How, as a serving teacher, can one come to think better about one’s practice? How can one understand the strange contradictions with which one is confronted? How address them? How be a better teacher? And how as a teacher educator, or as someone whose research seeks the better to understand the context and the engagement of education, can one think about these questions with greater precision, with deeper insight, in more penetrating ways? These are questions to which the present special issue responds.

Nigel Tubbs’ *Philosophy of the Teacher* in effect offers two texts in one. Its central section speaks to the serving teacher about the nature of the experience of teaching, but this is framed within a broader, more theoretical discussion that analyses and challenges dominant positions in the philosophy of education, and that examines the cultural conditions within which all this takes place. The result is a rationale for, and account of, an understanding of teaching that reveals tensions in the very experience – tensions that most teachers feel but that rarely figure in theorisations of their work, let alone in familiar prescriptions for better practice.

Nigel Tubbs brings to this project not only the wealth of his own experience in the education of teachers but also profound knowledge of a tradition of philosophy that has always been alert to the complex pressures that teaching and learning exact; his experience of realising these philosophical ideas in practice is reflected in these pages. The result is a challenge to anyone interested in the good of education and the qualities in teachers that this requires.

*Paul Standish*