis but, again, your privacy will be respected.

#### **Participant's Rights**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study up to the time of and during the interview;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded; and
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.

#### **Committee Approval Statement**

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application 16/08. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Andrew Chrystall, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 43317, email [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz).

#### **Project Contacts**

Should you have any questions about the study and your proposed role in it, please contact myself or one of my supervisors listed below. Could you please fill in the enclosed Consent Form and return to me in the reply paid envelope on or before .....

*Jacqui Burne*

Email: [jmburne@massey.ac.nz](mailto:jmburne@massey.ac.nz)

Phone:

Supervisors:

Dr Alison Sewell ([A.M.Sewell@massey.ac.nz](mailto:A.M.Sewell@massey.ac.nz))

Professor Howard Lee ([H.F.Lee@massey.ac.nz](mailto:H.F.Lee@massey.ac.nz))

## 2. Information Sheet for Former Principal, Colleagues, and Pupils



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

**From colonial past to New Zealand classroom:  
The biographical narrative of Will Potter —  
Commercial secondary school teacher (1958 – 1976)**

### INFORMATION SHEET

#### **Researcher Introduction**

My name is Jacqui Burne, and I am undertaking doctoral research towards a Doctor of Education (EdD) degree, looking at Will Potter, a Dutch immigrant from Indonesia who began teaching Commerce subjects in New Zealand secondary schools in the 1950s. He was also my father.

#### **Project Description and Invitation**

This project is a historical and biographical case study which will outline how Will came to teaching, his authoring of various Commerce textbooks, and the various life experiences that affected his life and career. You are cordially invited to participate in this research project.

#### **Participant Identification and Recruitment**

You have been selected for participation in an interview as you were familiar with Will as a teacher and could add valuable information and insights into his teaching and personal life that could benefit this thesis. There will be you and up to four other principals being interviewed. If you are uncomfortable about discussing Will, you are free to opt out of the study up to the time of and during the actual interview.

#### **Project Procedures**

The interview will take place at a mutually agreed locale and will take about one (1) hour of your time. Prior to the interview, I will send out a summary of interview topics to make you aware of what will be discussed.

#### **Data Management**

The interview will be recorded and transcribed by myself, and the transcription sent to you for authentication before being returned to me. The information will be used as part of the study and analysis of Will's life and will be kept for a period of ten (10) years on my

computer and securely in my possession, after which time it will be destroyed. Any further records or information that you may offer may be kept as part of the Potter Family archive. Should you wish to view a copy of the completed thesis, ways to access one may be emailed or posted to you. You may choose to remain anonymous. The names of the high schools at which Will taught will be made known in the thesis, but the information you provide may be written up generically so as to maintain your privacy should you so wish. The information gathered may also be shared at a conference or in another form, as well as in the thesis but, again, your privacy will be respected.

#### **Participant's Rights**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study up to the time of and during the interview;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded; and
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.

#### **Committee Approval Statement**

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application 16/08. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Andrew Chrystall, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 43317, email [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz).

#### **Project Contacts**

Should you have any questions about the study and your proposed role in it, please contact myself or one of my supervisors listed below. Could you please fill in the enclosed Consent Form and return to me in the reply paid envelope on or before .....

*Jacqui Burne*

Email: [jmburne@massey.ac.nz](mailto:jmburne@massey.ac.nz)

Phone:

Supervisors:

Dr Alison Sewell ([A.M.Sewell@massey.ac.nz](mailto:A.M.Sewell@massey.ac.nz))

Professor Howard Lee ([H.F.Lee@massey.ac.nz](mailto:H.F.Lee@massey.ac.nz)).

## Appendix E: Consent Forms

### 1. Focus Group Participant Consent Form



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

*From colonial past to New Zealand classroom:  
The biographical narrative of Will Potter —  
Commercial secondary school teacher (1958 – 1976)*

#### FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree not to disclose anything discussed in the Focus Group.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

I agree to family records being used as part of this study; they will be returned to the Potter Family archive.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name - printed \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Individual Participant Consent Form



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

*From colonial past to New Zealand classroom:  
The biographical narrative of Will Potter —  
Commercial secondary school teacher (1958 – 1976)*

### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

I agree that the information I give may be kept as part of the Will Potter Family archive.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name - printed \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: Focus Group Confidentiality Agreement



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

*From colonial past to New Zealand classroom:  
The biographical narrative of Will Potter —  
Commercial secondary school teacher (1958 – 1976)*

### CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I ..... (Full Name - printed)

agree to keep confidential all information concerning the project *From colonial past to New Zealand classroom: The biographical narrative of Will Potter — Commercial secondary school teacher (1958-1976)*.

I will not retain or copy any information involving the project.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: Release of Transcript Forms

### 1. Focus Group



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

*From colonial past to New Zealand classroom:  
The biographical narrative of Will Potter —  
Commercial secondary school teacher (1958 – 1976)*

#### AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the Focus Group discussion/ interview conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in the thesis and publications arising from the research.

Signature:..... Date:.....

Full Name – printed:.....

## 2. Semi-structured Interviews



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

*From colonial past to New Zealand classroom:  
The biographical narrative of Will Potter —  
Commercial secondary school teacher (1958 – 1976)*

### AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

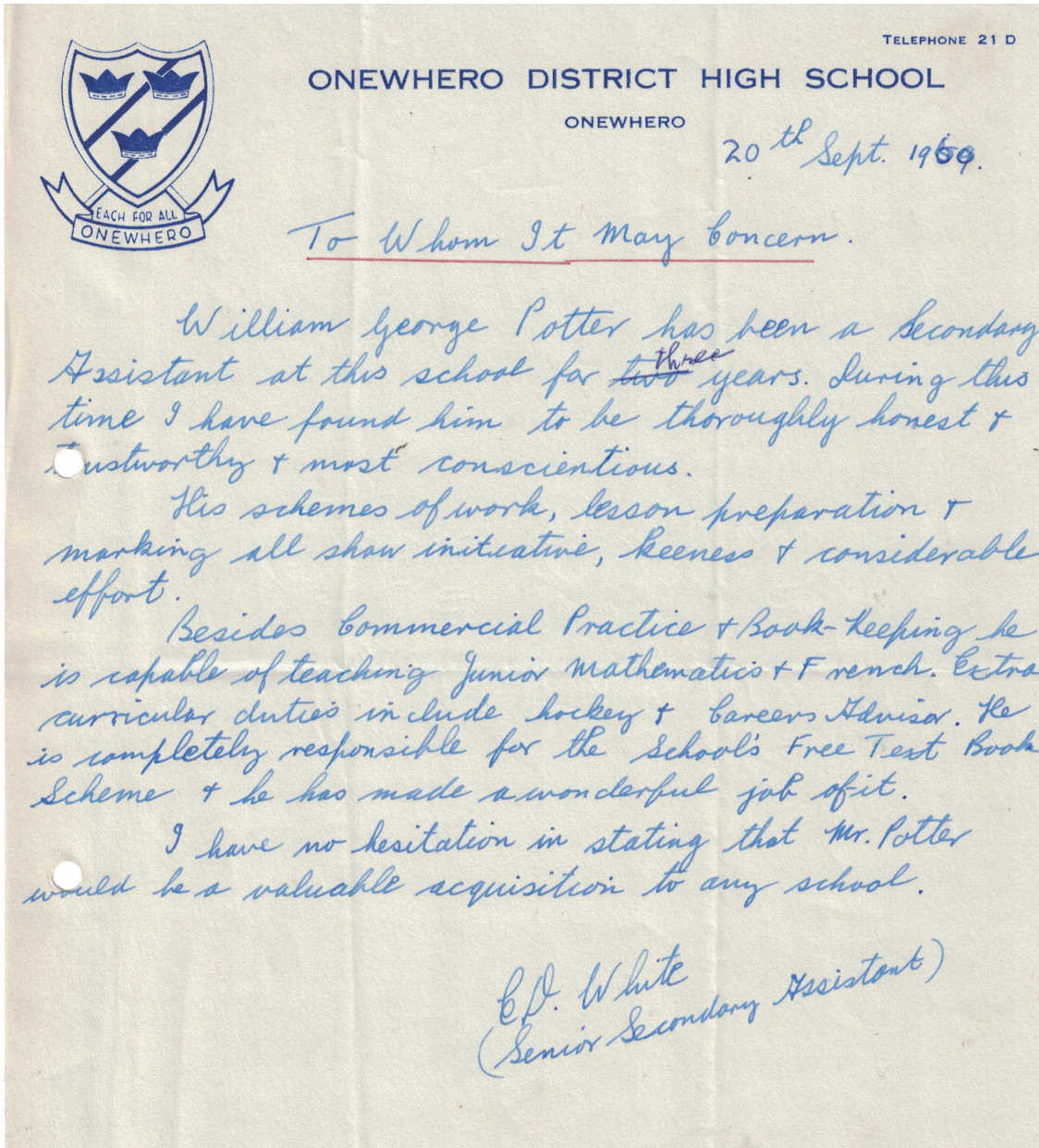
I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name - printed** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix H: Testimonials

### 1. E. D. White, Onewhero District High School



2. R. B. Twaddle, Paeroa College



# Paeroa College

R. B. TWADDLE, M.A.  
Principal.

PAEROA.  
Telephone 7095.

8 December, 1966.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

WILLIAM GEORGE POTTER has been a member of the staff of Paeroa College for the past two years. He was appointed to the position of P.R.A. in charge of Book-keeping and Commercial Practice and has taught classes up to University Entrance in these subjects.

Mr Potter is an extremely conscientious class room teacher who does his best work in extending the abler pupils. At the same time his thoroughness in preparation and marking have earned him the respect of pupils of all levels of ability. The discipline of his classes has always been of a high order.

For the first three months of his term here, he acted as treasurer to the Board of Governors and during this period he did a tremendous amount to put the school books back in order.

His main characteristic is enthusiasm for the task in hand. He brooks no delay and carries out the matters entrusted to him without any deviation from his aim. He is interested in school statistics and of his own volition he has compiled comparisons of fifth and sixth form marks and these have been most valuable.

Mr Potter has settled into teaching very well and has been a popular colleague.

I wish him every success in his future career.

*R. B. Twaddle.*

PRINCIPAL.

### 3. A. L. McPhail, Spotswood College



TELEPHONE 5769  
A. L. MCPHAIL, M.A.  
PRINCIPAL

## SPOTSWOOD COLLEGE

NEW PLYMOUTH

20 September 1974

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am pleased to testify on behalf of Mr W.G.Potter who has been a member of the College staff since 1967. He is Head of the Commerce Department and has wide experience in the field of Accounting and Commercial Practice.

He is a most competent head of department, thoroughly well organized with excellent schemes of work and a clear grasp of his own major subjects. His classes achieve pleasing results especially able groups at the fifth and sixth levels.

Mr Potter has written nine texts, book-keeping and commercial practice and these have been well received by teachers in many schools.

He has carried out many extra curricular duties. He has handled all matters relating to the issue, recording and accounting of stationery with the greatest of efficiency. He has prepared our statistics on examination results at the fifth, sixth and seventh levels, quite a considerable task in a school of 1400. He has assisted in the issue of textbooks. In all he does Mr Potter shows great attention to detail, excellent planning and absolute meticulousness in preparation and presentation of material.

He has played his part in all our social activities and we have enjoyed his ability on the piano. He is popular with his colleagues and has fitted easily into our staffroom.

Though Mr Potter has reached retiring age he is a man of vigour who has in fact, not missed a day in the eight years he has been with us. His ability to get on with whatever job he has undertaken is very marked and is appreciated.

I am sorry that the school is losing Mr Potter's valuable services and I wish him the best of good fortune in his retirement. I would commend him without reservation to any Principal who might wish to employ him on a relieving basis for he would give loyal and most efficient service.

The whole staff join with me in wishing Mr and Mrs Potter good fortune in Tauranga.

*A. L. McPhail*  
PRINCIPAL.

4. A. Shepherd, Onewhero District High School



TELEPHONE 21 D

ONEWHERO DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

ONEWHERO

10 Aug, 1959.

To Whom it may concern.

Re: - Mr. William Potter.

This is to certify that Mr Potter has been a competent member of my staff for almost the past two years. Though he came here without previous experience in, or training for teaching, he has earned the respect of both staff & pupils for the capable manner in which he has carried out his duties.

His experience as a Government auditor and his habits of orderliness have proved of great value in initiating the P/Primary Free Text-book Scheme which has been his particular responsibility here. As a result, the main points in his accounting are likely to be adopted by the Auckland Educ. Board for District High Schools.

Mr. Potter has a mind for detail, which fits him for Commercial teaching, his chief subject here. He also takes an interest in hockey, for which he is school coach. He has carried out to my satisfaction every duty asked of him. Furthermore his integrity and earnestness are undoubtedly beyond reproach.

A. Shepherd  
Headmaster.

5. W. R. Edwards, Waiuku College

WAIUKU



COLLEGE

TELEPHONE: 256

BOX 74 WAIUKU

PRINCIPAL: W. R. EDWARDS M.A., Dip.Ed.

19th November, 1963.

This is to state that Mr W.G. Potter has been a member of the staff of this school since February 1961. He was appointed to a Position of Responsibility Class A to supervise the teaching of Commercial subjects and the organization of the Free Textbook Scheme.

In September of last year he was appointed, on my recommendation, to act as Treasurer for the Committee of Management and has continued to act in this capacity for the Board of Governors this year.

Although Mr Potter entered the profession late, he has applied himself with energy and enthusiasm to his teaching work and is regarded by the inspectors as a competent teacher of his subjects - Commercial Practice and Bookkeeping.

Mr Potter's thoroughness carries over into all aspects of his work and is particularly noticeable in his administration of the textbook scheme and in his general school records. On numerous occasions he has voluntarily performed the very valuable task of assembling and tabulating the fifth and sixth form examination results for record purposes. All the work he does of this nature is meticulously neat and accurate.

Although he is not at present engaged in coaching school teams, he was responsible for two years for hockey and did much valuable work.

He has a pleasant equable personality and is well-liked by his fellow staff members. As Principal of the school I have had a hearty respect for the way Mr Potter came to this country, adapted himself to a new community and to a new profession and has earned regard and liking for his competence and his own general personal qualities.

W.R. Edwards, M.A., Dip.Ed.  
PRINCIPAL.

## Appendix I: Grading Letters

### 1. 1958 Grading Letter


Form E. 7/14

All correspondence should be addressed to:  
 "The District Superintendent,  
 Department of Education,  
 Private Bag, Newmarket,  
 Auckland."

Telegraphic Address:  
 "Schools Auckland."

Office Address:  
 "Gillies Avenue,  
 Newmarket,  
 Auckland."

TELEPHONE 23-099

  
 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
 AUCKLAND.

GB:IJM

In replying  
 E. P. F.  
 Please quote these numbers  
 and date below.

9 April 1958

Mr W.G. Potter  
 District High School,  
 ONEWHERE.

Dear Mr Potter,

This is to advise that your post-primary grading for 1958 has been confirmed as follows:-

Teaching	34
Qualifications	12
Service	<u>12</u>
Total	<u>58</u>

Grade II

Yours faithfully,

*L. le F. Ensor*  
 L. le F. ENSOR  
 District Superintendent of Education

### 2. 1966 Grading Letter

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Private Bag,  
 Newmarket,  
 AUCKLAND.  
 - 7 APR 1966

MR W.G. POTTER.  
G. VAIROA COLLEGE  
VAIROA

Dear Sir/Madam,

G R A D I N G

You are notified that your 1966. secondary grading marks are:

Ability in teaching:	<u>48</u>	(maximum 60)
Qualifications:	<u>12</u>	(maximum 20)
Service:	<u>20</u>	(maximum 20)
TOTAL:	<u>80</u>	

The minimum marks required for entry into the various grades are approximately:

Grade II	45	Grade IV	79 ✓
Grade III	61	Grade V	91

Yours faithfully,  
*T.G. Loomb*  
 (T.G. Loomb)  
 for Superintendent of Education

# Appendix J: Will's Salary Card 1958-1964

187735

TEACHERS SALARY RECORD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**NAME:** POTTER, William George  
(Surname) (Christian Name)

Born: 2-7-06  
 Reg'n under M.T. Acts verified: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Oath taken: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Married: 6.6.41  
 (To: Koutse J.)

DEDUCTIONS  
 EBS FROM 20/10 69/1  
 Super. % \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ince.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Increment: MAX.

Salary Service to \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country Service to \_\_\_\_\_  
 Scale II Service to \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: A-1  
 Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE		SCHOOL			POSITION		SALARY WITHINSE.							REMARKS	Grading
Began	Ended	District	Name	Grade	TYPE	Scale	Q	M	Rig.	Add.	Pr.	Total	Less Rent		
1-2-58			Onwhero DHS.	Sec AM		995	62					1057			RE Reg 16 (2)
1-10-58						1015	62					1077			50
2-10-59						1055	62					1107			E13
1-2-60						1055	62					1077			Tax change D/L 260
1-2-60						1115	70					1185			
1-2-61			Wainaku College	P.R.A.		1310	70					1380			D/L 183 R.P. (1/2)
1-4-61						1340	70					1410			E13 and P.P. 4/4
1-10-61						1370	70					1440			RE Reg 16 (2)
1-2-62						1425	70					1495			RE Reg 16 (2)
2-7-62						1470	70					1540			RE Reg 16 (2)
1-8-62						1500	70					1570			RE Reg 16 (2)
1-8-63						1500	70					1570			R.M. inc.
26.1.64						1545	70					1615			G. 301 I.S.I.

Source: Ministry of Education Archives (received 2016).