

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR



THE ACE FORUM FOR POLICY, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN EDUCATION

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An equity revival

Will the policy rhetoric about
equity in education ever be
realised?

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What sort of equity?

Prof. Alan Reid, ACE National President-elect

After many years on the outer, equity appears to be experiencing a revival in Australian education. With the election of the Rudd Labor government in November 2007, the then federal minister of education, Julia Gillard, committed the government to such priorities as lifting retention rates to Year 12 or equivalent to 90 per cent by 2020; sharply increasing rates of participation in higher education for students from 'disadvantaged' backgrounds; and raising literacy and numeracy outcomes, especially for indigenous students where it declared a target of halving the attainment gap in year 12 by 2020.

I applaud this commitment to equity which has continued into the second term of the Labor government. However, it is intriguing that despite its visible presence in policy rhetoric, there is no articulated government view about the meaning of equity. In the absence of such an understanding, policy developed in the name of equity can only be a hit and miss matter.

Indeed, in my view the policies that are claimed to address equity issues – 'transparent accountability', performance pay, and autonomous schools, to name just a few – are more likely to be counterproductive to equity goals than they will be to their realisation. Unless and until there is a serious attempt to theorise equity as a concept and a practice, the policy rhetoric about equity is unlikely ever to be realised.

In the absence of a considered articulation of the meaning of equity in education, the ways in which equity is understood and talked about is largely shaped by the prevailing (dominant) educational ideology. Under the Rudd/Gillard governments the education settlement has rested upon three major premises. The first is that the major purpose of education is to prepare young people for the workforce. That is, education has a largely, though not solely, economic purpose. The second is that schools and school systems operate best when they

compete against each other in an education market where the winners are those who best meet the need of the 'consumers' (parents and students). The third is that the best way to achieve quality in education is through 'transparent accountability' which ensures that information about schools is provided to enable consumer choice, and that schools are motivated by systems of rewards and punishment.

Once education policy is shaped by this triumvirate of policy positions, other aspects of education such as equity, are given a very individualistic framing. Equity policy simply involves identifying who is at risk and then ensuring that these students in particular are the beneficiaries of choice and accountability. This has led to the use of standardised test results (PISA and/or NAPLAN) as the major indicator of educational outcomes. Thus the government has remained in thrall to the endless display of graphs showing Australia's place in PISA test results; and the mantra that the Australian education system is 'high in quality but low in equity', or that Australia has a 'long equity tail'.

However, the identification by PISA or NAPLAN of the disparity between the educational outcomes of, say, indigenous children or children from low socio-economic backgrounds and children from more affluent backgrounds (something about which the education community had been aware for decades), has not led to more detailed research about the causes of such inequalities, but simply to an assertion about the solution – policies borrowed from overseas such as greater accountability, rewards and punishment. If this resulted in improved equity outcomes, it might be defensible. But, just as such approaches have manifestly failed in other parts of the world, so too will they fail in Australia.

We have reached the stage where the dominant discourse about education is based upon a simplification of complex issues. The causes of identified problems are rarely explored, there is often a leap from problem to solution, there is a language of certainty ('it is the right thing to do') and professional educators are rarely trusted and certainly not consulted, except about the detail of policies that have already been determined. This has resulted →

Unless and until there is a serious attempt to theorise equity as a concept and a practice, the policy rhetoric about equity is unlikely ever to be realised.

← in educators being sidelined whilst non-experts in education including economists, journalists, politicians and lawyers make the running. In the United States, for example, the heavy hitters in the corporate world – Gates, Walton, Murdoch – have entered the field, not just as donors of private funds, but as designers of education policy. Using the equity ‘gap’ as their justification, they have poured buckets of money into schemes based on education markets and ‘transparent accountability’. Their ‘solutions’ have been picked up by successive governments and turned into such failed policies as *No Child Left Behind*.

Lindsay Tanner’s recent book *Sideshow* shows how and with what consequences public policy debate generally is being dumbed down in Australia. And yet one would have thought that one area in our society which would not only eschew such techniques, but indeed, model or set the standard for the rest, is education! The point here is that is difficult to develop sophisticated policy approaches to address complex equity issues when education discourse is simplified to this extent.

So what can be done? It is up to educators to become more active in public debates about education and to take the lead in articulating policy possibilities, rather than simply responding to the latest government initiative. Educators must use research and practical experience to show that the quick fixes currently on offer won’t work: addressing equity in education is difficult and complex work, and sustainable long term change will take many years to achieve. Equity in education is a marathon not a sprint. It requires policy processes that are:

- Based on a clear and articulated concept of equity.
- Thorough and systematic and recognise the complexities involved in achieving better educational outcomes for ‘equity groups’.
- Founded on research and inquiry, and an appreciation of the different contexts in which educational practice operates.
- Trialled and evaluated before being spread widely.
- Wary about reinforcing the very inequities that they are designed to address.

The forthcoming ACE conference provides an important space for educators to explore equity in education in the sort of considered and reflective way that is needed to forge new and more socially just directions in education.

The insights from this conference will contribute to an ACE agenda that will inform our ongoing work in this area. I urge you to join us in Sydney on the 14-15 July to contribute to this process. More details about the conference can be found in this issue; and at www.austcolled.com.au. ■

Professor Alan Reid, ACE National President-elect

A system of winners & losers

The majority of Australian students are not well served by the current system, according to sociologist Professor Raewyn Connell. By [Annie May](#).

Education policy needs to be built from the bottom up and first serve the interests of the least advantaged if equity issues are to be properly addressed.

Currently this is not happening in Australian education. Instead it looks after the interests of the privileged first and then adds on measures designed to correct the inequities experienced by the disadvantaged population, says Australian sociologist Professor Raewyn Connell, University Chair in the University of Sydney.

“It is what I call the dirty secret of Australian education, which is a machine of injustice. This is not news to teachers who see class effects at play every day, but it is largely unspoken about,” says Connell.

“School systems were born segregated – by race, gender, religion and class. Today, it is still heavily segregated by class.”

Connell says as long as we live in an unequal society, there will be questions about the connection between schools and social justice. And while there is a wealth of knowledge gathered about this issue, that knowledge is not always used. At the moment, she says, social justice appears to be an “inconvenient question”.

“Instead of social justice we have My School,” she says.

“When you produce league tables, or tables of winners and losers, you are always going to produce great successes – the achievers. But we also produce the losers, forcing failure on people and making it impossible for everyone to come out well.

“A lot of rhetoric exists around bringing about equity in education, but what there is in reality is a mad cycle of producing exclusion, such as through league tables, and then running around trying to fix it in a way that can never



actually solve the problem.

“Rather than thinking the whole set of problems through from the point of view of those not being served by the current system, it is from the perspective of those on top of the heap. And it’s not about criticising or blaming those at the bottom – it’s about asking why the system doesn’t work for them and creating a system that does.”

While this isn’t happening on a national, or even state, level, it is happening in many classrooms.

“Teachers at disadvantaged schools are taking the point of view of those at the bottom of the table. They are going against the greater ‘logic’ that exists, but they know that their only chance of getting through to these kids is to find out what works for them and what doesn’t,” says Connell.

Working against a teacher’s ability to do this and against overall social justice is existing curricula and the planned national curriculum, which Connell says is “built from a culture of privilege”.

“If we want to seriously do something about the scale of inequality in the education system, we have to address the question of curriculum.”

“Curriculum needs to embody the interests and perspectives of the least advantaged.”

It is not that the national curriculum documents are hostile to social justice, rather how the documents will be used which is concerning.

“If they become the basis of the process of standardisation across the country, and that standardisation is linked to a

testing regime and that testing is attached to funding and wages, than the outcomes will be toxic,” says Connell.

“It will kill off the limited scope teachers have to develop locally relevant curriculum. First we had students competing against students, and with the potential of teacher bonuses we get teachers competing against teachers. The importance placed on developing an appropriate curriculum, one that best serves the students, will almost be obliterated by the importance of test results – high stakes testing, which is also linked to funding, creates fierce pressure

for teachers to teach to the test. It creates an almost business model where schools are treated as firms and principals as managers, all focusing on outdoing their competition.”

An increasing focus on competition, brought about by such initiatives as the My School website, will only be beneficial to the “privileged minority”.

“The logic of having a system where there will be some at the top of the table and others at the bottom goes against the idea of the much talked about ‘commitment’ to equity in education,” says Connell.

“Competition is a reflection of privilege, as well as producing privilege.”

The label of disadvantaged also needs to be reviewed when it comes to talking about equity in Australian education.

“The majority of the kids in the school system are not well served by the current regime. It’s important to break with the cycle of grouping students into advantaged and disadvantaged. The reality is that students perform on a gradient scale and those at the very top, the ones that are getting the most advantage out of the current regime, are in the minority,” says Connell.

The idea that comparisons of schools provide parents with the necessary information to choose the best school to send their children – and therefore creating more quality for students – has been challenged by many academics, educators and commentators. This includes Connell.

“My School should add a footnote that says the information is only useful for middleclass parents. Upper class parents will in the majority of the cases already be sending their children to the most privileged schools and those from low SES families simply don’t have a choice.”

While critical of the current education system, Connell says there is reason to be optimistic.

“Education can function as a means of mobility. In gender terms, the growth in the number of females completing university shows that inequalities in the education system aren’t fixed.

“A socially just education system is possible. We just have to start asking the right questions.” ■

The logic of having a system where there will be some at the top of the table and others at the bottom goes against the idea of the much talked about ‘commitment’ to equity in education.



Education Equity
Connecting for Change

Australian College of Educators
National Conference 2011
Sydney, 13-15 July

Aerial Function Centre,
University of Technology Sydney

NEW Program Inclusion

Smarter schools

National Partnerships

A case study of equity driven reform

The May 2011 budget confirmed that the National Partnerships are not being extended beyond their initial life of 3 years for Literacy and Numeracy and Teacher Quality and 5 years for the Low SES School Communities. The session will be organized around key questions:

Has this been enough time to make a difference – a difference that is sustainable post the funding?

- These Agreements necessitated a long planning negotiation timeframe and implementation did not gain momentum until 2010. Now less than 18 months later states and territories need to plan for managing without this funding
- According the Dr Jim McMorrow this decrease in funds is equivalent to a loss of 2800 teachers – how will this be managed without negative consequences – what might those consequences be?

What happens when funding is tied up as reward funds for achieving targets?

- Did states and territories resort to “gaming the system” to get rewards – what are the impacts of this?
- Will schools and school systems ever see any reward funds received by their Treasuries?
- Did this set up give the Commonwealth the leverage it needed?

Did the Agreements really deliver on the promise of bringing a new approach to the funding of reforms in schools?

Tom Calma in his 2008 Social Justice report made some trenchant criticisms about the on -again, off-again funding for high need schools with programs going in and out of favour and placing heavy administrative burdens on schools. Has this mode of funding solved some of this?

Background to the Smarter School National Partnership Panel Discussion

The Three Smarter Schools National Partnership Agreements (NPs) (Literacy and Numeracy, Teacher Quality and Low SES School Communities) are a product of the ambitious COAG productivity which radically changed intergovernmental arrangements in Commonwealth state educational funding.

In many ways these NPs were a new beast – a new way of doing business, because they:

- Required Government, and non Government systemic and independent schools to work together to deliver one state/territory plan
- Represented a shift away from on-off single purpose programs, enabled planning on a more whole-of-school, and even beyond school, planning frame
- Identified an agreed list of mostly compulsory and some optional reforms against which all states/territories had to report
- Required states and systems to identify participating schools and justify their selection based on agreed data
- Included a mixture of facilitation reforms and reward reforms – with the latter dependent on states/territories achieving an agreed output, outcome or goal
- Introduced into the process a neutral arbiter the COAG Reform Council with the task of assessing the adequacy of the reforms.



Practitioners, evaluators, policy makers and administrators involved in the planning and implementation of strategies funded under National Partnership Agreements are particularly encouraged to attend

Full conference program and registration at www.austcolled.com.au

HEADLINE here

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Finding the hidden talent

The government is being urged to look to aptitude testing to increase student diversity in higher education, writes [Annie May](#).



As universities continue to try and meet looming diversity targets, the push to expand selection criteria is gaining momentum.

In the last issue of *Professional Educator*, Nigel Palmer, lead author of a report on the nation's admissions strategies and research fellow at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne put forward a number of ways universities could select students, outside of the tertiary entrance rank.

This included a 'class rank' system, entry based portfolios and assessment of prior academic achievement. While not addressed in the article, in the report, Palmer also said there was a scope for the increased use of tests of aptitude and preparedness.

A range of these tests are in use in Australia and internationally, such as the Special Tertiary Admissions Test, uniTEST, and the General Achievement Test.

Palmer said the use of such aptitude tests, supplementary to other criteria, could potentially identify the likelihood of university success among "middle band" ATAR.

Continuing this train of thought, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) have

released a report calling for the wider use of aptitude testing to ensure that "senior secondary students with the capacity to do well at university are able to gain admission"

The report is an evaluation of the government funded Student Aptitude Test for Tertiary Admission (SATTA) pilot program that began in 2007. The program involves the supply, management and evaluation of uniTEST – an aptitude test that assesses reasoning and thinking across the two broad domains of mathematics and science, and humanities and social sciences. The test, developed by ACER together with Cambridge Assessment, was designed to complement existing selection criteria such as the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

Six universities participated in the pilot across three years, in which time almost 1500 people sat the test. Of those about 400 gained admission – 165 of which, the report said, would not have been admitted to university if their achievement at the end of high school had been the sole criterion.

"...uniTEST was able to facilitate the admission to university of students who otherwise would not have received a place, and that these students performed on par with their counterparts who gained entry through other means, most commonly through Year 12 scores," the report found.

"While the evidence is limited, both uniTEST and control group students appeared to report similar levels of academic engagement as well as learning and skill development. It has the potential to identify 'latent talent' and facilitate the inclusion of able individuals in the system.

There are three parts to uniTEST, each of which consists of 30 multiple choice questions:

- Quantitative Reasoning deals with interpreting mathematical and scientific information and problem solving.

- Critical Reasoning deals with making decisions on the basis of information provided and with

→

New website launched

The first phase of the National Professional Standards for Teachers website: www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au was recently launched by the Chair of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), Mr Anthony Mackay, at the third National AITSL Stakeholder Forum.

The Standards, endorsed in February by the Ministerial Council for Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), were a highlight of the Forum.

Developed to provide teachers with information and support about the Standards, the website will be a space to collaborate and share evidence.

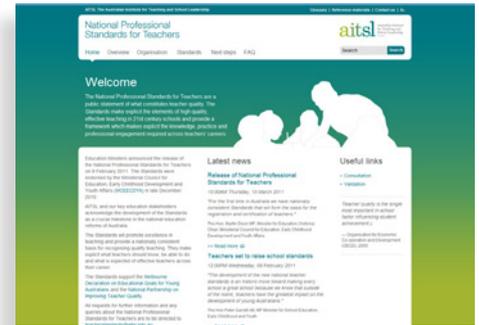
An easy-to-use platform, the teachers' website offers multiple entry points for educators to explore and work with the Standards specific to their own needs.

The Standards make explicit what is expected of teachers, what they should know and be able to do. They cover the three domains of teaching: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement at four career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead.

The stages reflect the continuum of a teacher's developing professional expertise, from undergraduate preparation through to being an exemplary classroom practitioner and a leader in the profession.

AITSL is developing supporting documentation and processes along with the elaborations, exemplars and evidence guides. At the same time AITSL is working with all jurisdictions, sectors, principal and professional associations toward implementation of the Standards.

The website provides a community of shared resources providing the capacity for teachers to delve into the exemplars and elaborations for each stage of the Standards. Teachers will be able to add to the repository of information available with their own examples, interacting with other teachers about the resources available. They will be able to rate them and in turn shape the nature of way they determine their own professional development.



"For the first time in Australia we have an agreed set of Standards for teachers. But, they will not be worth anything unless teachers engage with them in their schools."

Margery Evans, Chief Executive Officer, AITSL

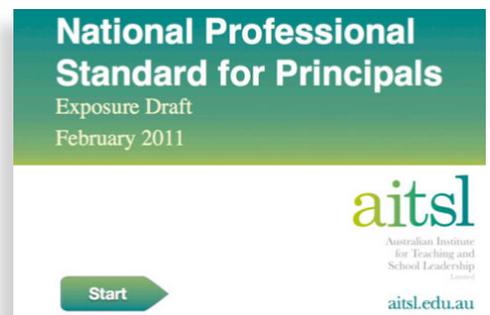
AITSL's 1st App

Released on Friday 13 May 2011 AITSL's first App for ipads and iPhones is available free worldwide on the Apple iTunes store in a first for the organisation.

The App lays out the exposure draft of the National Professional Standard for Principals. The Standard is represented as an integrated model that recognises three leadership requirements that a principal draws upon within five areas of professional practice.

Pilot studies to test the exposure draft have recently been concluded with the findings being the main focus of AITSL's first Leadership Symposium.

AITSL is keen to ensure that the next version of the App is ready for release with the finalisation of the Standard later this year.



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← the ability to analyse argument in a logical fashion – topics relevant to scientific, technical, business and humanities type subjects.

- Verbal and Plausible Reasoning, which deals with interpretation of passages in a socio-cultural context, and is based on the type of reasoning typical in the arts, humanities and social sciences.

For those who do not have a suitable final year school mark, aptitude tests are seen to open the possibilities for access to tertiary study.

“Australia is actively seeking to boost participation in higher education with new funding and regulatory arrangements but nothing will change unless we seriously address admissions,” report co-author, ACER Higher Education research director, Associate Professor Hamish Coates said in a statement.

“This report provides strong evidence that information from aptitude testing can help institutions manage the rush of additional applications.”

During the trial, one respondent said: “As the Bradley review is rolled out aptitude tests could provide a means to identify students with the capacity for higher education studies but who lack conventional TER or other means of entry.”

“Scores appear to be particularly helpful for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds, and have been shown to be less influenced by important characteristics like socioeconomic status,” the report said.

As well as widening participation, the report found aptitude tests could be used by students to identify their own strengths and weaknesses in particular subject areas. This could potentially highlight a more successful pathway into the degree or career that suits their preferences.

While the results are promising, the report points out that “many of the results are statistically inconclusive, due largely to the small and idiosyncratic nature of the available sample”.

However it does conclude that success at university is better predicted by uniTEST than by Year 12 results. But, the two in combination provide a more “powerful means of predicting first-year performance than either measure on its own”.

UniTEST has a supporter in Steven Schwartz, vice-chancellor of Macquarie University, which took part in the study.

“Universities should use a multitude of admission criteria and not just rely on the tertiary entrance score,” he wrote in his blog.

“Because of their lack of access to good schools, students from economically deprived backgrounds, rural and remote students and many students with a disability fail to gain admissions scores high enough to get them into university.

“Yet, these students may be perfectly capable of succeeding if they were given the chance. We need an admissions system that can find hidden talent that is not revealed by ATAR scores.”

ACER’s report recommends that “nationally coordinated implementation of uniTEST should be considered as a means of improving the transparency, efficiency and international relevance of university admissions in Australia”.

However, DEEWR, which released the report, said the government does not intend to direct universities to undertake specific enrolment practices.

“Given the low uptake in the pilot program the Department’s view is that definitive conclusions about the value of uniTEST are not possible at this point in time.” ■

A NEW ADMISSIONS ARCHITECTURE

Hypothetical ways of how institutions may use information of aptitude tests to increase diversity include:

- 50 per cent of places are allocated on the basis of ATAR and 50 per cent allocated on aptitude assessment for a number of its courses. This strategy is designed to diversify the student intake and to offer prospective students alternative ways of demonstrating their suitability for admission.
- 90 per cent of places are allocated on ATAR and 10 per cent on results from aptitude assessment plus Statements of Recommendation.
- Applicants must achieve a threshold band on the aptitude assessment for the field of study for which they are applying, following which selection is based on ATAR. This strategy is used to ensure suitability for particular careers.
- Applicants must achieve a threshold ATAR, following which selection is based on aptitude assessment. This strategy is also used to ensure suitability for particular careers.
- Students must achieve a threshold band score on aptitude assessment in order to be later judged on the basis of their design portfolio. This approach places no emphasis on school achievement but looks instead to demonstrated talent in creative areas.
- Students with an ATAR above 80 or an aptitude assessment above a certain band gain entry to a ballot for the allocation of places. A strategy such as this might be used for high demand courses in which ATAR and aptitude assessment results are both known to be predictors of academic success in tertiary education.
- Students with an ATAR above 80 are admitted. Students with ATAR in the 70-80 regions may be selected on the basis of aptitude assessment.
- Applicants are selected on the basis of ATAR set at a certain level and an aptitude test score that has been weighted to reflect the course in which the candidate has applied (for example a science applicant might have the quantitative reasoning section double-weighted).
- Entry is entirely based on portfolios.

Source: *Evaluation Report on the Student Aptitude Test for Tertiary Admission (SATA) Pilot Program*

Scores appear to be particularly helpful for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds, and have been shown to be less influenced by important characteristics like socioeconomic status.

Tackling gender issues



will increase the talent pool

While the number of women enrolled in university continues to grow, gender still remains an issue in some disciplines.

Universities in Australia need to urgently reduce the male stereotypes that exist in engineering and construction industries curriculum, as both an issue of social justice and to alleviate a national skills shortage, says researchers.

Australia, like many other countries, is in desperate need of more engineers. Tens of thousands have retired in the past five years and only half that number is graduating from university, resulting in a “chronic” shortage of staff with the necessary expertise.

This is not news, and has seen a number of reports and recommendations put forward on how universities can produce more engineering graduates. Government, industry and university institutions efforts over the past years to do this have resulted in some increase in the number of students studying undergraduate engineering.

But it was only moderate, with a 7 per cent increase in commencing domestic students in bachelors of engineering in 2007 and about a 10 per cent increase in 2008 and 2009, according to the Australian National Engineering Taskforce (ANET).

And many believe future increases will continue to be moderate unless the gendered nature of the curriculum is acknowledged, and addressed, to open the doors to more women.

There have been many campaigns and initiatives in the past 30 years to increase the number of women in the engineering profession and in entrants to engineering degrees; however they continue to be in the minority.

The ANET report *Scoping Our Future*, released at the end of last year, stated the figure remains “unacceptably low”.

It reported that women made up only 16 per cent of commencing undergraduate students in engineering, and 9.5 per cent of those with tertiary qualifications in engineering working in engineering or related occupations.

Attracting and retaining more women students to engineering is not only an issue of equity, but one of practical supply. Painting a picture of what ‘could be’, the report said measures to increase engineering commencements for women up to average higher education participation rates for women would create additional 5958 engineering undergraduate commencements per year if male rates remained static.

However for this to occur, a more gender inclusive curriculum and classroom environment needs to be created.

A recently completed ALTC-funded project, ‘Gender Inclusive Curriculum in Engineering and Construction Management’ aims to assist universities

to do just that through a set of new guidelines.

According to project leader Professor Julie Mills from the University of South Australia, continued low numbers of female engineering students are in stark comparison with other traditionally male-dominated professions such as law and medicine, where gender equity in terms of student enrolments is vastly improved.

Many books and reports have been written on improving engineering education and addressing the skills shortage in the construction industry, but, Mills says, most do not acknowledge the problem of gender disparity.

Gender therefore remains the “elephant in the engineering classroom”.

“In the last 30 years, [female enrolments for] law and medicine have gone from almost nothing to 50-50. While engineering has gone from nothing to around 15 per cent and [participation] percentages for construction management are lower still.”

At least some of these gender equity issues, particularly those of student retention, can be addressed by changing the way that engineering curriculum at universities is approached, says Mills and the project team.

For many, the engineering curriculum

is perceived as being shaped with the over-use of masculine stereotypes and examples, such as cars, rockets and weapons. For it to be more inclusive, these male stereotypes need to be reduced.

“A lot of people think [curriculum] is just straight content. They say fluid mechanics, thermodynamics and so on are just scientific principles and that they’re not gendered in any way. But the fact is that the way they are taught in terms of things like the examples that are used to illustrate theories can be gendered,” says Mills.

“With thermodynamics, lecturers are always talking about car engines but thermodynamics can also be used to talk about diet, calorific content of food and so on,” she said.

The guidelines ask academics involved in designing and teaching engineering courses to consider the different experiences of students from diverse backgrounds – gender as well as cultural – and whether all, if any,

AIMS OF AN INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM ARE TO:

- Respect every student as an individual
- Enable every student to reach his or her potential
- Recognise, acknowledge and respect the diversity of student interests, values, perspectives, prior experiences, ambitions, learning styles and home circumstances and to use these differences to enrich the learning experience of all students.
- Pay attention to student feedback and evaluations of the informal learning environment as well as to formal coursework, and take these into account in reviewing the curriculum.

have “tinkering” experience such as working with car engines. It then suggests that an inclusive curriculum will include introductory ‘how-to-use’ laboratory and computer sessions as part of the program for those who have never had the sort of experience often

assumes, like playing with mechanical or electronic toys, or dismantling a car. These shouldn’t be put forward as remedial sessions but open to all students.

Of course, Mills says, not all men are interested in car engines or women in diets but studies show that broadening curriculum is beneficial to all students.

“It has been shown that if you consciously set about making curriculum more inclusive for women you end up not just improving [female students’] outcomes you improve all student outcomes. And if broadening the curriculum benefits all students, you really have nothing to lose.”

Suggested amendments to the accreditation criteria for engineering programs developed by the project team are expected to be adopted by Engineers Australia later this year.

The guidelines are available from www.altc.edu.au/June2011-addressing-gender-equity-engineering. ■

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intergenerational mobility exists, with almost one-third of Australians aged 30–44 achieved tertiary education despite their father's low level of education, the report says Australia still has “some way to go”, with the number of current university students with a low socio-economic background still below set targets.

The report, *Unequal Opportunities: Life Chances for Children in the “Lucky Country”*, released by The Smith Family and the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, also found those who had a father who attained a university degree, earned about \$280 more per week than those whose father's highest education level was Year 10 or below.

“We have some way to go before the equitable and fair values we believe in as a society are reflected in the achievements of the next generation,” says Dr Lisa O’Brien, chief executive officer of The Smith Family.

Growing up in a single parent family has also been shown to be associated with a lack of financial resources and therefore education pathways.

Of those who grew up in a two parent family, 42 per cent went on to achieve a university degree, compared to 32 per cent of those from a single parent family. Those who grew up in a single parent family were more likely to have only completed Year 12 or less, than those with two parents in the household. The differences in outcomes are likely to be driven by the underlying economic differences that exist between family types, said the authors.

“The importance of education and sufficient financial resources to equip children and youth with the skills they need to succeed in life, to open doors and enhance social mobility, are well documented,” says O’Brien.

So, she asks, how is Australia faring for the next generation?

People who have a university-educated father are more likely to obtain a university degree, as are those who grow up in a two parent family.

This is according to new research that puts into question that Australia is the land of the “fair go”, where all children have the opportunity to reach their potential regardless of their background.

Analysing social mobility, the report compared the lives and backgrounds of 13,000 university graduates currently aged 30 to 45 and revealed what is already widely known – higher wage and educational attainment levels are much more likely for those who come from well-off families.

It found more than 65 per cent of those with a university-qualified father had also achieved a university degree, compared with 53 per cent of those whose father had reached Year 11 or 12; 42 per cent of those whose father had a vocational qualification, and 29 per cent of those whose father had stayed at school until Year 10 or less.

While showing that some degree of

ces matter

Higher wages and greater educational attainment are more frequently achieved by people from well off families than from poorer families.

Growing up in a jobless household is a well established measure of child wellbeing, including their future educational and work opportunities. While the proportion of children living in jobless homes decreased significantly in the eight years to 2009, large inequalities remain in terms of financial resources available to parents during their children's formative years.

According to the report, children living in the richest households have on average 3.1 times the household income of children living in the poorest household, and 75 per cent of children living in a jobless household have done so for two years - an indication of the entrenched nature of this disadvantage.

"This research looks at social mobility between generations and equality of opportunity as key indicators essential to our country's progress; from an equity perspective but also an economic perspective. It demonstrates an urgent need for action to change the status quo for those living in disadvantage," says O'Brien.

Being able to afford basic necessities such as a decent home to live in, food on the table and clothing is as important as it ever has been, but increasingly other resources attached to education such as computers, access to the internet and school excursions are becoming more and more important.

When families can't afford these resources, children have been found to struggle to fit-in, with their confidence and aspirations suffering.

The report illustrated this with the words of one 18-year-old: "[Having low funds]...I suppose it made me feel very awkward and shy among my peers and teachers, resulting in me no participating in class activities and getting low grades."

Other additional educational supports that can be purchased by more affluent families, including summer schools, tutoring, extracurricular activities, sports

and leadership camps, all contribute towards inequality of opportunity and a less than even playing field for kids from low SES backgrounds to compete on.

As these children grow up, the report shows that parents may also struggle to offer guidance with school work and career choices and they can be further impacted by the lack of role models in their extended family network helping to

by 2020.

Low SES students currently comprise around 15 per cent of all students enrolled in a bachelor level degree, while high SES students make up around 44 per cent of all university students.

"The evidence is profound and the economics clear that early intervention in the lives of disadvantaged children is the most powerful way to ensure a better

Those who had a father who attained a university degree, earned about \$280 more per week than those whose father's highest education level was Year 10 or below.

influence job and study choices.

Access to and participation in higher education has been shown to increase life opportunities and outcomes for individuals – particularly those from a low socio-economic background.

In 2008, the federal government implemented a recommendation from the Bradley Review into higher education, which sets a goal of low SES background students making up 20 per cent of all enrolled university students

start in life for the next generation. This requires a new approach to education that recognises the multitude of skills that children need to thrive in a modern society, and the relationships they need to support them in their learning across the life course," says O'Brien.

"Enabling these children to thrive, rather than survive, will change the future for all Australians and bring a whole range of better outcomes for our society," concludes. ■

Sins of the father

In explaining the reports use of a father's education level as the measurement of socio-economic status, the authors said the approach of using a geographic socio-economic score, based on the current address of the student has many issues. This includes the variability of persons living within a geographic area.

"A measure based on geography assumes that a person residing in a low socio-economic area is themselves from a low socioeconomic background. Another obvious flaw of this measure is that students often move away from their home in order to study at university, so using the current address of the student can be misleading in terms of capturing their socio-economic background," write the authors.

"The father's education level has been found to be one of the most reliable measures of the socio-economic status of a family. Low SES has been defined as those persons whose father's highest educational attainment was year 10 or below, and high SES is defined as those whose father's highest educational attainment was university level."

In the absence of a father in the household, the mother's educational attainment has been used.

ACE EVENTS

13 July

ACE NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S DINNER

Pre-conference event, Guest Speaker – Mr Ross Gittins
7.00 for 7.30 pm

Aerial Function Centre, University of Technology Sydney
Members \$88 Non-members \$110
www.austcolled.edu.au or call 1800 208 586

14-15 July

ACE 2011 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Equity in education: Connecting for change
Australia College of Educators Conference
A conference for teachers, educators, researchers, policy developers interested in equity in Australia
The Conference will bring together practitioner experience, policy, philosophy, and research. It will draw on two research projects commissioned by ACE. The conference aims to identify strategic policy priorities for ACE to pursue in its research and advocacy role; as well new ways to enhance democratic engagement by ACE members in policy analysis, development and advocacy.

Aerial Function Centre, University of Technology Sydney
Early bird Members \$429 Non-members \$649 (ends 1 July)
www.austcolled.edu.au or call 1800 208 586

25 July

ANNUAL POSTER PRESENTATION LECTURE EVENING

ACE NSW Branch in conjunction with NSW Teachers Guild

Trinity Grammar School, Dining Hall
119 Prospect Road, Summer Hill, NSW
www.austcolled.edu.au or call 1800 208 586

5 August

SIR HAROLD WYNDHAM MEDAL DINNER

ACE NSW State Branch
Waterview Convention Centre, Homebush, Sydney NSW
www.austcolled.edu.au or call 1800 208 586

6 August

AGM AND STATE BRANCH MEETING

10.00 am
ACE NSW State Branch
Catholic Education Office, Renwick Street, Leichardt, NSW
www.austcolled.edu.au or call 1800 208 586

19 August

DIRECTIONS FOR EDUCATION GLOBALLY – IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Presented by Keith Bartley, DECS Chief Executive
ACE SA Branch
7.45-10.20 am
Adelaide Pavilion Conference and Function Rooms, South Terrace, Adelaide
Members \$50 Non-members \$65
www.austcolled.edu.au or call 1800 208 586 for further information and bookings

22 August

2011 ACE ON THE SPOT

Building Learning Power – Schools that Teach Confidence, Curiosity & Creativity
Professor Guy Claxton, University of Winchester, UK.
Ace ACT Branch
4.00-6.00pm
University of Canberra
Members \$40.00 Non-members \$50

OTHER EVENTS

5 August

JEANS FOR GENES DAY

By donating a gold coin, educators and students can support the Children's Medical Research Institute in its quest to unravel the mysteries of childhood diseases.

Contact: Nermeen Yacoub
Phone: 1800 GENIES (436 437)
Website: www.jeansforgenes.org.au

29-30 August

2011 VICTORIAN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Contact: office@vitta.org.au
Phone: 03 9495 6836
Website: www.vitta.org.au/conferenceinfo

10-11 September

QUEENSLAND EDUCATION RESOURCES EXPO

Education professionals from all levels and institutions can test and purchase resources and services, and discover innovative ideas. Featuring a workshop and seminar program on education issues. Register online for free tickets.

Place: Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre
Email: interchange@onthenet.com.au
Website: www.quedrex.com.au

6 August

SHOW ME THE MONEY: LIFTING LEVELS OF CONSUMER AND FINANCIAL LITERACY IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Venue: The University of Sydney
Website: Sydney.edu.au/
education_social_work/professional_learning

EVENT COMING UP?

Please send details to:

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deborahc@austcolled.com.au

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Australian College of Educators

ACE is dedicated to providing an independent voice for educators and advancing the education profession. ACE provides the forum in which educators can inform themselves; discuss and debate issues; and seek to find shared solutions to current educational questions.

Advancing the profession through support, networking and research - for the success of all Australia's educators

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Cristina Sandri FACE
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A forum for debate and communication with the responsibility for ensuring the interests of members at State level are considered in planning and decision making.

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 SAMary Asikas FACE
 TasDavid Kronenberg MACE
 Vic.....Annette Rome MACE
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Regional Committees

Are responsible for promoting the College goals by providing strategic activities and initiatives for members in the local area.

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To contact any Board or Council member or regional committee:
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- Opportunity to have input to ACE education policy development, publications and activities
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- On line learning groups
- Discounts for ACE publications and events
- Discounts with ACE partners
- Monthly electronic newsletter and fresh website with news and articles relevant to the profession
- Celebration and recognition of the profession – local and national awards programs
- Free issues of "Professional Educator" (6/year) and "Education Review" (8/year)

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Fellowship of the Australian

Fellowship of the Australian College of Educators is one of the highest honours that the College can bestow. It is seen by College Members and Fellows, and by the wider education community, to be recognition of outstanding and distinctive contributions to the advancement of education.

The College awards Fellowships on the recommendation of its National Awards Committee.

Nominations must also receive prior consideration by Branch Awards Committees.

COLLEGE FELLOWS 2011

The Australian College of Educators is delighted to announce the College Fellows for 2011. These awards were granted to educators who have been judged by their peers to have made a distinctive contribution to education in Australia. Congratulations to all award recipients.



Mr Tom Alegounaris, New South Wales

For outstanding leadership in the recognition of the profession of education, and for commitment to the

development of state and national policy to provide quality education for all students.



Mr Craig Bassingthwaighe, Queensland

For an outstanding contribution to student learning and engagement,

and to the enhancement of professional practice for educators, particularly in regional education.



Professor John Bennett, New South Wales

For outstanding contributions to the development of educational assessment and credentialing

in New South Wales, nationally and internationally, particularly in the field of standards-referenced assessment and education more broadly.



Dr Richard Berlach, Western Australia

For significant impact within the field of teacher education in Western Australia as a lecturer, course developer,

research academic and post graduate supervisor.



Mr Brian Burgess, Victoria

For an extensive and distinctive contribution to education, representing principals' interest and

advocating for principals through a number of professional associations.



Dr Simon Clarke, Western Australia

For distinctive contribution to education, particularly in Western Australia and for the advancement of educational

studies through sustained excellence and scholarship.



Professor Toni Downes, New South Wales

For an outstanding contribution to theory and practice in education and Information and

Communication Technologies for the school and teacher education sectors, both nationally and internationally and for visionary leadership and innovation in teacher education nationally and in institutions of higher education.



Ms Jann Eason, New South Wales

For exceptional and unique contributions over two decades to the education and training of students at risk

and those experiencing significant economic, social and academic disadvantage leading to positive outcomes, greater work and higher education opportunities.



Mr Michael Eller, New South Wales

For distinguished, innovative, passionate and visionary leadership in working with staff to design, resource and

implement education programs that achieve diverse outcomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, many of whom face tough challenges in completing their education due to socio-economic and social disadvantage.



Mrs Mary Fitz-Gerald, Victoria

Outstanding commitment and contributions to the education of girls in school and society as a principal, level

coordinator, team and network member, and as an international leader.



Mr Andrew Fraser, New South Wales

For outstanding contributions to educational scholarship and leadership within the catholic education

system and professional associations, through his promotion of innovative practices and paradigms for effective learning and teaching, and through his supportive processes for building teacher capacity.



Mr Roderick Fraser, Victoria

For exceptional achievements and leadership in international education organisations and adopting

an international approach to schooling.



Ms Megan Hansen, Victoria

For distinctive and wide ranging contributions to education, particularly in the area of improved classroom

practice, school leadership and women's leadership and improving student welfare through developing protective behaviours.

n College Of Educators



Mr Peter Hauser, Queensland

For demonstrated contributions to leadership in Australian secondary schools, particularly in the education of boys, and to the broader educational community.



Dr Kim Jaggar, New South Wales

For outstanding leadership in secondary education and advocacy of gifted education at state, national and tertiary levels that has effectively revitalised education for gifted and talented students through strategic initiatives designed to bring improvements to the student experience and to increase connections with community stakeholders.



Miss Leesa Jeffcoat, Queensland

For sustained and quality leadership of education within Queensland especially in curriculum development and delivery, and commitment to the quality of student outcomes.



Dr Berenice Mary Kerr, New South Wales

For outstanding contributions to education generally and Catholic education in particular in the areas of policy development, school and system governance, Vocational Education and Training and school improvement.



Mrs Anne McDonald, Victoria

For excellence in education through inspirational leadership and contribution to the professional development of teachers.



Professor Barbara Pamphilon, Australian Capital Territory

For leadership as an academic and practitioner in the fields of health education, community development, trans-national education and participatory evaluation.



Dr David Paterson, New South Wales

For outstanding leadership in special education and educational psychology, through teaching, research and community outreach and for his contribution to teacher education, schools and professional associations.



Professor Field Rickards, Victoria

For an outstanding contribution at a national and international level to the education of hearing impaired children through academic leadership, research, innovation, publications and consultancies.



Ms Annette Rome, Victoria

For strong, energetic, strategic, collaborative and effective leadership in science education, equity programs and professional associations, earning the respect and admiration of her colleagues and community.



Ms Pam Ronan, South Australia

For collaborative and innovative school leadership within a regional setting that has opened up diverse opportunities for young people, within arts, vocational learning and academia, and influence on regional developments, relationships and culture.



Dr Diane Russell, South Australia

For initiating and fostering programs in remote communities of South Australia, enabling young Indigenous Australians to enhance their educational options, participation and achievement.



Dr Maxwell Shaw, New South Wales

For perceiving the potential contribution that vocational education could make to all students in the suite of subject offerings and educational outcomes in the senior secondary years, and courageously proceeding to establish and develop the first Registered Training Organisation as an activity of an independent school in Australia.



Ms Karen Spiller, Queensland

For an outstanding contribution to education and particularly the education of young women and the encouragement and nurturing of women leaders.



Ms Jane Swift, South Australia

For a significant contribution to Catholic education through inspirational leadership, especially in the areas of preparation of future leaders, teaching and learning, child protection, innovative and futures oriented school structures and women in leadership.



Mr Patrick Waring, Victoria

For a sustained contribution to primary education and to the education of the deaf for over 20 years as a respected Principal in government primary schools and has demonstrated exemplary leadership in a range of settings.



Mr John Whitehouse, Victoria

For an outstanding and distinctive contribution to education through leadership to teachers in Victoria, particularly through innovation in pre-service education, research, professional learning and curriculum development.



Professor Sue Willis, Victoria

For thirty years service to education policy and administration and as a leading national and international education scholar, policy maker and educational administrator.



Bringing public back the purposes of education

By: Professor Alan Reid (University of South Australia, ACE President-elect), Professor Neil Cranston (University of Tasmania), Professor Jack Keating (University of Melbourne), Professor Bill Mulford (University of Tasmania)

At a time when the next lot of education policy are to be introduced, educators and their professional associations need to hold the government to account for the contradictions that exist between its rhetorical commitment to the public purposes of education and the policies it is using to achieve these. Instead of first asking how a policy will advantage my child and my school, the debate should start with asking what does this policy contribute to the common good of the education system as a whole?

Introduction

Historically, Australian schools have been seen as being central to the project of nation building. That is, as well as enhancing the life chances of individuals, schooling also had a number of public purposes which included, for example, building skills for the economy, and fostering citizenship understandings and dispositions for the polity.

These public purposes were refined in public discussion as Australian education expanded slowly. However, in the latter part of the 20th century this settlement around the public purposes of Australian schools has been disrupted for a number of reasons. These include the significant social, economic and cultural changes that are altering our society and economy; the changing political settlement resulting from the decision to provide state funding to private schools; and the dominance of neo-liberal ideology and its focus on public choice theory.

These trends and the responses to them are reshaping schooling. And yet there has been little analysis of the implications of these changes for the purposes of education. This has meant, in turn, that there is no benchmark against which to make and evaluate educational policy and practice. In our view, this is partly due to the lack of clarity about the

meaning of the concept of educational purposes, and specifically public purposes. Given the amount of state and federal money that is put into the schooling sector each year, it is crucial that the Australian community and its educators are clear about the purposes of public expenditure on education and the extent to which these are being realised.

With this goal in mind the four authors of this article combined with the Australian Government Primary Principals Association (AGPPA) and the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA), to apply for an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant to fund a research project to explore the following questions:

- How are the purposes of schooling understood in the literature?
- What are the public purposes of education today and why should they be central to education policy and practice?
- How are the purposes of education, and specifically its public purposes, understood and enacted in Australian primary schools and the wider community?

and the role of the media, case studies of schools, and an Australia-wide survey of Australian government primary principals. This article outlines the processes of the research and some of our key findings.

How do we understand the concept of the public purposes of education, what are they and why are they central?

Educational practice is informed by its purposes; and such purposes are the outcome of political processes, resulting in broad 'settlements' which shape educational discourses at particular historical moments. The literature review in our project suggests that there are three broad purposes of education - democratic, individual and economic.

- The democratic purpose is located in a society that expects its schools to prepare all young people to be active and competent participants in democratic life (ie from perspective of the citizen). Since this benefits the society as a whole it is a public purpose.
- The individual purpose aims to

are all important) but there will always be a dominant purpose which shapes the policy parameters and the discourse in education. Of course educational purposes are not simply represented in official statements of missions and goals. They are shaped and delivered – both intentionally and unintentionally – through policy and practice in many different ways in schools and education systems which can be grouped into three modalities of schooling. These include:

- the structure of schooling, such as the ways in which formal schooling is organised and funded which contain hidden messages about how the society is/should be structured, ordered and maintained;
- the official curriculum, such as organisation of knowledge, including which knowledge is selected and omitted; assessment and reporting practices; and pedagogy;
- the culture and processes of education systems and schools, such as social relationships, the nature of decision-making processes, the school ethos and so on – all of which give out messages about what is valued.

A healthy education system is one where there is strong compatibility within and between the modalities of schooling and the stated purposes of education. One way of thinking about the relationship between the modalities and the purposes of schooling is to use the metaphor of the body – where the institution of the school (or the education system itself) is the body; the purposes of schooling are the heart; and the modalities are the arteries. If the arteries get 'clogged' as a result of being incompatible with the heart, then the body will suffer. In short, to achieve a healthy education system means ensuring that there is a strong compatibility within and between the modalities of schooling and the stated purposes of education.

Under the Howard government, the major educational purpose was an individual one, dominated by the ideology of choice and resulting in increased competition between schools. Education was treated as a commodity. There is now enough empirical research around the world for us to understand the social effects of constructing education around

Given the amount of state and federal money that is put into the schooling sector each year, it is crucial that the Australian community and its educators are clear about the purposes of public expenditure on education and the extent to which these are being realised.

- What are the factors that facilitate and/or inhibit the enactment of these public purposes in schools?
- What are the implications for educational policy and practice?
- How can the findings of the project contribute to professional strategies for school principals, and on-going discourses about the public purposes of schooling and their successful enactment?

In late 2006 we learned that our application had been successful and the research commenced in 2007 and concluded in June 2010. It involved literature reviews, analyses of policy makers' positions, policy documentation,

advantage the individual in social and economic life. It treats education as a commodity, and supports school choice within an educational consumption approach. It posits education as a private good for private benefits and is therefore a private purpose (ie from the perspective of the consumer).

- The economic purpose aims to prepare young people as competent economic contributors. Since this combines public economic benefits with private economic benefits, it is a constrained public purpose (ie from the perspective of the employer).

It is important to emphasise that these purposes interact and intertwine (and





individual choice. Such research has demonstrated that marketised schooling systems result in a loss of the diversity of student populations and a significant growth in the disparity of resources between schools. And these differentiations are invariably organised on the basis of socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion and race. The focus on individual choice within education markets began to create a number of tendencies in Australia, including competition both within and between public and private schools, the imperative to market schools, and the residualisation of public education

The Rudd/Gillard government has mainly focused on the economic purposes of education, with the major priority being the preparation of human capital for the labour market. On the COAG agenda, education sits under the banner of productivity and every major education policy announcement is prefaced by reference to the contribution of education to the economy. For example, in announcing the 'performance pay for top teachers' policy during the 2010 election campaign, the Prime Minister said:

I'm here today with a transformative education plan which is a transformative economic plan. What drives wealth in a nation? Participation and productivity. What gives you the edge in participation and productivity? It's your investments in human capital (PM Gillard, Australian 10/8/2010, p. 1)

This narrowing of educational vision to seeing students as human capital to be enlisted in the cause of economic recovery and growth, marginalises the important cultural, social, political and relational aspects of education. It understands students as potential workers and consumers rather than as local and global citizens.

In our view, pushing the public democratic purposes of education to the background impoverishes the potential of education as a common good. In a globalising world where the role of the nation-state is changing and societies are becoming increasingly culturally diverse, schools are needed more than ever for the important public purpose of forming active citizens for democratic publics - people with the will and commitment to shape, and participate in, an inclusive and

democratic civil society and polity that are responsive to the new environment. There is need to return to a renewed emphasis on democratic public purposes for Australian education. That is, the public purposes of education should be the dominant purposes.

How can the public (democratic) purposes of education be advanced? Since active democracy requires capabilities

another to develop educational policy and practice in ways that are consistent with it. Our ARC project demonstrated that there is a formal commitment in the education community to the public purposes of education – from policy makers, principals and teachers. For example, the flagship document of the national agenda – the Melbourne Goals of Schooling – reflects the public purposes of education; and our

Our ARC project demonstrated that there is a formal commitment in the education community to the public purposes of education – from policy makers, principals and teachers.

for its nourishment, the central work of schools in a democratic society is the development of the capacities for social practice. These include capacities for citizenship, work, intercultural understanding, community involvement, communication and so on – capacities that build the common good.

The development of these capacities as a major purpose of schools has implications for the three modalities of schooling referred to earlier. Thus, from the perspective of public (democratic) purposes of education, the structure of schooling would seek to ensure equality of educational opportunity and resources that provide for the needs of all students (it would not tolerate unequal resourcing of schools); the curriculum would ensure that all students are encouraged and enabled to develop the capacities necessary for a democratic society (rather than a narrow and/or stratified curriculum); and the culture and processes of schooling would be based upon and model democratic processes (rather than authoritarian, top-down approaches). In short we would move from a 'me' to a 'we'; from a 'them' to an 'us'. These are OUR schools and we care about the health of all of them.

SUB: What purposes are currently at the forefront of Australian education?

It is one thing to argue in the abstract for a renewed focus on the public (democratic) purposes of education – quite

interviews with CEOs and Ministers of Education largely demonstrated a strong commitment to them.

In addition we undertook in-depth case studies of 6 government primary schools in Australia. These were superb examples of places that are committed to and enact the public purposes of schooling, exhibiting such characteristics as:

- The culture of the schools is inclusive and democratic, with a focus on whole child
- Leadership which promotes professional learning communities, evidence based policy and democratic practices;
- Community: Schools use the local community as a resource - the local community is brought into school for pedagogical purposes (funds of community knowledge); and school is used by the community as a resource (e.g., for social meeting space; welfare; language, translation service; trauma counselling; food and clothing support etc). That is, the schools make a major contribution to community building through the development of capacities of social practice, and through being a resource for the community;
- Curriculum: all of the schools had adopted thematic approaches with a whole school focus – for example, in South Australia one school took the theme of peace and international understanding; and the other used

that of sustainability. These themes are enacted through the formal curriculum and extra curricula programs, and are also represented in the forms and symbols of school life.

We also surveyed over 1000 government school primary principals, asking them about the level of importance and level of enactment they attached to the public purposes of education. The highest scoring for level of importance were all public purposes, with the lowest being for private purposes

So it seems that the key players in Australian education strongly support the public purposes of education. However, what came across consistently from key policy-makers, school communities and principals were the difficulties/barriers/impediments to enacting the public purposes of education. For example, the survey of principals revealed huge differences between the level of importance and the level of enactment. The reasons for this covered such issues as (a) inadequate resource support for students with socio-economic disadvantage or learning needs; and (b) the negative impact of the current focus on, and the impact of, national testing regimes and

associated accountabilities.

In summary, it is clear that there is a commitment in the education community to the public purposes of education – from policy makers, principals and teachers. However, there is a significant gap between the aspiration for, and the enactment of, public purposes. While the case study schools demonstrated that it is possible to work against this dominant policy grain, it was also clear that this work was made all the harder by the policy environment. There is a lack of alignment between the stated (public) purposes of education (ie the goals and intentions of education policy) and the strategies that are designed to deliver these (ie the modalities).

In our research report to AGPPA we used this public purposes lens to critically analyse key features of the so-called 'education revolution', showing how and why this gap between policy aspiration and practice has opened up. We assessed funding policy, the national curriculum and approaches to accountability and 'transparency' against the public purposes of education and found much of them wanting (Reid, Cranston, Keating, Mulford, 2011).

Our report to AGPPA also made a number of recommendations which, if implemented in full – that is across all the modalities of schooling: structures, resourcing, and funding; curriculum; and culture and processes - would, we believe, place the public purposes of education right at the centre of education policy and practice. We think they provide an agenda for reform that would reassert the democratic (public) purposes

of education (see Reid, Cranston, Keating & Mulford, 2011).

Conclusion

Education policy and practice needs reference points against which to assess and make judgments; and in our view the key reference point should be the public purposes of education. Our research shows that the Melbourne Goals of Schooling – the flagship document of the national agenda – reflects public purposes; and many educators and policy makers are committed to them. However, it also demonstrates that many of the policies and strategies of the so-called 'education revolution' are making it difficult to enact these purposes: the arteries are clogged. In our view, the government needs to draw the public purposes of schooling back to centre stage by making the Melbourne Goals the touchstone for its policy making, rather than consigning them to the margins. Not to do so is to force schools to continue to work against the grain as they seek to pursue the public purposes of education in an environment which is antagonistic to those aims.

An important task for all educators and their professional associations – at a time when the next tranche of policies are poised to be introduced, including performance pay for teachers and schools; and new forms of self-managing schools – is to analyse and question policy, and to hold the government to account for the contradictions that clearly exist between its rhetorical commitment to the public purposes of education and the policies it is using to achieve these. Bringing the public purposes of education back to centre stage in the education debate means that rather than starting with the question: how will this policy advantage my child and my school?, such a debate would start by asking: In what ways does this policy or practice contribute to the common good and the health of the education system as a whole?

This article draws on a 3 year ARC-Linkage project conducted with partners, the Australian Government Primary Principals' Association (AGPPA) and the Foundation for Young Australians. A copy of the full report, which was launched on March 21st, 2011, by the federal Minister of Education, the Hon. Peter Garrett, is available by contacting ACE.

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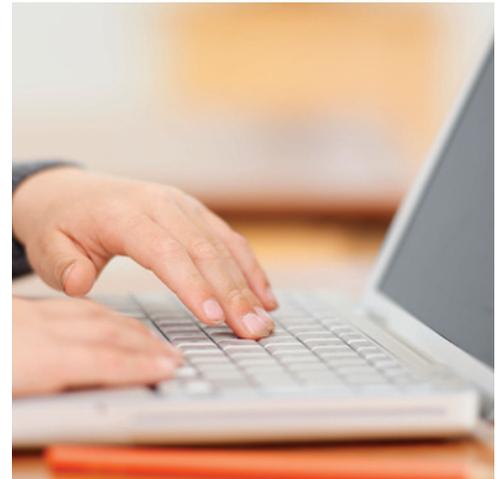
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What to make of the May 2011 Budget for schools?



By Margaret Clark

The elements of the Commonwealth budget that relate specifically to schools¹ are not particularly complex on the face of it. But there is an awful lot that we don't know. What we don't know is how it will impact on different schools and students across the country.

The key elements that we know include

- \$200 million for Students with Disabilities
- \$222 in funding for school chaplains for an extra 1000 schools – up to \$60,000 per school over three years
- \$63m per annum and rising to give teachers more control over school budgets
- A pause to the roll out of trade training centres in schools
- The cessation of the ICT component of the DER and of the Smarter Schools National Partnership in Literacy and Numeracy, Teacher Quality and Low SES School Communities
- Additional \$18.1m over 4 years for Teach Next
- \$388 million between 2012 and 2017 to reward schools that improve attendance and numeracy and literacy results.

- \$425 million for bonuses to reward top teachers

Students with Disabilities

The Students with Disabilities (SWD) funding has been applauded by almost all commentators as long overdue and the government has been urged to move quickly to deliver. This may not be wise. The only details about the program provide a figure of 169,517 as 'the numbers of SWD students in Australian Schools' – 79.1 per cent of whom are in governments schools and 20.9 per cent in non-government schools.

However given that there is no nationally agreed definition of SWD the use of this figure may be unduly optimistic. A nationally consistent approach to identifying the needs for students with disability has been an ongoing issue that will not be easy to settle especially in relation to students with learning and behavioural difficulties.

In remote communities, for example, it is highly likely that there is an under identification of need. The NT Intervention child health checks reported very high instances of unidentified sight,

hearing and other disabilities – and it was only assessing the physical well being of children. My understanding is that this data has not been shared with NT Department of Education and training because of data privacy issues (an example of a rushed and poorly considered initiative).

In addition to the physical disabilities identified through this process, the impact on children of heavy alcohol consumption of mothers, failure to thrive, parental inability to care for children consistently due to overcrowding and high level of violence have left their mark on remote Indigenous children in ways that are not always immediately visible to casual observation. This is well supported by the Australian Early development Index (AEDI)

Community Profile data which show very high levels of children assessed as developmentally vulnerable across many remote communitiesⁱⁱ but a lower proportion of children assessed at special needs status than the all of Australia figure. This suggests a high level of unidentified students with disability.

Under the Disability Act schools have to respond to the additional needs of a student with a disability if they are notified of a need to do so – usually by a parent. Not all parents know that they have such rights. Indeed I would argue that parents with non-existent or poor English language skills will almost certainly not know of this option. This is a potentially a serious equity issue.

Surely the availability of new funds is an opportunity to work towards an equitable approach to the identification of the disability profile of schools and the needs of all students, including those not currently included in the 169,517 figure.

It is also important to guard against the time honoured practice of cost shifting. Anyone who has ever worked in a bureaucracy will confirm that when new Commonwealth money becomes available in a line of service that is the

funding responsibility of states, it is just too tempting for cash strapped states to transfer their investments to other areas of need – leaving the users of the program no better off at all. Setting in place strong requirements including the benchmarking of current levels of inputs should be considered essential.

And finally there are the unequal costs of delivering the same standard of service. If this is rolled out on a per identified student basis then the additional costs of securing speech therapists, and other supports in far flung remote communities where there are no houses available and no appropriate onsite supports is almost never factored in.

One-off Bonuses for the Top Teachers

The teacher bonus program, now officially known as the National Rewards for Great Teachers initiative, has been panned by almost everyone except the

vote would be for a program that would measurably enrich the experience and quality of teachers in our highest need schools. This is a complex resistant problem that is unlikely to be fixed by a one off cash injection. However a good start might be to put the funds into a cross jurisdiction/cross sectoral establishment of a remote and rural teacher recruitment strategy which could replace Teach Next (more funds this way) but put the student entrants through a teacher education program that specialises in training education students for teaching in regional and remote locations.

School Chaplaincy Program

The School Chaplaincy program is one of the few measures that explicitly targets disadvantaged schools. Minister Garrett's press release notes that this new funding will "target schools in regional, remote and disadvantaged locations most in need of program support and will benefit

Less visible in the announcements is the decision to wind up the Smarter School National Partnerships for improving teacher quality, literacy and numeracy and low SES communities.

Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Education Minister. The arguments against this approach to raising teacher quality have been dealt with in many recent articles. I am sure that all educators could come up with a way to spend this allocation in ways that would contribute to enhancing teacher quality.

In recognition of the fact that this amount of funds would not support the roll out of additional time off class to devote to collaborative planning or for well planned induction and mentoring programs for all career entrants, my

students, parents, school staff and the broader school community." It is not clear to me how the need for program support is understood in the program eligibility guidelines but I am wondering if this is code for not having access to an adequate school counselling serviceⁱⁱⁱ. If this is not the key driver for this program, and for schools applying for funds under this program, then it would be interesting to know what the problem is, for which this program is a solution.

The naïve assumption that chaplains will not engage in preaching their own





religious beliefs to students, when the only eligibility criteria for working in the program is formal ordination or endorsement by a religious organisation, is hard to believe. It is a bit like endorsing fully accredited youth workers to work in schools, but specifying that the work they do must not draw on the very skills and understandings that make them eligible to work in the school.

I can't help but notice that this program requires schools to submit an application and gives each successful school a mere \$20,000 per year or up to \$60,000 over three years to engage an unaccredited worker to deal with the complex and high level social and emotional needs that remote and other high need community students have. Somehow I can't imagine more privileged school saying it is unfair – and that they want access to the program.

Rewards for School Improvements

This is another rewards based program. In a redefining of the school improvement program, introduced in the 2010-2011 budget, individual Australian schools will receive \$75,000 (if primary) or \$100,000 (if secondary) if they show the most improvement in school attendance, literacy and numeracy performance; Year 12 attainment/ results and the proportion of students going to further education, training or work. Once again there is an assumption that schools could do better if only they had a bit of an incentive to do so. The problem is not that they can't move forward without additional supports but merely that they won't unless pushed.

Of course schools that are really doing the hardest work will find themselves in a bit of a dilemma because if they do increase attendance and enrolments, more students with a very patchy attendance and learning record will sit the NAPLAN tests and bring down their results.

It is worth noting rewards based programs become opportunities for schools to “game the system” but only if the reward monies are a strong incentive. The National Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership was a recent example of a similar situation where systems chose schools and ran

interventions, not based on need and evidence, but in order to reach a self identified improvement target. Thus, incentive is not likely to seduce the well heeled schools. Once again, just like with the NAPLAN situation, we find a new policy measure with potentially serious perverse incentives that will impact unequally on our schools.

Digital Education Revolution

It is known that nearly half of all secondary students in years 9-12 were yet to receive the laptops promised by the federal government under the program but what is not known is which schools/ systems are ahead in the rollout and which behind. This will have minimal impact it is argued because it amounts to a stretching of a programs over a longer period of time. This is an argument that ignores, that for today's students in classrooms with reduced access to on-line learning because of this changed pace of rollout, this is a real and significant impact.

Smarter Schools National Partnership

Less visible in the announcements is the decision to wind up the Smarter School National Partnerships for improving teacher quality, literacy and numeracy and low SES communities. While these programs were not intended to be continuing programs there was always an expectation that transitional arrangements would be considered to avoid the boom-bust impacts on schools. This decision is disappointing. Once again, important revenue streams for high need schools are non-core and packaged in such a way as to create huge administrative burdens on schools. Then just when they are starting to fine tune elements and hypothesis on ways to improve the program, the funding is taken away.

This practice of turning off and turning on of programs that have a multiyear rollout turns the budget into a sort of lottery. Indeed it reminds me of the decision under the Rudd Government to suddenly stop the rollout of Science

and Language Labs to high need schools in order to feed the demands under the BER (for all schools). This sort of thing constantly seems to happen to high need schools, because they depend, for so much of their funding, on program specific funds. It turns school funding into an unfair lottery system, where those schools that get in early were are much better off than the schools scheduled for round two.

Trevor Cobbold concluded that the schools funding in the budget when looked at across the board represents a walking away by the Commonwealth from its historical and important role in equity funding. I am inclined to agree with this.

But I am also appreciative of a throw-away line from Linda Darling Hammond in her talk at the ACE/Sydney University event on 2 May where she noted that the some of the key education strategies of the Australian government went straight to the periphery of issues. The Students with Disabilities new funds are the notable exception to this assessment, but even this initiative needs to be implemented with great care, in order not to exacerbate current inequities.

- i Space limitation precluded an equal analysis of the VET, Higher education and early childhood sectors so this is held over till the next edition
- ii The AEDI Community Profile for the Gulf Region of the NT in March 2011 records that in the area of emotional well being 25.4% of Gulf region children are developmentally at risk (that is below the 10th percentile) and 50.8% below the 25th percentile. This compares to a national figures of 8.9% and 24.4% respectively. The result for physical health and well being show similar disparities: Gulf children – 42.2% below the 10th percentile compared to 9.3% nationally and Gulf children – 75.8% below the 25th percentile compared to 22.3% nationally. Yet the special education estimates are 3.2% for Gulf children and 4.4 % nationally.
- iii This “poor persons counseling service” is noted by George Williams , in an article in the SMH called, “Chaplaincy challenge reveals legal failure” (May 24, 201), where he notes that “ Instead of trained counsellors, children in need are left to access services provided by people appointed because of their religious convictions”



The quest to re-moralise the modern university

Universities should not only teach students, but make them wise, says Steven Schwartz.

W

hat, exactly, is the university for? Universities once had clear ethical purposes but over the years we have lost our moral direction. To fulfil their true purpose, universities need to get back on course: we need to re-moralise.

To show you how much, I will take you back to when I was a five-year old living with my family in New York City.

Thousands of people around the world died of polio that year; more than half were children.

This drama was repeated every summer. Everyone was relieved when autumn brought an end to the polio season, but the cycle of fear would begin again the following year.

Then something amazing happened.

Jonas Salk, a young, and previously obscure,

university researcher, created a vaccine.

The initial results looked promising but a large-scale research project was required to be certain that the vaccine was safe and effective.

A call went out for children to participate in a nationwide double-blind trial and my parents did not hesitate to enrol me.

All together, two million primary school children, known as “Polio Pioneers” rolled up their sleeves for what became known as “The Shot Heard ‘Round the World”.

The trial proved a success; the vaccine was safe and effective and Jonas Salk became justifiably famous.

Although Salk became famous he did not become rich.

This is because he and the University of Pittsburgh, the private university where he worked, licensed the vaccine to anyone who wanted to manufacture it.

The ethical premise driving Salk’s work was simple: the purpose of university research was the discovery and dissemination

of knowledge for the benefit of society. Making money was never their goal.

Would parents be as eager to sign up their children to this kind of experiment today?

I am sad to say the answer is probably no.

Many of today’s parents refuse to allow their children to have tried-and-true vaccines let alone experimental ones.

Today’s parents are deeply sceptical about science and scientists.

They particularly distrust the commercial motives of drug companies, researchers and universities.

They have a point.

Drug companies, for instance, have their in-house staff produce research articles extolling their product’s benefits.

Company representatives then approach well-known medical researchers and ask them to put their names on the articles as the author.

The result is that articles, actually written by company employees, wind up in prestigious medical journals under the names of famous scientists.

Publications are the coin of the realm in university scientific careers. Some scientists agree to pose as authors just so they can add another paper to their CVs.

Clearly, we live in another time and place from Salk.

The central ethical premise of universities has changed fundamentally.

The discovery and dissemination of knowledge has been replaced by the desire to exploit it.

Can anyone today imagine a university giving a valuable vaccine away?

In fact, the government encourages universities to do just the opposite—to patent our discoveries and capitalise on our intellectual property.

There is nothing illegal in universities trying to exploit the commercial value of their intellectual property.

However, commercial transactions carry their own imperatives, and these may not be compatible with traditional academic values.

Scientists are not the only ones whose ethics require scrutiny.





In the Global Financial Crisis, financiers whose fast and loose behaviour caused financial distress and misery to families around the world included some of the brightest graduates from the world's leading universities.

The British parliamentary expenses scandal was perpetrated by graduates of the United Kingdom's most prestigious universities.

Instead of taking a stand, universities have kept quiet.

This is because they no longer have a moral role. They have given it up for one that is strictly utilitarian.

The federal government says the purpose of universities is "to grow the knowledge-based economy". They are "key contributor[s] to ... economic progress".

Invest more in higher education, it says, and the result will be more wealth for everyone.

As a Vice-Chancellor, I would really love to believe this, but I am sorry to say that it is grossly exaggerated.

There is no automatic correlation between the amount of money spent on universities and economic growth.

I am not suggesting that universities do not contribute to the economy. Of course they do.

So does Shakespeare. Tourists to Stratford-upon-Avon spend millions of pounds per year on hotel rooms, meals, not to mention coffee mugs with quotes from Hamlet.

And then there are the jobs created printing Shakespeare's plays, selling copies of his sonnets and acting in Shakespeare productions.

There is only one problem. Shakespeare's value has nothing to do with any of these things.

Not everything of value can be expressed in dollars and cents. Education is, or should be, a moral enterprise.

I know that many, indeed most, students go to university because it will help them to get a better job. There is nothing wrong with this; a fulfilling occupation is part of a good life.

But even jobs are not just about money; work also has moral value.

As John Ruskin said: "The highest reward for man's toil is not what he gets for it, but what he becomes by it".

From its earliest classical origins, education has not just been about acquiring work skills—its real purpose was to build "character" so graduates could take up their role in their society and contribute to the good of everyone.

The original universities took it for granted that their main job was to mould the character of their students, usually by inculcating religious precepts.

The idea that the purpose of education was to forge character persisted for almost 700 years.

As recently as the 19th century practically all universities still understood that this was their mission.

Unlike the first American and British universities, which were either private or independent charitable trusts, the first Australian universities were public institutions established by acts of parliament and supported by annual appropriations from the government.

They were deliberately not religious.

Interestingly, Australian universities never actually renounced their goal of developing character. Following Socrates, they hoped that knowledge of the good would automatically lead to a commitment to the good.

Beginning in the 1960s, however, even this non-religious approach became suspect.

The Vietnam War and civil

rights movements fomented campus unrest in the USA, which spread to Europe and eventually to Australia.

The result was that not just students but also their professors increasingly perceived truth seeking as futile. Universities slowly sank into the morass of moral relativity.

This rendered them unable to make judgements; they could not even decide which subjects

women who understand the world and their place in it, who can write and speak coherently, who know what a poem is and who can tell a symphony from a jingle.

For this reason, our new undergraduate curriculum does make judgements.

All of our students, no matter what course they are enrolled in, are required to study People subjects (exposing them to the arts and humanities) and Planet



Not everything of value can be expressed in dollars and cents.



Education is, or should be, a moral enterprise.

students should study.

Today, students are allowed to choose from hundreds of options with no subjects considered more important than others.

The result is that our universities teach students, but they do not even pretend to make them wise.

In his inaugural address as rector of St Andrews University in 1867, John Stuart Mill said the object of universities was "not to make skilful lawyers, or physicians, or engineers, but capable and cultivated human beings".

Mill was right.

We at Macquarie University have decided to see whether it is possible for a secular institution to teach more than job skills but to actually educate the whole.

Although we can no longer go back to teaching religion-based prescriptive ethics, we do want our students to live up to John Stuart Mill's vision of graduates of cultivated people.

We at Macquarie believe that a university education ought to produce educated men and

subjects (so that they can understand how science works).

But being cultivated is not enough. We also want to go back to education's purpose and build character.

How are we doing this?

This is where the third "P" for Participation comes in.

All Macquarie students, whatever course they pursue, will undertake a community or work project outside the university, in many cases outside Australia.

Most important of all, their experience will help them to develop a concern for others, and a concern for others is the essential foundation of all ethics.

Our new curriculum is expressly aimed not just at the state of the art - but at the state of our students' hearts.

This is an edited version of an address by Professor Steven Schwartz, Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University, to the 2011 Australian College of Educators Sydney Metro Event on Monday June 6 2011

CROSSING

the line

How accomplished teachers
made the transition from
classroom to school leadership.

By Norman McCulla.

There is a compelling logic in the notion that our most accomplished teachers should progress to formal positions of school leadership as principals and school executive. It is a logic implicit in statements of career stage professional standards and accreditation frameworks. After all, one might argue, the very skills of being a good classroom teacher— a focus on student learning; the capacity to develop teams; ongoing professional learning; good parent relations and so forth— are fundamental to whole-school leadership. That is not to say, of course, that good teachers automatically make good principals given the development necessary to do the job effectively; it does however raise the question of what we can learn from accomplished teachers who have made that transition. In an education world currently dominated by a large scale issues, there is also a place for stories that are both local and individual.

It was these thoughts that motivated a study of 15 teachers (identified from a cohort of some 243 primary and secondary teachers) who were acknowledged as being accomplished in their classroom practice by being

recipients of the NSW Quality Teaching Award. These awards are adjudicated on the basis of professional standards describing accomplished teaching and validated by way of professional learning portfolios and observations of classroom practice. As such, the group provided a rather unique sample worthy of study.

The stories that were gathered from one-to-one reflective interviews based on open-ended questions recounted the transition that each person had made as they ‘crossed the line’ from the classroom door to the wider world of educational leadership. Intensely personal and autobiographical, and local in their focus, they provide an important counterpoint in the literature to exhortations as to what school leaders ought to do in developing the leadership capabilities of others; to lamenting the supply of potential school leaders; or to suggesting strategies and programs for succession at a time of demographic change. They describe what it is that this sample of teachers actually did do. As the researcher, I was interested in listening to their stories, and through a constant comparative methodology, identifying from the transcripts common themes that emerged. I also shared my initial findings with the participants in the study and invited further comment. As it eventuated, the common themes that emerged were far greater than any differences. What then was learnt?

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Getting started

Few respondents had any leadership ambitions while in the classroom. Being a school principal simply was not on the radar. Few, if any, had any real understanding as to what it is that principals do while in the classroom. Respondents to a person acknowledged a genuine love of classroom teaching as their prime focus.

Turning points

An interest in career path progression had been provoked, motivated and supported primarily by “significant others” in the life of the teacher rather than by the teacher themselves.

Significant others included principals, system administrators such as school education directors, and QTA personnel who recognised leadership potential. Respondents were “nudged” into thinking about their leadership potential and given opportunities to develop leadership skills by these significant others. This “nudge” factor is consistent with a previous finding that nomination for a NSW Quality Teaching Award was seldom motivated by the recipients themselves but rather at the suggestion of others such as principals, colleagues and sometimes parents and students. (McCulla, Dinham and Scott, 2007). In return, respondents viewed these significant others as “mentors” although no formal mentoring relationship existed.





Road maps

The transition from classroom to non-classroom based positions of leadership was characterised more by serendipity than any deliberate strategy or plan for career path progression. Respondents were motivated by the most part by the teaching and learning aspects of the leadership roles they took up rather than their perceived status.

Finding the right school

A key motivating factor was the degree of “fit” between the teacher’s self perception and the perceived needs of a school community. In this sense, the school was seen to “find the right person” rather than the converse. School choice and career path progression were also strongly influenced by gender and biographical factors. Gender-based issues could also be seen to be exerting an influence on some female respondents impacting on mobility with school choice being restricted to certain geographic locations because of familial ties. The most prominent factor impacting on upward mobility of a number of primary respondents was a predisposition to make choices that kept their professional work anchored in classroom practice. For most, this oriented their leadership roles to smaller rather than larger schools often combining teaching with the principalship.

The classroom skills that had been demonstrated in attaining a NSW Quality Teaching Award – student-centredness; problem solving; ongoing professional learning; capacity to build interpersonal relationships with parents and community; all stood the respondents in good stead as they moved into leadership roles in smaller school environments and in one sense became extensions of their classroom teaching activities.

Learning how to be a principal

Accomplished teachers also learnt from other principals who appeared to be less comfortable in their roles, a factor the respondents put down to choosing the role for its perceived status value, the school for its geographic location, or as a stepping stone to a larger school on a pre-determined career path at the expense of focusing on teaching and student-parent-community relationships.

The professional learning required

to undertake the leadership role was developed through a virtual tapestry of activity that included various combinations of employer-provided professional development courses, professional networks, personal learning initiatives, and some exposure to postgraduate study. Employer-provided programs were particularly valued.

Postgraduate study featured more prominently than might have been expected as an important factor in many of the responses although this was influenced by the extent to which tertiary study was perceived by the respondent to be valued by the employing authority. Self-motivation was therefore a key driving force in undertaking tertiary study.

Foremost among the professional learning opportunities that were valued were the informal mentoring relationships developed particularly with other principals or other senior non-school based personnel. Once in the role, these relationships continued to be highly valued with regard to just-in-time learning needs associated with managing the school.

While some principals were highly supportive of career mobility, other principals were not. This could be put down to varying combinations of the “tall poppy syndrome”; the need to provide stability in their own school by not losing good staff; or the perception that there was a “right” way to work your way up through the various promotion positions, as they themselves had done, and short-cuts or fast tracking were not to be encouraged.

Letting go

The focus on quality teaching in the classroom and pursuing this as a principal in smaller school environments, somewhat ironically, may also act as an inhibitor in developing aspirations to be principal of larger schools and developing the differing skills and attributes that requires. Some accomplished teachers struggled to let go of the sense of control that comes from good classroom teaching practice, and the direct rewards and personal fulfilment that come from feedback of students, parents and community, and were learning how to move to the more distributive forms of leadership that larger school environments require.

The structure of primary schooling allows for a wider variety of leadership

opportunities to be experienced in small and large schools than secondary schooling where the career path is more clearly defined through faculty structures, head of department and deputy principal roles.

Teaching principals in smaller primary schools saw themselves as “have the best of both worlds” in this regard, experiencing what it is like to be a principal while, despite the workload, also teaching.

Professional recognition

Being the recipient of an award for quality teaching was beneficial in that the recipient in a leadership role felt that they had credibility, and were seen by others to have credibility, in setting high expectations for teacher performance and student learning outcomes. Being the recipient of an award also provided the basis and credibility for challenging underperforming teachers for a number of respondents.

Other than in the setting of high expectations, the tangible value of the award to career path progression was variable depending on the context in which promotion was being sought. In some contexts this tangible expression of accomplished teaching was valued and acknowledged; in others this was less the case. Recipients of the award continued to value it a personal level for the reflective capacity on professional practice and personal affirmation it provided.

Professional growth

Significant areas of new learning in the principal role included how to work with professional colleagues as staff and adult learners; how to manage school finances; how to “de-centre” from being the dominant force within the classroom in the interests of building collegial team relationships among staff and providing leadership for others; how to manage different forms collegial relationships with staff to those that existed while teaching as a peer while at the same time meeting staff expectations for the principal’s role. The use of professional standards for leadership did not feature in the progression although several respondents acknowledged that more use was likely to be made of them in the future.

Professional networks were the key driving forces underpinning the transition to leadership.

These professional networks were highly

influential in further developing informal mentoring relationships as accomplished classroom teachers first spread their interests beyond the school and later took over principal roles themselves.

Leadership and succession

The reflective comments provided by accomplished teachers on advice that might be given to younger teachers contemplating school leadership reflected a number of the findings above.

Accomplished teachers now in principal roles were completing the cycle putting into effect the strategies they had come to value for the development of younger teachers whom they viewed as having leadership potential.

What it all means

The study suggested that the journey to the principalship for the most part is deeply personal, biographical, incremental and developmental rather than pre-determined and aspirational. If this is indeed the case, it places far more weight than hitherto on the quality of the social networks with which the teacher is involved professionally. This is not to underplay the importance of an employer-developed succession strategies and their related professional development programs preparing teachers for the principalship and supporting them within it. These are, of course, essential. Rather, based on the findings of the study, it is suggest that policy developers and program planners need to take into consideration the social, inter-personal and relational dynamics in the design of their programs placing just as much weight on them as they would on the content of the program itself.

Social networks that stimulate, support and sustain and are consistent with Capra's (2002) analysis of schools and school systems as "living systems" that are interconnected by way of cohesive diversity rather than mechanical alignment. There is therefore, according to Fink (2010, p.9), an interplay and a necessary point of balance between "design" (usually defined in terms of government policy, plans and structures) and "the innate human urge for emergence" to be free, creative and liberated. The challenge at all levels is to find the balance.

The findings also resonate with other insights from the literature. Again

Fink (2010, pp.101-103) notes through interview data from principals in American, Canadian and British contexts that, when asked about where the idea of moving up the ladder started for them, most pointed to a motivational leader who "stoked their ambitions" as young teachers. As this study also revealed, a number also referred to dysfunctional leaders who made them think "I can do better than that". Many had been encouraged to take on challenging leadership roles as teachers with success inside and outside of their schools.

As Fink (2010, p.143) makes clear, transition to leadership and the succession challenge is more than just recruiting "warm bodies to resolve the mathematical mismatch between leadership aspirants and available jobs. Educational leaders, regardless of their roles, must see themselves as leaders of learning- their own; their teachers' and other staff; and of course their students". These attributes were well demonstrated by the respondents in this study.

Fink (2010, xxi) has observed too that, in many education jurisdictions, there is no shortage in the number of people who think they can run a school to be able to fill positions, but the "succession challenge" is to find the right person for the right place at the right time for the right reasons.

What is also of interest in this study is that the number of accomplished teachers who had actually made the transition to formal positions of leadership was relatively small in the total number who had been recipients of the NSW Quality Teaching Award. It begs the question as to why this is so suggesting from this study it may well be a combination of the attractiveness of classroom teaching on one side or, on the other, a lack of developmental opportunities and informal mentoring that provide insights into what it is that leaders together with a lack of knowledge of programs that are available.

The findings of the study were consistent with those of Fink (2010, p. 140) who argues that developing leaders of learning takes time, resources, and energy because prospective leaders require: the opportunity to undertake significant and challenging activities early in their careers that "stretched" them intellectually and professionally leadership development

opportunities that enabled them to meet these challenges supportive mentors who assisted them as they met their challenges the opportunity to observe and learn from powerful models of successful educational leadership (and from some negative examples) feedback on their performance that was honest and constructive.

Working from the assumption that our accomplished teachers have the potential to become accomplished school leaders, it is interesting to explore what might now be done to encourage more of these teachers to at least consider formal positions of leadership. It is a career path transition that is implicit in all standards-referenced frameworks for teacher professional development regardless of whether it is actually taken up or not. Where should our emphases be in the mix of employer developed programs, professional development courses, postgraduate studies...? Or does it really matter so long as the inter-personal and relational dimensions underpinning these are sufficiently robust? Is diversity in these tapestries of learning indeed a strength? ■

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- A full copy of the research report is available to members of the Australian College of Educators at www.austcolled.com.au

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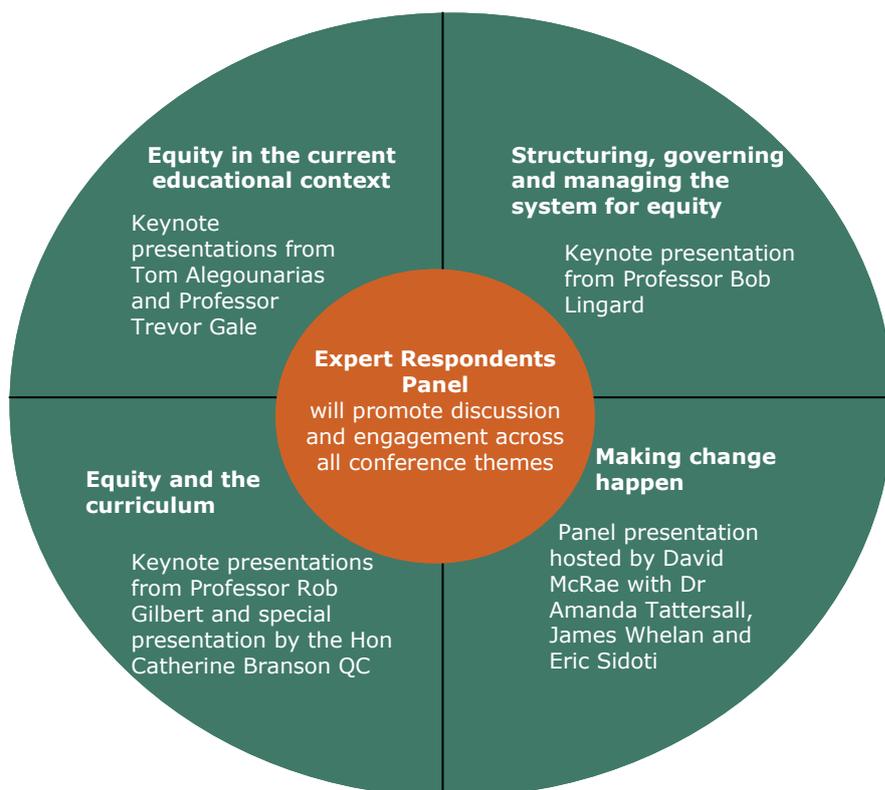
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