

professional EDUCATOR

August 2014

Volume 13

Issue 4

The ACE forum for policy, research and practice in education



Australia in
the Asian
century:
Learning
some lessons

Supporting
English
language
learners

Surviving
resistance to
languages
education



professional EDUCATOR



ABN 96 562 879 327

Published for the Australian
College of Educators by Studio 131

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Language Education

Australian College of Educators members and fellows should have received a letter outlining the *2014 Grassroots Membership Challenge*. If you haven't received a letter, please contact National Office.

The membership challenge is a key part of the College's strategic plan for the next three years and is related to other developments, including in the policy, membership and awards areas.

The challenge for each of us is a simple yet important one. Can you identify an educator who would benefit from membership of the College and add value or contribute to our work? Can you speak with them about the benefits of a College membership and invite them to join with their professional colleagues from across all sectors and levels of Australian education?

Strengthening our membership brings a number of powerful advantages. Our membership is our greatest asset and drawing quality educators to the College increases and renews that critical mass. This enables us to increase our influence and engagement in Australian education for the betterment of the profession.

Recently we called for members and fellows to nominate for membership of a new education policy committee, policy being a key aspect of our strategic plan. We have been gratified with the response from members and fellows who have agreed to serve on the committee for the coming two years under the leadership of Ian Keese.

The work of the committee will be supported by Maren Klein in the new position of Policy Officer. Our work in the education policy space is vital, given current developments in Australian

education and the need for an informed and independent educational voice for the profession.

For some time, for example, we have had a working party led by Carl Stevens undertaking important work on the issue of attracting high quality applicants to teaching. An experienced and committed group of members and fellows from across Australia has been researching and formulating a College position on what is a complex area. The work of this working party fed directly into our recent submission to Federal Education Minister Pyne's Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (or TEMAG), and our submission received a great deal of largely favourable attention in the press.

This edition of *Professional Educator* represents many states and is largely devoted to languages, supporting English language learners and improving the teaching of foreign languages are key areas of importance for Australian education. However, after reading the articles contributed to this edition one can draw the inescapable conclusion that Australia has yet to get the teaching and learning of languages right.

We have a national shortage of foreign language teachers yet we see on a regular basis—usually around elections—calls for greater take-up of foreign language study by students in Australian schools. Claudia Cicuttini examines the deficiencies of responses in this area and the need for a more sophisticated approach to address foreign language education.

Joseph Lo Bianco adds to our understanding in this area through examination of the language debates going back to the 1970s. He too calls for

more appropriate, effective policy in this area, something that will both shape and reflect the future development of Australia and its relations with other countries.

Anna Dabrowski provides us with an analysis of the continued growth in numbers of English as Additional Language (EAL) learners in Australian schools and what this means for Australian policymakers and educators.

Angela Evangelinou-Yiannakis writes a rich case study of sustaining the teaching and learning of a European language in a non-European educational setting and how resistance was overcome to the introduction of a Greek language program. A further interesting case study, by Patrick Chin-Dahler (a first-year teacher), examines the challenges faced in teaching Chinese in a regional or rural setting. These case studies remind us that while the learning of languages might be of importance to the future of the nation, the major benefit is to the learner.

Peter Kell widens the focus to consider the bigger picture of Australia's place and role in the 'Asian Century' and the adequacy of current responses to this challenge.

There is also a powerful opinion piece on the Gonski Review of School Funding and its aftermath by Ken Boston, a member of the Gonski review committee, former ACE President and Director General of Education in South Australia and New South Wales, amongst other high-level appointments.

**Professor Stephen Dinham OAM PhD
(FACE) FACEA FAIM
National President**



Languages: A hardy Australian Perennial

JOSEPH LO BIANCO

Bottom of form

In some ways languages resemble garden plants we call hardy perennials, surviving harsh winters, growing on exposed ground, or disappearing only to spring into life with green shoots when the snow melts or the frost thaws.

Perhaps the botanical metaphor applies more to language debates, rather than languages. Every few years, after decline and neglect, a new bout of political commitments and media reports featuring smiling children learning Chinese characters or German verbs emerges, tied to laments about the failings of public education (Lo Bianco and Aliani, 2013).

Sadly, such 'debates' have produced reports rather than improvement: no fewer than 67 declarations of policy since the early 1970s, but precious little sustained, evidence-based and effective action. Improvement is urgently required at all levels concerning the extent, quality and delivery of second language education, but also to our national understanding of its essential purposes. Rarely taken into consideration is the Australia of languages, incredibly, which lies alongside the Australia of language policy making. This is the Australia where languages flourish on a vast scale. In effect we have an immense, but mostly untutored, national multilingualism. An impressive 251 languages are used every day for transacting business around kitchen tables and in lounge rooms of Melbourne homes (Butt and Worrall, 2014).

Yet, every few years, federal and state politicians declare themselves chief gardeners aiming to restore language study to an earlier state of vitality. The

golden age to which they wish to return is usually called: 'before 1968' or 'during the 1960s', when almost half of all students took final exams in languages, and public policies to promote, cajole, fund, and incentivise language study were unheard of. But 'before 1968' there was no golden age. It is true that after 1967-8, when most states removed language requirements for tertiary access, enrolments plummeted from approximately 45 per cent of students matriculating with a second language to around 12 per cent. But that was 45 per cent of an already highly-selective and unrepresentative proportion of all students. 'Before 1968' education differed fundamentally from today's scene that it could almost describe another country, lacking the ideals of universal school completion, based on principles of equity and access, essentially achievements of later decades.

It isn't just schooling in Australia that has changed; it is Australia itself. Today the languages we speak in our homes and want to learn in our schools, and the reasons for doing so, are also unrecognisably different. In 2014 we teach and examine 15 times the number then offered, in primary, secondary and technical education, and we are slowly finding ways to accommodate to the complementary school systems that communities have created to transmit heritage languages across the generations.

A *Sydney Morning Herald* article entitled 'Language studies to be overhauled in schools' (20 June, 2014) reports renewed efforts in NSW to revitalise languages. Given that less than 10 per cent of the 75,000 students enrolled in the HSC studied a language in 2013,

the aims seem modest: 'All primary school students will be exposed to at least one language before starting high school'. The minister is promising to increase, improve, extend and deepen language study, all the verbs that such policies deploy, with action extending to retraining of bilingual primary generalists into specialist language teachers, and collaboration between mainstream schools and 'community language colleges to meet the needs of the 350,000 NSW students who speak a second language at home'. High school students will be required to complete the current requirement of 100 hours of language study in one continuous year, preferably Year 7, and links to vocational content in hospitality, retail and tourism subjects is encouraged.

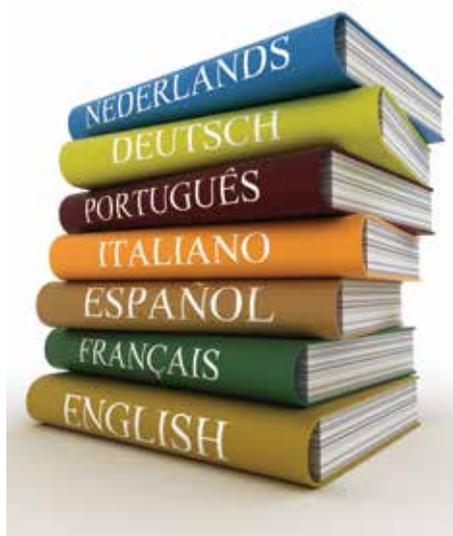
“ *It isn't just schooling in Australia which has changed, it is Australia itself. Today the languages we speak in our homes, and want to learn in our schools, and the reasons for doing so, are also unrecognisably different.* ”

Federally there is renewed activity as well. In a speech at the Adelaide Languages Festival in May, Minister

Christopher Pyne reiterated a 2013 election promise to have 40 per cent of Year 12 students studying a 'foreign or classical language within a decade' and announced a 'cradle to grave' approach. While the cradle seems late, and the grave early, and the ambition modest, the move towards integrated planning is promising. It ranges from a \$9.8 million online trial for preschoolers to including non-university providers in general reforms for a 'demand driven' higher education, and a request to the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) for advice on fast-tracking language graduates into teacher training. The hope is to generate independent momentum for language study.

Will this renewed policy energy work?

A recent study (Lo Bianco and Aliani, 2013) tracked students taking Japanese and Italian in western suburban Melbourne schools over five years, contrasted to 25 years of federal and state policy. The study found a high degree of instrumentalism in policy, but little sense of the practical constraints and linguistic composition of our school population. The flawed design of top-down prescription has not escaped the attention of students, some of whom articulated strong criticism of low academic seriousness



of programs. Despite several hundred million dollars allocated to a handful of trade languages since the early 1990s the results are disappointing.

Lasting improvement to Australia's language education will never succeed without greater sensitivity to the specific needs of learners, taking account of the sociolinguistics of the Australian population, diverse purposes for language study, the many languages Australians want to learn, the role and importance of English in the world, and the practical constraints schools face. Methodology innovation is also urgently needed.

In July, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) released the Chinese, French, Indonesian and Italian curricula following consultation and research commencing in September 2009. A further nine languages are being prepared for mainstream school teaching by 2015: Arabic, German, Japanese, Hindi, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish, Turkish, and Vietnamese, as well as a national framework for Indigenous languages. ACARA's Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, stresses a range of purposes, including strictly educational ones, and incorporates the needs of diverse learners through different study pathways.

The curriculum is moving towards using language competency as a basis for programming by distinguishing three groups of learners: those completely new to the target language; those who may use the target language at home, but are not literate in it; and students who have had at least primary schooling in the target language, and are already literate in it.

It is telling that the *Sydney Morning Herald* article features a young girl at Campsie Public School who 'is able to speak Indonesian, Korean and English'. Only when Australian language policy has a more sophisticated response to this impressive, but mostly home-cultivated, multilingual ability, will we begin to solve our language education challenge.

It is well recognised that we are entering a global age, signaled by interdependent economies, population mobility and instantaneous communications. Less

well recognised is the depth of change we need to make in response. It includes an analysis of the role of English in the world (including emergence of diverse 'Englishes') and arrangements to cultivate and reward the linguistic pluralism already existing in the Australian population, which is like a donation from community to school. All this calls for a comprehensive approach to developing national multilingual resources, one that is multicultural as well as multilingual.

No such approach is on the horizon, but the Australian Curriculum represents an important move in the right direction. It will help in normalising bilingualism, for all students in all schools, maintainers as well as new learners. The hardy perennial should be bilingual ability, rather than bilingual rhetoric.

Joseph Lo Bianco is a Professor of Language and Literacy Education at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

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PETER KELL

Australia in the Asian century: Learning some lessons

The former Federal Government's white paper – *Australia in the Asian Century* (AG 2012) was a clear attempt to resuscitate and redirect Australia's relationship with the region. It tried to realign and reorient Australia's private and public institutions so that they could 'piggy back' on the latest stage of the Asian economic miracle with the rise of China. More recently the new Federal Government has recommitted to the mission of Asian engagement with initiatives in education, allocating policy priorities to the teaching of Asian languages and the development of study abroad programs for Australian students to experience Asian destinations. The study abroad programs have been marketed under the banner of the New Colombo Plan (NCP) invoking the post-war assistance program for people from commonwealth nations to study in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK. Ironically, Australia is using the legacy of a British sponsored program that was designed to maintain colonial loyalties as 'the sun set on the British Empire in the east' to kick start its own brand of Asian engagement.

Young Australians might like holidaying in Bali and Phuket, but they are far more reluctant to undertake study abroad opportunities in Asia. Their preference in such programs has been for European and US destinations. Most Australian students do not undertake overseas study programs in the systematic way

that European students can travel and study in the European Union countries using the Erasmus programme for education, training, youth and sport. The Erasmus programme makes it possible for students enrolled in one university in the European Union to study a semester in another European university without charge. The Erasmus program has a budget of over €14 million and in excess of 270,000 students involved in exchanges. Visit http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/key-figures/index_en.htm for more details on the Erasmus programme.

Struggles with debt levels and part-time jobs that characterise the current Australian student experience have been a big impediment for person-to-person exchange opportunities in Asia. Some universities such as the University of Wollongong offer exceptional global opportunities to students and provide generous incentives for students to have an internationalised undergraduate experience. Visit www.uow.edu.au/student/exchange/index.html for the global dimensions of the Wollongong programs.

Recently a group of Charles Darwin University students undertook a teaching placement in a Malaysian school in Penang. From all accounts it was a 'life changing' event for the students, expanding their intellectual and professional identities. They gained first-hand experience working and

living in Asia and their perspectives have possibly shifted to global horizons. The NCP initiative of the new Federal Government is commendable as it assists both person-to-person contacts as well as the development of institutional partnerships. These partnerships, in this case with schools, are the next stage in international education because they are something more sophisticated and are a shift away from the instrumental and market-based view that has typified the first stages of the internationalisation of Australian education.

Moving to a more sophisticated relationship with Asia is important because some of Australia's policies engaging with the continent have been framed around exploiting the massive populations in the region and the burgeoning markets associated with the growing middle classes and their new-found wealth. This is a vulgar message which suggests Australia is really only interested in Asia for what it can get out of it. This transactional view sees Asia exclusively as a holiday destination and as a market ripe for exploitation. It is not only an unsophisticated and reductionist approach but it also confines our perspective and opportunities for 'Asia within Australia'. A good example of this are the policy failure in the teaching of Asian languages and the dilemmas we have created for ourselves in wanting to teach Asian languages but erecting barriers to prevent it happening. In the

early 1990s the Council for Australian Governments (COAG) proposed and introduced the 'National Asian languages/studies strategy for schools' (COAG 1994). The strategy was authored in part by Mandarin speaker and future Prime Minister Kevin Rudd who cited the fact that this report was the 16th in 25 years calling for an increase in the teaching of Asian languages. But this, like other initiatives, foundered on resistance and indifference to the acceptance of the notion that the teaching of Asian languages was an important part of engaging with the region.

The teaching of Asian languages has been a long running problem for a nation promoting connections with the region. Asia is close to Australia and the multicultural composition of the Australian population suggests that Asian languages would be a focal point of student learning. Successive policy initiatives have been developed to boost teaching of Asian languages in Australian schools and higher education. They have all failed miserably. This failure has been attributed to an absence of qualified teachers, the high-cost of teaching languages and the difficulty establishing pathways for language learners between primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education.

Shifts in policy orientation also have seen some languages go in and out of favour. Arabic, Urdu and Afghani were once viewed as 'lesser' languages than those associated with Australia's trading partners such as Japanese, Mandarin, Korea and Indonesian. September 11 may have changed these notions. However, a policy orientation around Asian languages that favours trading and commercial links still remains. This leaves the community languages of the large Asian diaspora in Australia such as Vietnamese, Cambodian, Tetum (Timor Leste), Tagalog (Philippines) and Tamil uncommon in teaching programs.

The biggest impediment is a methodological perspective of languages which sees Australian language teaching based on an assumption that those who are teaching languages and those who are learning them will be monolingual English speakers. This

'monolingual mindset' is an outdated methodology which has its legacy prior to the mid-1970s when Australia was a monocultural and monolingual nation with few immigrants speaking other languages. Alistair Pennycook calls for a 'translingual activism' to 'oppose the incursion of homogenous discourses and to look to multiple sources of cultural renewal' (Pennycook, 2006 114).

Translingual activism recognises that there is an existing language heritage of Asians living in the Australian community which can be harnessed as an asset for teaching. This demonstrates a need to understand the notion of Asia inside Australia. For example, identifying and training speakers of Asian languages who have capabilities, proficiency, background and experience in Asian languages and a willingness to train as language teachers. Many of them will be multilingual and have a working knowledge of several Asian languages.

However, there are profound structural and regulatory barriers that make these shifts hard to make. For overseas trained teachers, who are likely to be the bulk of the language teaching workforce of the future, the regulatory barriers to teacher registration are high. The Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) requires an attainment score in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) of 7.5 with nothing below 7 and a requirement for speaking and listening at Level 8. This English requirement also is used as the criteria for applicants in teaching for Australia's skilled migration program.

The bias against Asian nations is reinforced because citizens of English speaking countries, no matter what linguistic background they are from, do not have to sit an IELTS test. It is assumed their levels of English will always meet the IELTS standard.

For those with long memories of the history of migration in Australia, the IELTS testing requirements and their application in teaching is starting to look like a hangover from the 'dictation test' era that was used in the days of the restricted immigration policy as an administrative function to justify and

camouflage the deliberate exclusion of non-white entrants to Australia. It is these examples of institutional and structural practices that suggest there is a real place for deregulation and slashing red tape to ensure there is a supply of potential teachers of Asian languages?

Engaging with Asia is a fashionable policy position which is most often centred on improving trading partnerships. As a source for international students Asia is also seen as critical to the viability of Australia's universities. Both of these imperatives are important but Australian education has to move beyond a narrow transactional and market-based models. The next wave of engagement with the region will be around durable partnerships to sustain long-term institutional and personal links. Establishing partnerships can be leveraged on the potential of Asia in Australia, and the strength of Australians of Asian background and their families. These partnerships will challenge long-held institutional practices and the legacies of the past.

The Federal Government has commenced some initiatives that promote mobility to Asia. It also needs to remove some of the barriers identified in this article and start to recognise the potential of Asia within Australia to promote better institutional partnerships links with continent.

Peter Kell is the Professor and Head of the School of Education at Charles Darwin University. Together with Dr Marilyn Kell he authored the recent book *Language and Literacy in East Asia; Shifting meanings, values and approaches* published by Springer Publishing.

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CLAUDIA CICUTTINI

Learning foreign languages - game changers

A sophisticated and nuanced approach to address foreign language education is needed. Brakes should be applied to the fossilised, sterile debates which seem so entrenched in the architecture of foreign language education in Australia. Language educators frequently become dispirited, leading to a need to refocus and renew educational strategies.

All too often, trends in politics and education seem to affect the way languages are perceived, with the study of foreign languages often being used by school administrators, non-language educators and politicians alike as a political football on both the macro and micro level, in order to be seen to respond to stakeholders' perceptions of 'current practice'.

Languages are often categorised as being an 'isolated problem' with minimal consideration for the complexities of issues which affect each language. Many band-aid solutions, such as an injection of funds and stereotypical motherhood statements are offered, commonly resulting in a sluggish progress in the way languages are taught, studied and understood. If schools are genuine in aspiring to improve their language programs, then school administrators and language educators alike must adapt to a number of game changers.

In schools, languages are routinely inaccurately and conveniently classified as 'one subject' rather than being understood to be unique, inter-related studies, each with its own rich, distinct idiosyncrasies. Each language however, is a multidimensional, intricately interconnected, and extraordinarily fascinating interdisciplinary mosaic,

affected by many considerations. These include intercultural nuances, changes in societal structures and attitudes, the impact of the conceptual¹ visual-digital age, and the implications of the research in neurology and psychology for languages – to list a few.

The 'traditional rules' we have for institutions from a former era do not seem to work well in this contemporary, fast, ever-evolving age. Much anecdotal evidence seems to indicate that the role of the teacher has changed in recent decades – it is no longer to 'teach down' as such, but to 'educate'² students in the true sense of the word. We must unpack the world and inspire students by using contemporary tools, and by providing them with imaginative opportunities to connect the dots, then move aside and allow them to excel.

Languages are taught for more practical use because information is so easily accessible through the ubiquity of technology. Students simply do not learn languages using the same traditional, prescriptive resources and methodology the way earlier decades of language educators were taught – and it is essential to appreciate this. A plethora of additional factors that affect language education must also be considered. For an educator merely to have fluency in a language³, for instance, is simply not enough to teach languages effectively as students need to feel connected.

Today to be engaging, educators must have a sound understanding of methodology and tools that engage and motivate students. Using technology, students easily discover information for themselves. To learn, students no longer

need to be totally reliant on the teacher. This means that while the richness of the past can be applied, educators need to keep up-to-date with current research in a range of contemporary areas and not be paralysed by the 'top-down command and control', 'facts-based' and rote-learning methodology that was relevant in the past. Language education too, must focus on the needs of a future which is not linear, fixed or predictable. Every year, students 'remain the same age', but educators become one year older. What is of interest to educators therefore may be very different to what will engage students. In addition, we now have the opportunity for our teaching to be strongly informed by research from the science of teaching and learning.

As a result of sophisticated digital tools and such easy access to information, if we expect students to be better prepared for a new conceptual, visual and global era where they are able to interpret complex relationships and find creative solutions, we must draw on students' interests so that curiosity is fostered and they remain engaged and inspired to want to keep learning a language for themselves (not to mention for the economy). Foreign language teaching programs must adopt an ephemeral, permanently evolving approach to provide for this. Educators must be prepared to think proactively, innovatively and more creatively about the way students learn. The power that any change presents must be embraced to adapt to the opportunities change offers⁴.

To enhance our teaching, it is necessary to *understand*, not only current research related to the science of teaching

and learning (such as psychology and neurology), but there is also a requisite for educators to undertake proactive professional development to embrace a multifaceted understanding of the complex variables that affect students when learning languages.

Ways must be explored and created to ensure that variables such as emergent technology, creativity, generational issues, macro and micro learning cultures in schools, work concurrently and harmoniously for our students to engage in learning languages more effectively. To prepare for a changing workforce based on 'ideas' rather than 'physical capital', students need to be inspired with learning techniques that provide them with opportunities to question, to be curious, to problem-solve, to be creative, as well as to synthesise and to analyse⁵. When opportunities arise in the classroom too, positive failure should be celebrated to develop resilience and confidence in students, so that they

become 'small L' leaders in a world that is very different to that of our generation.

Learning spaces and times also need to continue to evolve and to be flexible so that they accommodate an emergent technological, visual age – not what is still often perceived to be trapped in the obsolete 'industrial-information' age⁶.

Differentiated teaching and learning is essential. Online is no longer where we 'go', but it must now be considered to be an integral part of life. Technology should no longer be used for old transmission purposes, or 'command-and-control' teaching, but should respond to an 'information snack-able', data-driven, inquisitive, hyper-connected generation who lead fast-paced, future-focussed lifestyles. We need to value that today's students are 'masters' of technology who readily and routinely access online resources and multi-sided learning platforms as an inherent part of their daily lives. Educational systems are no

longer gate-keepers of what students have permission to know and learn. The writer's experience is that through work they present, when students are given the right classroom challenges, they often display deep and eclectic knowledge in their interest areas, and demonstrate a variety of skills they have already acquired independently. Given the opportunity, students exhibit agile, developed, incisive thought, often to be driven to silence and compliance by some educators who view themselves as custodians of knowledge.

To ensure students remain inspired, educators must collaborate with their students by proactively seeking robust feedback to ensure programs continue to be relevant. We must try to position ourselves in students' learning mind-sets to truly understand what motivates them to learn. We must respond to students' voices, by modifying and being guided by the narrative driven by their needs – not our own.



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Educators should be circumspect of technology's limitations. 'A screen is by definition something you look at' (Greenfield, 2013) suggesting that human contact is an essential ingredient for using technology powerfully. Learning with technology does not automatically result in wisdom or creativity, but good educators who inspire students do. Leadership teams need to value creative, innovative and inspirational educators.

Because of the connected age, technology leads young people to feel that they have power. Nevertheless, supported by research⁷, the writer observes that more than ever, young people have a fragile sense of identity and self which may affect their attitude to learning. Although they have many 'friends' in online spaces providing them the approbation they seek - often leading to high levels of narcissism for instance, in the 'real world' students often tend to have fewer friends and much lower self-esteem.

Finally, educators must be cognisant that the decisions made for our students today have a cyclical impact on the future. Never lose faith in students. Challenge them and appreciate that students are not empty vessels that need to be filled. They come to class enthusiastic and willing to learn - if only we allow them to.

Claudia Cicuttini is an experienced teacher of languages who has held senior positions in the independent school system where she has introduced rich and theme-focussed exchange programs. She currently works at the VCAA but writes independently.

Foreign language education should also reflect:

- Students need to be validated and be given opportunities to voice their opinions. Teachers should proactively seek robust feedback by conduct open-question, online surveys⁸ at the end of a course and positively embrace any negative feedback; then modify the course(s).
- Take every opportunity to learn from students and *with* them. Create

positive learning, crowd-sourced⁹ and community partnerships with educators and students exchanging knowledge they may have discovered online. Exchange subject knowledge and direction for instance, for students' technology skills. Learn something new and share it with students.

- Acquire ideas by regularly examining contemporary online resources used in a range of countries.
- Source ideas by organising exchange visits to a range of Australian school systems, particularly when traveling overseas.
- Examine national and international resources and assessment papers from a range of countries, to calibrate standards and to remain nationally and internationally competitive.
- Routinely allocate time to perform streamlined online searches to access self-targeted online professional development opportunities that can be completed online anywhere and at any time.
- Provide school administrators with *contemporary, informative and authoritative* research on languages.
- Instil a culture of positive 'failing forward' to learn from the opportunities afforded by intelligent failure. Accentuate the positive. Encourage resilience by embracing possibilities that this opportunity presents.
- Be creative in finding solutions.¹⁰
- Engender a culture in which all students have the capacity to learn languages. Prepare programs that ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed.
- Use the litmus test of asking yourself whether you would enjoy being a student in your own classroom.
- Adopt a determined 'can-do' attitude to all obstacles. Consider 'brick walls' to be an intellectual opportunity and challenge to find ways of circumventing obstacles by creating alternative solutions.

Footnotes

¹ The 'Conceptual Age' (coined by Pink, 2005) suggests that people will need skill sets that are different from those dominated by logic, knowledge (left hemisphere) and use intuition, and creative thinking (right-hemisphere).

² Originating from the Latin verb 'e' (out of) and 'ducere' (to lead).

³ It is of questionable value to have fluent speakers with empty classrooms because they are unable to motivate students to learn.

⁴ To quote Toffler, 'The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.'

⁵ 'We can have centuries of culture in our pockets. On our phones, on our computers. What we do with it is down to our curiosity.' G. Gospodinov (Quoted in *Europeana Strategy p. 12, 2015-2020*) Accessed 24 July 2014.

⁶ In the Industrial Age schools, knowledge was delivered in a logical, controlled, cumulative sequence. Students were allocated to age-related classes and were taught knowledge in the same order, at the same pace, at the same time with little consideration placed on differentiated learning.

⁷ <http://www.psychologytoday.com>

<http://www.narcissismepidemic.com/>

<http://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/02/narcissism.aspx>

<http://psychcentral.com/news/2012/06/27/facebook-social-networks-tie-into-self-esteem-narcissism/40728.html>

⁸ There are many online tools that provide quick and easy ways to produce these and that collate the information.

⁹ 'Crowdsourcing' a term coined by J Howe (2006), suggests using the expertise and creativity of experts and the general public via the internet.

¹⁰ Maximise the use of online resources or network and share resources with other schools.

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Surviving resistance to languages education

Immaculate Heart College is a new independent school, now in its third year. Situated in Lower Chittering, Western Australia, the school began with 24 students from kindergarten to Year 3, but now caters for 80 students from kindergarten to Year 5, with Year 6 also being offered in 2015.

The college's main focus areas are academic excellence and the Catholic faith. Much of the academic excellence at the school includes improved outcomes in literacy and numeracy standards for every child. As such, the concept of literacy is inclusive of languages education as it is perceived that the study of another language assists the learner to comprehend their own language better whilst also broadening horizons in terms of cultural understandings. Furthermore, in learning another language, the student's mind is being prepared for the reception of new linguistic concepts and ideas that not only assist with the mastery of the new language, they also create 'pathways' in the brain for future academic pursuits.

The other focus area, the Catholic faith, is taught by two sisters of the Missionary of the Congregation of Mary (MCM), along

with the college and parish priest (who is also the Chair of the Board of Directors). The college's strong Catholic ethos pervades everyday activities, such as the virtues of the faith being incorporated in the Behaviour Management Plan, as well as in other areas of daily school life.

The location of the school lends itself to an interesting demographic: one that is predominantly Anglo-Australians with a smattering of other ethnicities. According to the 2011 Census, the Chittering Local Government Area (LGA) had a population of 4,428 people. Of these, 71 per cent were Australia born and 24 per cent were born overseas. Of the overseas born, the majority originate from the UK, New Zealand and South Africa. A small percentage (3.6 per cent), speak another language other than English (ABS 2011).

As the Foundation Principal, I was asked to offer Modern Greek (Greek) as the language other than English at the school. I was quite taken aback as other languages such as Italian, Spanish or Indonesian, or others, seemed to fit in with the ethos of Catholic schools. However, the directors of the college gave three reasons for their choice:

- Greek is the language of the New Testament, an important consideration for this faith-based school
- Greek is my area of expertise
- Greek would go hand-in-hand with the introduction of Latin in secondary school.

Clearly, the directors of the college had a long-term vision for the school and also for the purpose of Greek being the language of choice.

Despite this view from the governing body of the school, the general outlook from the parent body, particularly in the first year of the school's operation, was one that ranged from indifference to opposition. In fact, many parents were bemused by the choice of language on offer, some even voicing their confusion openly. For a small proportion of parents, the perceived over emphasis on Greek language immersion manifested itself as cause for concern. They felt that the time allocated to the study of Greek was at the expense of time that could be spent on other learning areas of the curriculum, such as English or mathematics. ▶



Resistance in the first year

Having accepted the fact that Greek was to be the language on offer at the school, in 2012 I allocated three 40-minute periods per week to the study of the language into the timetable for students in pre-primary onwards. We were also fortunate to secure the services of a seconded teacher from Greece who was able to offer us free tuition in the first half of the year as he was still under contract with the Greek government. Known to me from my previous school, this made the establishment of the Greek program at the school relatively seamless.

At the first public event at the school - the blessing of the college by the Catholic Archbishop of Perth in March 2012 - the students from pre-primary to Year 3 commenced with a simple Greek welcoming song and, after the blessing ceremony, recited two prayers in Greek with accuracy and flare. This resulted in a formal meeting and complaints the following week from the president and vice president of the college's Parents and Friends (P&F) Association. The complaint was that the students recited the Greek items better than the items in English. This led to further complaints about the amount of time dedicated to Greek in the timetable. The children were '...missing out on other learning areas' because there were three periods dedicated to language education each week. Finally, the representative parents claimed that there was general confusion in the wider community about the school: was it a Greek school or an Australian school?

I addressed each matter with care and consideration, aiming to reassure the two parent representatives that, in fact, their children were becoming more literate by learning Greek. I explained how learning another language helps children to consider the mechanics of their own language, and how it also broadens their horizons and understandings of other cultural and ethnic groups. I mentioned that they should be proud at how their children sang and recited items in Greek with such ease. However, they were adamant that they wanted less time spent on Greek in the timetable. They also suggested that this would help alleviate

“ I explained how learning another language helps children to consider the mechanics of their own language, and how it also broadens their horizons and understandings of other cultural and ethnic groups. ”

the problem of confusion that existed in the wider community with regard to the identity of the school.

I adjusted the timetable for the start of Term 2, 2012, from three periods to two in 2013 and 2014. Since then there have been no formal complaints about the time allocated to Greek at the school. However, personally, I thought that the students would have been better off with three periods per week, not just where Greek was concerned, but also in terms of all literacy and numeracy skills. However, emphasis continued to be placed on studying Greek at the school whilst care was taken to 'tone down' the amount of input from me as principal. This 'toning down' did not last long; I soon reverted back to using Greek wherever possible, so that the students could see its relevance outside the classroom.

Since 2012, there has been consistency in the amount of time allocated to studying Greek, but also in the input from me, establishing traditions such as greeting the students in Greek and receiving greetings and blessings from them in Greek in return. Another tradition that has been instilled is that students who are masters of ceremony for parent assemblies use Greek to greet the audience and to introduce themselves. These traditions have helped to establish a firm languages education culture at the school that is now commonplace and even expected by the parent body. Furthermore, the inclusion of Greek items at parent assemblies and the

issuing of certificates of merit for student achievement in Greek lessons are a welcomed and an expected part of the educational journey of the students from pre-primary onwards.

Consolidation in the second year

Continued emphasis on the teaching and learning of Greek at the school, including educating the college community on the importance of learning another language, took place from 2013 onwards. I made a point of including information on languages education in the monthly newsletter so as to continue reinforcement in the value of learning another language. In time, some parents even expressed a desire to learn basic conversational Greek so that they could understand what their children were saying to them at home.

Another initiative to take place in 2013 was the introduction of a 15-minute session for Greek at the kindergarten level. No formal teaching/learning program for Greek was required for kindergarten; instead, the Greek language teacher liaised closely with the kindergarten teacher, aligning words, phrases, and songs to be taught in Greek closely to her teaching/learning program. Despite initial resistance from the kindergarten teacher to introducing Greek into the program, she has subsequently become very keen for the weekly lesson to take place.

In 2013, I applied and was successful in receiving the following grants; Languages Plan Grant, Languages Special Project Grant, and Languages Shadowing a Colleague Grant. These funds allowed for the following initiatives to take place:

- a Languages Education Plan for 2013-18
- bilingual signage around the school
- to have the Greek language teacher 'shadow' a languages education teacher from another school for a day

During Semester 2 of that year, the five-year languages education plan was completed. This comprehensive plan included an introduction of the Greek culture into the Greek teaching/learning

program; an aspect that had been absent to date. The plan also included the introduction of Adult Greek language classes and an online teaching/learning component. And the Greek language teacher began to 'shadow' a colleague from another school for a day, gaining invaluable insight into different strategies used in the primary school to further engage students in language learning.

One of the most successful motivators for senior students (Years 3 and 4 in 2013) was the introduction at the school of the online program 'Language Perfect'. This tool was used both at school and at home by the students, allowing them to test their Greek vocabulary and pronunciation. The Language Perfect world championships, held in May each year, provided great motivation for some, with rewards in the form of points and certificates. One student achieved an outstanding result on an international scale for his efforts in the near month-long competition.

Sustaining languages education in the third year

In 2014, another significant initiative and direct result of the five-year languages education plan that eventuated was the introduction of Adult Greek language classes. Midway during Term 1, the Greek language teacher began offering a half-hour lesson for beginners in Greek

for anyone interested in learning. A core group of mothers at the school have taken up the lessons and are persisting with successful results.

The integration of Greek in the curriculum of the school is also evident through teaching units of work on Ancient Greece. For example, the classroom teacher will liaise with the Greek language teacher and, together, they will present a coordinated approach to the topic. The Greek language teacher compliments the unit of work by teaching key words and phrases in Greek, and by embellishing the history being taught by the classroom teacher.

Finally, the online teaching/learning tool, Language Perfect, is continuing to provide great motivation to the senior students, many of whom entered this year's world-wide competition with successful results. Once again, the school was propelled to great heights in terms of its standing at the end of the competition with a number of students receiving attractive certificates. This, coupled with the internal certificates received by students in all year levels for their efforts in the Greek language has helped to cement the status of Greek in the school's curriculum.

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“ One of the most successful motivators for senior students (Years 3 and 4 in 2013) was the introduction at the school of the online program 'Language Perfect'. This tool was used both at school and at home by the students.... ”

A way forward – Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)



Second language learning has seen many ups and downs in Australian schools over the past decades. In the context of the global rise of English and its dominance in key areas such as knowledge and information distribution, technology, and global economic relations, second languages struggle against marginalization and the occasional sense that they only clutter an already crowded curriculum. Many foreign languages are in decline in all developed English language speaking nations, including Australia (Clyne, 2007; Slaughter, 2007; Willoughby, 2006). Indeed, some reports indicate that Indonesian, French, Japanese, Italian, German and Mandarin Chinese experienced a 7 per cent decline in total numbers programs between 1998 and 2004 (Willoughby, 2006, p. 5). Since then, the decline has continued.

Successive governments have made valiant attempts to steer second language learning into a better position, by using policy and other initiatives to support language learning as an important part of Australia's economic and human capital development. In particular Asian languages received policy and funding attention, first through the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) strategy from 1994 - 2003, and later through the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) in 2007 (ceased in 2012). While the 2012 White Paper 'Australia in the Asian Century' renewed the call for more second language proficiency (particularly in Asian languages) for Australian school leavers, so far the current government has not explicitly thrown its weight behind the status of second languages in Australian schools.

Against the backdrop of this maybe discouraging picture, an intensive language learning model has entered our schools for the past 35 years, largely unrecognised by state and federal government policies, and not very well known in the wider community. Initially called 'second language immersion program', the initiatives are increasingly referred to as CLIL, or Content and Language Integrated Learning programs, in agreement with the internationally used term. CLIL programs have been established in all school sectors, public, independent and Catholic, and can be at primary or secondary level.

CLIL programs are specialist learning groups in mainstream schooling that deliver Australian National Curriculum subjects such as biology, mathematics and history through the medium of a second language. Addressing the 'crowded curriculum' in a unique way, students cover all required curriculum descriptions while learning a second language at the same time. Teachers and students use the second language for all communication inside and outside of the classroom, as teaching materials are translated into the second language. This requires a special set of qualifications for teachers, who have to be registered teachers in their subject areas (for example science secondary schools)

or registered classroom teachers (in primary) as well as highly proficient in the language used for instruction (Smala, 2013).

The term CLIL is preferred to 'immersion', as the CLIL model emphasises active learning of both the second language and the subject area, whereas immersion suggests a rather unstructured exposure to language use only. In actual practice, however, immersion programs in Australia always included a focus on language learning as well as the teaching and learning of the subject content. Approaching students' engagement with a second language through the CLIL method has two strong advantages: 1: it links second languages with compulsory subjects, and 2: it provides an authentic reason to use the second language.

“ The term CLIL is preferred to 'immersion', as the CLIL model emphasises active learning of both the second language and the subject area, whereas immersion suggests a rather unstructured exposure to language use only. ”

The 'tyranny of distance' is often experienced quite sharply by students and teachers involved in second language learning in Australia. Unlike in Europe, trips to countries where the target language is spoken are difficult and expensive, and creating an environment where the use of the second language is expected provides a welcome incentive. In CLIL programs, bilingual subject teachers work closely with the heads of science, social science or mathematics departments, enabling the second language to gain a more prominent position in the mainstream school.

In many CLIL programs, particularly in secondary schools, students undergo a selection process based on academic achievement and motivation. Students, and their parents, might be motivated to enter a CLIL program for a variety of reasons, among them a sense of being with a smaller, but high achieving group, the opportunity to learn a language more proficiently for travel and future work competitiveness (Smala et al, 2013), and links to the target language that can reach from having travelled to the country once, to being a native speaker of the language. Consequently, CLIL programs actually occupy a niche that includes intensive language learning for some participants, and language maintenance of already existing skills for others.

Educators and researchers have focused on the question of how CLIL program experiences are 'feeding back' into a broader understanding of pedagogy in general. Australian research has shown that due to their use of transnational language communities via the internet, CLIL programs can be sites for developing global competencies and skills, including digital literacies and a deeper awareness of world issues (Smala, 2012).

There are about 30 CLIL programs across the whole of Australia and the main languages are German (9 programs), French (8), Italian (7), Japanese (7), Mandarin (6), Spanish (3), Vietnamese (2), and one each in Greek, Macedonian, and Korean. Most of these programs developed independently either in primary or secondary schools. There are no continuity plans between primary and secondary schools for most of the programs, and programs are driven, delivered and administered by individual teachers at the different school sites (Smala, 2014). Government agencies from target language countries, for example the Goethe Institute or the Confucius Institute, often support CLIL programs with free professional development (in Australia and overseas), teaching support materials, and access to online communities and further materials (Smala, 2012).

However, in recent years, several professional organisations have also begun to embrace the CLIL approach as an overarching concept of interest to teachers in Australia. The Modern Language Teachers Association of Victoria (MLTAV) conducted an online survey in 2009 in which 71 per cent of the 386 teachers who participated saw the inclusion of CLIL models for a National Languages Curriculum as a priority (Modern Language Teachers Association of Victoria, 2009, p. 12). Both the MLTAV and its counterpart in Queensland, MLTAQ, have established webpages on their websites that aim to inform both language and subject teachers about CLIL.

The first CLIL program in Queensland was established in 1985 as a pioneering effort by a high school teacher of French who had familiarity with the Canadian bilingual education model. Consequently, CLIL in Queensland then developed predominantly as late onset secondary programs which start in Year 8 and generally cover Years 9 and 10 as well. Similarly, the first CLIL programs in Victoria were established in the 1980s,

mainly in primary schools, and NSW has trialed four programs in primary schools for the past few years (Harbon & Fielding, 2013). In 2013, a Victorian government commissioned report about 12 trial bilingual CLIL programs was released, concluding that this language learning model was worth pursuing, but needs support for professional teacher development and ongoing monitoring of student learning (Cross & Gearon, 2013).

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Supporting English language learners



ANNA DABROWSKI

As global mobility increases, the number of 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) students in Australian schools continues to grow, and so does the need for language provisions that value the cultural and linguistic heritage of EAL students. Although Australian schools have historically favoured assimilation into the English language, there is increasing recognition that EAL students should be nurtured rather than assimilated into English at the expense of their mother tongue. The benefits of language retention are widely documented, with pluralist practices demonstrating increased cognitive and psychosocial capabilities in English language learners.

Although the group is diverse, many English language learners in Australian schools are affected by aspects of disadvantage additional to a lack of proficiency in the language of instruction. These students are often from low socio-economic backgrounds and often rely upon school support and government funding to improve their English language skills and academic ability. Yet recognition of EAL students in government and non-government schools varies greatly, and in order for educators to understand and support the specific needs of English language learners, the existing policies and practices that support EAL students in Australian schools deserve greater attention.

A history of assimilation

Until the end of the 1960s, there was no language policy in Australian schools that supported immigrant children

who did not speak English. Instead, official education policies were that of 'assimilation', with little consideration given to the value of the existing linguistic or cultural heritage of non-English speaking students. In 1971, the national Child Migrant Education Program (CMEP) was founded with less emphasis upon cultural assimilation and an increased recognition of the value of individual students with regards to their cultural identities.

Between 1971 and the early 1980s, the number of teachers instructing or assisting EAL students was reduced due to lower levels of state and national funding in the area. Accordingly, English language provisions in schools decreased substantially as federal government policy began to dictate that mainstream teachers integrated EAL methodology within the classroom. As a result, English language provisions continued to be sidelined and ultimately ineffective. ►

Since this time, teachers and language professionals have continued to argue for changes to the policies surrounding the support of EAL learners in Australia. There is now increasing acknowledgment of the growing number of students from non-English speaking backgrounds attending Australian schools. In Victorian government schools, for example, almost twenty five percent of school students come from a non-English speaking background.

The shape of the Australian Curriculum reflects ACARA's (2013) 'commitment to supporting equity of access to the Australian Curriculum for all students', and like other existing state provisions, recognises and outlines the difficulties facing students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Although ACARA iterates the importance of recognising the value of linguistic variations, the separate EAL model is also based upon principles of linguistic assimilation in order to meet the standards outlined in the Australian Curriculum.

Similarly, the prestigious International Baccalaureate, increasingly being offered in Australian schools, is taught entirely in English within the Australian context, with no special guidelines for EAL students. For schools that offer the International Baccalaureate, EAL continues to be perceived as an area of low importance, with limited support for English language learners reflected in either the curricula or policy documents of the International Baccalaureate Organisation.

A question of funding

Educating EAL students has become a highly important issue in many English-speaking countries around the world. As more students from non-English speaking backgrounds enter the Australian educational sphere, deliberations over how best to cater for the linguistic needs of migrant students remain an area of contention.

In Australian public and independent schools, there are now several policies relating to the education of migrant and transnational EAL students. EAL provisions are available to students who were born overseas or in Australia, with the most significant being the *New*



Arrivals Program, *ESL Index Funding* and the allocation of *Multicultural Educational Aides*. Each policy possesses unique stipulations, however across these programs, English language assistance is offered only to students who have been enrolled in an Australian school for less than five years, thereby excluding EAL learners who do not seek assistance upon or soon after arrival in Australia. To be eligible to participate in the *New Arrivals Program*, students must have been in Australia for less than six months (or eighteen months for prep students) and must be permanent residents or citizens of Australia. *ESL Index Funding* is only available in schools where there are significant numbers of EAL students. The same is true of funding for *Multicultural Education Aides*.

State-funded EAL programs are dependent upon perceived need and funding restrictions, both aspects of which result in programs being mandated by time frames and student numbers. In contrast, for wealthier independent

schools that fall within the non-government sector, dependence upon both state and federal funding is of less influence over the programs available to students. This results in a multitude of linguistic provisions being offered within the independent sector, ranging from bilingual education to multilingual curricula options.

EAL students need extra help

Historically, many EAL learners in Australia have come from low socio-economic backgrounds and possess poor linguistic competency in both their native and additional languages. These students require extra support, but it can be difficult for educators (particularly those not trained in EAL) to differentiate between communicative competency and academic proficiency. Many EAL students demonstrate oral competency as a result of immersion in English speaking environments, yet use of this 'survival English' camouflages their classroom ability to understand and produce the

“*The shape of the Australian Curriculum reflects ACARA’s (2013) ‘commitment to supporting equity of access to the Australian Curriculum for all students’, and like other existing state provisions, recognises and outlines the difficulties facing students from non-English speaking backgrounds.*”

more complex aspects of written and oral English. Inevitably, as language advocate and educator Jim Cummins has noted, EAL students ‘miss out on acquiring certain concepts. Their inability to cope with classroom language can lead to motivation or behaviour problems. A negative self-image reinforced by frequent categorisation as a remedial student, compounds the problem’ (2001).

There is also a strong case for the value of EAL students retaining their native language and culture. For English language learners, the manner in which language acquisition is facilitated within the school or community is also highly influential over the rate of mother tongue retention. Over the previous decades, research has illuminated the role language plays in both the formation and deconstruction of identity. Today, it is widely assumed that native language retention can facilitate the construction of identity, promote value and self-worth and encourage educational and social engagement.

In Australia, the ability to develop competency in English is of great importance, providing a pathway to

tertiary participation, employment and permanent residence. Without adequate resources, it can often be difficult to support the language learning needs of the most disadvantaged English language learners and ensure that EAL students share the same opportunities as their native speaking peers.

Where to from here?

The pursuit of linguistic proficiency for educational and academic purposes sometimes eclipses other facets within the area of language acquisition. Yet to overlook the consequence of these elements would be a mistake. For English language learners, the implications of individual and societal English language acquisition vary greatly, ranging from multilingualism and improved cognitive performance to subtractive bilingualism (the replacement of the native language with the second or additional dialect) and linguistic genocide for minority language communities.

An increasing number of schools around Australia are offering bilingual programs in order to foster and promote cultural diversity in young Australian students. These programs are particularly beneficial for EAL learners, allowing the retention of the mother tongue alongside the language of instruction. This premise stands in contrast to the assimilation method long proffered in Australian education policies. The positive implications are numerous: not only is English language instruction integrated into the curriculum on an ongoing basis, but the existing cultural and linguistic ties of students are maintained in parallel to increased English language proficiency. Although western prestige dialects such as Italian, French or German continue to dominate bilingual programs in Australian schools, an increasing number of minority and community language programs are being offered in reflection of Australian EAL students’ linguistic diversity and cultural heritage.

In an increasingly diverse context, there is now a direct need to research alternatives to current policy that supports EAL students within the education and broader social context, in order to implement policy that places

value upon the cultural and linguistic practices of individuals regardless of access to capital, instead of deeming these differences nugatory. Employing qualified teachers and increasing funding for language programs are just the first steps to augmenting the prospects and experiences of EAL learners in Australia.

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Gonski and the Abbott Government



KEN BOSTON

Ken Boston delivered a speech at the NSW Teachers Federation's 2014 Annual Conference held in the Sydney Town Hall on 29 June. ACE and *Professional Educator* were granted permission from the author and the NSW Teachers Federation to print this speech in its entirety.

"I begin at the heart of the matter: why the neo-conservative right that has taken control of the Federal Cabinet is so totally opposed to Gonski.

It is not because of the budget or the state of the economy, or because the Gonski solution won't work.

It is because the two key Gonski objectives are both anathema to a neo-conservative agenda.

Those objectives are:

- First, to ensure that education, as a public good, is genuinely available to every child, according to individual need.
- Second, to ensure that educational achievement, as a positional good, is available to all on the basis of ability and hard work alone.

A public good is something that is universally available to all and accessible by all. Traffic signs, fire alarms, air traffic control, street lighting and roads are common examples of a public good.

A public good usually has a cost, which may vary according to circumstances. For example, the cost of bitumen roads as a

public good in rural NSW is more than the cost per capita and per kilometre of roads in metropolitan Sydney.

A public good is of benefit to all of us, and the benefit to each of us does not reduce the availability of the benefit to others.

By these criteria, education is a public good.

Education is universally available, in government and non-government schools.

There is a cost to the taxpayer, and in many schools to the parent, in educating children. The cost of delivering education as a public good for some children will be more than the cost for other children, because of circumstances such as disability, ethnicity, poverty, language background or remoteness.

The provision of education for all children is of benefit to all of us.

And teaching one child to read does not reduce the availability of reading to another child.

A positional good is inherently scarce. It is a service or product with value arising from the fact that it is not available to everyone, so not all can benefit from it. Its possession confers status and preferment on the possessor. The economist's usual examples are luxury cars and houses, ocean cruises and so on.

An education credential - a Higher School Certificate, a TAFE certificate, a degree, a graduate diploma, a higher degree - is

a positional good. By definition, high achievement in education is relative to the lower achievement of others. High educational outcomes confer status and preferment on the possessor.

Now, the essence of Gonski is that it seeks to do two things:

First, to ensure that every child, regardless of individual circumstances, receives the support needed to experience education as a public good.

This is very different from every child receiving the same level of support. It is about ensuring every child is given the particular level and kind of support needed to ensure that they can gain full access to education as a public good.

Second, to ensure that educational achievement, as a positional good, is available on the basis of talent and hard work alone, rather than preferentially available to those in a position of wealth and privilege.

Gonski is a fundamental re-imagining of Australian education, not simply a proposal for allocating resources to schools. It is a radically liberal rethinking of priorities and approaches and objectives, not an exercise in accountancy.

Christopher Pyne understood that sooner than most people, and he is utterly opposed to it.

To explain the first of those objectives - to make education a genuine public good - I begin with the term teacher quality. We do not talk of doctor quality or dentist quality: we talk of the quality of health care or the quality of oral health.

And that quality varies greatly from place to place. Health care in Australia is not everywhere of the same quality. The variation is not explained by the quality of the medical staff, but by their number, the availability of specialist diagnosis and treatment, and the availability of technical and ancillary support.

Low quality health care in rural and remote Australia is explained by inadequate funding for the task at hand, not by the relative incompetence of the available doctors and nurses.

Now, it is the same with teaching. We should talk not about teacher quality, but about the quality of education. The

“ *There is a cost to the taxpayer, and in many schools to the parent, in educating children. The cost of delivering education as a public good for some children will be more than the cost for other children, because of circumstances such as disability, ethnicity, poverty, language background or remoteness.* ”

teachers in our most disadvantaged schools are at least as good as those in our most advantaged schools.

The issue is not their competence, skill or commitment.

The issue is that their number, resources and support are unequal to the task.

At a national and state level, there is no correlation between teacher quality and school performance in Australia. There are some ineffective teachers as there are incompetent doctors, but they can be found in schools both effective and ineffective, and there are procedures for dealing with them.

But education in Australia is not everywhere of the same quality. There is great variation in the quality of education from school to school, and it is that which Gonski seeks to address.

The schools at the lower end of both the scale of aggregated social disadvantage and the scale of educational performance are the emergency wards of Australian education. In a hospital emergency ward there is a battery of medical specialists and intervention techniques and diagnostic tools targeted at the recovery of the individual.

A school with more than 90 per cent of its intake being children with a language background other than English, from families from 35 different language groups, less than three years in the country and unlikely to stay more than three years in the school, is an emergency ward in the same real sense.

So too is a small rural school, taking children from the long-term unemployed, some suffering from foetal alcohol syndrome, some of whom have never been read to, or even held a book.

That image has not been implanted firmly in the public mind. Children entering such schools require immediate diagnosis of need and immediate intensive care. They need smaller class sizes, the ready availability of tier 2 and tier 3 interventions delivered by fully qualified personnel, speech therapists, counsellors, school/family liaison officers including interpreters, and a range of other support.

A child is eight years of age once in her life. If she has not learned to read to the level of national minimum standard by the end of Year 3, she will not effectively read to learn in later years. It is in the public interest that we invest in her education as a public good.

And if a refugee child newly arrived in the country, not speaking English and from a very poor family, requires greater support than the child of a third-generation Australian family in secure employment, with an income twice the national average, then so be it.

We have for years accepted such needs-based differentials in the cost of our road system, and in the provision of many other kinds of public good.

If we fail to make the investment, we consign that child and thousands of others to the bin of under-achievement, and we fail as a nation to realise our potential stock of human capital.

The Business Council of Australia – certainly not a neo-conservative body, but hardly socialist left – estimates that a 10 per cent increase in the number of young people completing Year 12 would increase GDP by \$1.8 billion by 2020; the Grattan Institute estimates that increasing our

international tests scores by one standard deviation would lift GDP growth by one per cent.

Over the past forty years, and particularly since Howard, successive governments have allocated funding to the three sectors, after consultation with state governments, independent school organisations, church leaders, teacher unions and others. It has never been on the basis of the detailed assessment of the needs of individual schools. It has been essentially a political settlement, sector-based and needs-blind.

There has then been a series of post-hoc equity programs designed to address specific purposes, the most recent of which was the New Partnership funding. These programs have been but partially effective, and time-limited.

The Gonski model turns all this on its head. It is sector-blind and needs-based. It seeks to assess the resource requirements of each individual school according to need. It proposes a base loading for all schools and loadings for the different elements of aggregated social disadvantage. It brings equity funding into the main stream. What is eventually spent in each sector is to be the sum of the needs of the schools in that sector, built up from the bottom, not the result of a political settlement pushed down from the top.

The Labor Government, not Gonski, said no school should lose a dollar, and to satisfy that requirement we included in the model a base grant for all schools. But there is no doubt that the model is redistributive, and that it creates a more even playing field across the three sectors.

Christopher Pyne understood that sooner than most people in politics and unlike some people in the Coalition parties he is utterly opposed to it. The Abbott Government might claim the nation cannot afford an increase in education funding: what Pyne is really opposed to is the redistribution of whatever funding might be available, according to measured need.

The second Gonski objective is one of equal opportunity: to ensure that educational achievement as a positional

good is earned on the basis of talent and hard work alone, rather than purchased by those in a position of wealth and privilege.

The strategic targeting of resources according to need, will do much more than reduce the impact of disadvantage on educational outcomes.

The flip side is that it will also reduce the impact of advantage and privilege on educational outcomes.

If school performance is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by parental income, ethnic background, religion, school size and location, or whether a student attends an independent, Catholic or public school, success at school will be determined essentially by the student's ability, application and hard work.

In other words, Gonski will create a genuine meritocracy. And that's where Minister Pyne - although by no means all other members of his party - has particular difficulty with Gonski.

Mr Pyne is anchored in the era of Dr Kemp, the minister in the Howard Government who presided over increased funding for non-government schools in order to underwrite financially the exercise of choice between government and non-government schools by parents.

As many of us predicted at the time, this has not resulted in reduced fees and greater accessibility to the non-government sector, but has widened the gulf between the rich and the poor. It has sucked the oxygen from any real competition between schools in different sectors.

And, as the international data clearly demonstrate, Australia's educational performance has sharply deteriorated since that time.

The publicly-funded user-choice model introduced by Dr Kemp was intended to encourage increasing number of parents to pay for their children's education.

To do so, non-government schools had to be perceived as manifestly better than state schools.

If parents are to invest in their child's education, they want to see a return on the investment.

“ If parents are to invest in their child's education, they want to see a return on the investment. ”

And the return they want is educational achievement as a positional good - to increase their child's chances for selection into courses such as law, medicine or engineering in the university of their choice.

At present, the hard-working and talented children of the privileged have a somewhat better prospect of access to the very highest levels of educational achievement than the similarly hard-working and talented children of the socially disadvantaged.

Gonski would change that: all won't have prizes - this is about equality of opportunity not equality of outcomes - but those who do receive prizes will do so, on the basis of hard work, ability and application alone.

Mr Pyne correctly recognizes this as a direct challenge to the neo-conservative heartland. A funding system designed to build a genuine meritocracy by creating an even playing field, and devaluing the benefits of private schooling, cannot be contemplated by the clique currently in charge in Canberra.

So, what is to be done? Five thoughts.

First, we should heed the advice of Justice Michael Kirby at the recent awards night for the Centre for Public Education that the priority is again to make the case for the Gonski reform to the Australian electorate. This the previous government failed to do adequately - indeed, its failure to accept the Gonski recommendation to establish a national schools resourcing body largely unpicked the broad-based national consensus built by the Gonski process.



The objective should be to elect a pro-Gonski government at the next election, either Coalition or Labor.

I am immensely encouraged by state governments including Liberal National Party governments, and most prominently in NSW, which are committed to the Gonski principles and are prepared to bear the cost of their implementation. Such support, together with support from state opposition parties and some Federal Government backbenchers, does bring real pressure on the present Federal Government leadership.

There also seems to me – from the various discussions I have had around the country following presentations on Gonski – substantial potential to build support among the more disadvantaged non-government schools and their parents; and within those many elements of the Catholic sector in which there is a strong Catholic social justice perspective.

I am also encouraged by the strong interest that I have experienced among business and industry groups, which clearly recognise the importance of education to the economy, and understand the imperative of maximizing our national stock of human capital.

Nothing the Federal Government has done, or said it will do, or can do other than implement needs-based funding, will prevent further decline in our national performance in the next round of PISA results in 2015, which will become available in the first part of 2016.

Barring a double dissolution, the first date at which the next election for the House and half-Senate can be held is 6

August 2016. Gonski will be right back on the agenda.

Second, we must not be distracted by the diversionary and flanking attacks on Gonski, launched by Pyne under the banner of the Students First program and its four pillars of teacher quality, school autonomy, parental engagement and a robust curriculum.

Our poor international performance and steep social gradient cannot be explained away by poor teacher quality. If every teacher in NSW were to obtain a master's degree within the next three years, there might be some improvement in performance across the range including at the top and the bottom, but the gap between the most disadvantaged state school and the most affluent private school will never be reduced without the strategic redistribution of funding according to measured need.

Improved teacher quality – or, as I would prefer to describe it, 'improvement in the quality of education', costs money: it is not an alternative to Gonski. Gonski is an essential pre-condition.

As the research has shown, the second pillar, school autonomy, is an irrelevant distraction. I worked in England for nine years, where every government school (for example maintained school, which includes faith-based schools) has the autonomy of the independent public schools in WA – governing boards that can hire and fire head teachers and staff, determine salaries and promotions, and so on. Yet school performance in England varies enormously from school to school, and from region to region, essentially related to aggregated social advantage in the south of the country and disadvantage in the north.

It is the quality of the whole-school instructional leadership of the principal that is the important thing, not their capacity to hire staff or borrow money for capital works. And building high quality instructional leadership across a school system costs money: it is also not an alternative to Gonski. Gonski is the pre-requisite.

The third pillar, parental engagement, is critical to school improvement. But building effective engagement, for

example with newly arrived communities from different language and cultural backgrounds, demands very substantial resourcing. Improved parental engagement is not a substitute for Gonski – it requires Gonski, if it is to be effective.

The fourth pillar, a robust curriculum, is code for the charge that our poor international performance is the result of a 'cultural left' national curriculum.

No-one would be opposed to ongoing monitoring and review of the curriculum, by the proper authority (the Ministerial Council, not the Commonwealth Minister), and by independent reviewers.

But this is not what we've got. In the next few months Pyne will focus on an allegedly content-free, left-wing and insufficiently Anglophile curriculum as the cause of our national decline. To him, education is a matter of filling an empty vessel, rather than the Socratic vision of lighting a flame.

We must not be distracted by all this. The real issue is Gonski.

Consider: the gap in reading performance between the top 20 per cent of Year 9 students, who are mainly in affluent schools, and the bottom 20 per cent who are mainly in disadvantaged schools, is currently equivalent to five years of schooling.

It is an appalling situation. One in five of our 15 year-olds is reading at no better than mid-primary level.

This is not the result of insufficient autonomy for government schools and their principals.

It is not the result of poor teaching.

It is not the result of a cultural left curriculum.

It is not the result of failing to make Thomas Hardy compulsory in Year 8.

It is the direct result of sector-based, needs-blind school funding – and it will not change until the situation is reversed, and funding becomes sector-blind and needs-based.

Third, we must all have the arguments at hand to counter – in meetings with parents, in the local media, in the local pub, in meetings such as Rotary which

“ I firmly believe that needs-based funding along the lines of the Gonski model will eventually be introduced to this country. The longer the delay, the greater the deterioration and injustice. ”

principals are often called upon to address – the fallacious and frequently dishonest assertions made in the media.

Despite neo-con assertions that there is no evidence that increased expenditure will improve school performance, the positive impact of increased funding on student and school performance is overwhelmingly reported in the scholarly literature.

The jury is in on this.

The relationship between socioeconomic status and achievement is also absolutely beyond question. This is true however socioeconomic status is defined: either narrowly as parental occupation or income; or more broadly as the Index of Economic, Social and Cultural Status, which is used by PISA, and which includes parental occupation, parental education attainment, and home possessions relating to wealth, educational resources and cultural possessions; or even more broadly as aggregated social disadvantage, which is the Gonski measure, and includes additionally Indigeneity, language proficiency and geographic location.

Again, the jury is in.

Briefings prepared by the Teachers Federation and the AEU are invaluable in assisting you to respond to fallacy with fact. I also recommend the submissions, transcripts of evidence and answers to questions on notice which are now available on the website of the Senate Select Committee on School Funding.

For example, answers to questions on notice number 41, in my name, is a comprehensive survey of the research findings on the relationship between expenditure, socioeconomic status and performance. Twelve of us worked on this document, and it is well worth a read.

The point is we each individually cannot afford to let nonsense go unchallenged, at any level from the Murdoch Press and 2UE down to a dinner table conversation or a chat with a parent, if we are to turn things around at the next election.

Fourth, keep the pressure on the Labor Party. They have a lot to answer for. I admire Gillard for establishing the Gonski process.

But the reason we don't have Gonski today is not because the country has elected an Abbott Government, but because the Labor Government failed in its implementation.

Nine months after the election there is no roadmap apart from a promise to fund the full six years. Why does the Opposition not commit to setting up a national schools resourcing body, as we recommended, which would surely be immensely attractive to the states and territories – as the basis for implementing needs-based funding once it returns to government?

Finally, whoever forms the next government – a rejuvenated Labor Party or a more enlightened group of Liberals – let's campaign to get rid of what proved to be the albatross around the neck of the Gonski Panel: the undertaking that no school should lose a dollar.

I am not suggesting the end of state aid to non-government schools. But, taking up David Gonski's comment in his recent

Blackburn Oration, I do believe that it is in the interests of the nation and the individual that whatever funding is available should be spent strategically on the schools that need it - government and non-government - and on the things that matter, rather than on the schools that don't need it and on things that are simply nice to have.

In conclusion, Gonski lives.

And in ensuring that is so, great credit must be given to the AEU, the NSWTF and the teacher unions in the other states for your highly successful national campaign to keep this issue at the forefront of the public mind. Without that campaign, which we need to continue through to the next election, the neo-conservative right would have swept away the Gonski agenda. It not only remains, but has much support within the government's own ranks.

I firmly believe that needs-based funding along the lines of the Gonski model will eventually be introduced to this country. The longer the delay, the greater the deterioration and injustice. But at some stage there will be a national government that will be prepared to act, to prevent Australian education going utterly to the dogs.

It has been a privilege to speak with you: I thank you, and wish you well."

Dr Ken Boston AO (FACE) is a former Director-General of Education in SA and NSW and a former Chief Executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for England. He was also a member of the Gonski Review Panel, and currently chairs the NSW Ministerial Advisory Group on Literacy and Numeracy. Ken is a gold medalist and former President of ACE.

ACE Grassroots Membership Challenge

Recently you would have received information explaining the ACE Grassroots Membership Challenge. The College's National President, Professor Stephen Dinham has launched this campaign in order to help grow ACE's membership numbers.

As a national organisation, ACE members are our greatest asset and the driving force that provides our organisation with direction and purpose. Achieving our aim to enlarge our membership base will intensify our collective voice, provide more benefit to the wider education community, increase networking and collegial activities for members, diversify our publications and give ACE more strength to advocate and influence education policy.

You may be aware of some of the far-reaching advocacy work that the College has been undertaking this year including: the submission to the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) on teacher education; the inaugural Jean Blackburn Oration with guest speaker Mr David Gonski AC; the probing articles that are being published in *Professional Educator*; the increased presence of ACE in the media on topics relating to policy and education in Australia in general; and of course our upcoming ACE 2014 National Conference on the theme of 'What counts as quality in Education?'.


So when you, as a member of ACE, are thinking of people to invite into the College, think of educators you know who are interested in engaging with their profession as well as those who would benefit from the College and its future goals.

ACE is known as the nationwide voice of the teaching profession. With this Grassroots Membership Challenge we hope to diversify our membership and encourage new members from the wider education sector to join us so that we can advocate together for education in Australia and make a real difference to the educational journey of all Australians.

Benefits to members are varied and include: the opportunity to become actively engaged in the discussion on education policy; access to professional development programs; participation in high-profile events; networking possibilities with imminent educators across all education sectors nationwide; opportunities for publication of articles; becoming engaged with a wide range of state and national committees in a range of education subjects and fields; and the use of College post nominal (MACE).

We know education professionals are busy people, but approaching colleagues about the Membership Challenge can be a quick and engaging activity. It can be a tea break chat, or a suggestion thrown in to a supportive conversation with a younger colleague. These are small steps into opening up a conversation that may lead to someone benefitting from an ACE membership.

If every member has one successful conversation with a potential new recruit to the College this can lead to a much larger more powerful membership for ACE. Just picture an organisation with its members' strong voice being heard and heeded by the public and government decision-makers.

Please visit austcolled.com.au/membership and become involved.



PATRICK CHIN-DAHLER

The challenges of teaching Chinese in a rural setting

Throughout my professional career, many of my colleagues often stressed how they wished they had learnt Chinese. They typically discussed China's economic and political importance to Australia as inherent reasons to study the language, suggesting that Chinese would give them a niche skill and competitive edge in the job market. When I asked why they did not now chose to pursue Chinese language studies, many often said they were daunted by the immense amount of work required to master it and that the learning process did not seem enjoyable.

This paradox between recognising the importance of learning Chinese and seriously engaging with the language reminded me of a quote by Confucius: 'Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself.' Successfully teaching Chinese is therefore a very serious and problematic issue, and this issue is made even more complex in regional or rural areas because of the geographic context that shapes students' world views.

In my first six months teaching Years 7 and 8 Chinese, 75km southeast of Melbourne, the two most common questions students asked were, 'why are we studying Chinese?' and 'what happens if we fail Chinese?' Students' questions and discussions about Chinese culture, society and engaging with China were also limited and were often based on hearsay and stereotypes. Unlike in urbanised areas, there is no easy access to Chinatown, Chinese food remains exotic or limited to the local Chinese restaurant and Chinese people are not common. In short, there is little visual

manifestation of China's strong economic growth and significant trade ties with Australia in the town and surrounding areas. For the students I teach, the concept of Australia in the Asian Century seems distant and divorced from their reality.

Making Chinese relevant to rural students' lives is therefore pertinent to language success. However, in my experience, students' key motivation for engaging with a language proved counter-intuitive or rather exposed my naivety. In approximately 150 letters from students to me regarding why they wanted to study Chinese, less than 20 per cent discussed the growth of China or the job market (even after we had learnt this), more than 60 per cent said they were interested in various aspects of Chinese culture and wanted to learn something new and 20 per cent did not provide a reason. Despite students spending significant time exploring links between Australia and China and how learning Chinese would provide them with a niche skill to market themselves for almost any job, these reasons did not seem to significantly affect their motivation to learn Chinese. While the economic and foreign relations reasons may serve as reminders about the long-term benefits of studying Chinese, students need more immediate or tangible reasons to motivate them.

My hypothesis based on student feedback proved correct when I changed my teaching style mid-year and began with a new group of students. As I discovered, one of the best motivators for commencing high school students is to have them use the language as much as possible from day one, and secondly to compare the English and Chinese languages. Anecdotally, many students said they enjoyed speaking and writing Chinese because they could show others what they learnt and it was unique. In a survey of over 80 of my students, over 85 per cent said they enjoyed unpacking the meaning of characters. For example, students liked to see and work out how the characters for civilisation (文明) individually meant literature (文) and light (明), so civilisation meant enlightenment through learning; that the characters for teacher (老师) meant old (老) (and therefore respected) and master (师);

and that the characters fire (火) and mountain (山) combined to make the word for volcano (火山). More importantly, my new students' scored approximately 15 per cent higher on similar tests than those in my previous classes, and their work completion rate is also significantly higher.

The socio-cultural method of language learning, or simply learning by doing, has allowed my students to engage with the language and innately work out patterns and grammatical rules. Not only does it demonstrate that Chinese is achievable to them, but it develops their curiosity and problem-solving skills. In turn my students have developed a sound work ethic and sense of self-efficacy with many students who score average or below average in other classes often performing well in Chinese. As Confucius says: 'I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.' Learning by doing and having students rigorously engage with the Chinese language is therefore critical if we are to have any hope of motivating students to continue to study Chinese.

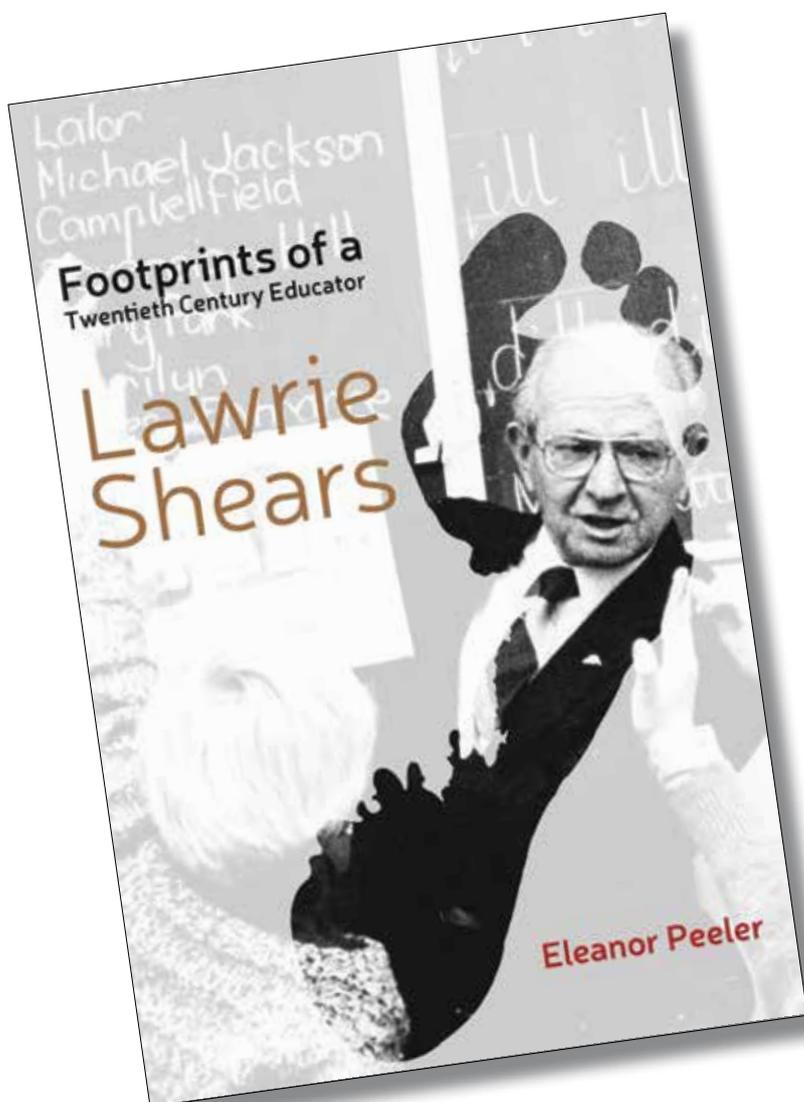
Using the language makes Chinese real and relevant, and learning inductively and having students extrapolate key rules and patterns develops their problem solving skills and curiosity. These factors in themselves motivate students to study the language and need not be pedagogically linked to arguments surrounding the importance of China's economic and political growth. These latter issues are useful reminders, but on their own do not significantly affect regional or rural students' motivation to study the language because it is hard for many of these students to see how the rise of China directly affects their lives. Rather, using the language and developing students' self-efficacy, curiosity in the culture, problem-solving skills and work ethic is the first step towards bridging the gap between an idle curiosity and the opportunity for serious engagement with the Chinese language.

Patrick Chin-Dahler is a first year Chinese and Economics via the Teach for Australia program. Patrick holds a Bachelor of Asian Studies (Honours), a Masters of Public Policy (Economic Policy) and is currently completing his Masters of Teaching.

永恒
诺言
家庭
友谊
欢喜
希望
变化

*Footprints of a twentieth century educator:
Lawrie Shears*
by Eleanor Peeler

Book review by Barry Jones



Lawrence William Shears was born in Melbourne in 1921. He completed his secondary education at University High School, went on to the Melbourne Teachers' College and completed a BEd at Melbourne University and a doctorate at London University, with a thesis on 'the dynamics of leadership'. Awarded a Harkness Fellowship in 1959, he conducted research in the US, particularly California.

Dr Eleanor Peeler, an educational historian, with a Monash DEd, has been deeply committed to working on his biography for most of a decade, carrying out many interviews between 2007 and 2009.

Very few of our important educators have had their achievements appropriately recorded or analysed. They are very thinly represented, if at all, in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (and few are anxious to meet the essential precondition for eligibility) or *Wikipedia*. Some educators are commemorated when buildings or lectureships are named for them. However, in the Order of Australia, awards for service in the public education system have been noticeably stingy. Dr Norman Curry, who received an AM in 1997, is the only Victorian Director-General of Education to have been recognised at any level (under the Imperial honours, Sir Alan Ramsay had been knighted in 1961).

The blame for this is not in the Council of the Order but in the education system itself, unconfident about pushing, while other professions are eager to secure recognition for achievement. Other states have been more generous than Victoria.

In 2009 Dr Shears was awarded the Sir James Darling Medal. The Dr Lawrie Shears Public Lecture Series was sponsored by the Australian College of Educators and Professor Suzanne Cory, President of the Australian Academy of Science, delivered the first lecture in April 2013.

Dr Shears' achievement should have been recognised in the Australian Honours System long ago.

I should declare an interest, having taught in a Victorian high school for a decade (1957-66) and was a member

“ Very few of our important educators have had their achievements appropriately recorded or analysed. They are very thinly represented, if at all, in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (and few are anxious to meet the essential precondition for eligibility) or *Wikipedia*. ”

of the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA) Council, when teacher morale was low, conditions poor, the department unduly defensive and clashes with Government frequent. The political context is central to understanding what was happening in Victorian education, but I feel that this biography avoids examination of the system.

In 1969 Lawrie Shears was appointed Assistant Director-General of Education.

Lindsay Thompson, who had been a teacher himself, was Minister for Education (1967-79), a record term, during a period of unprecedented population growth in Victoria. He appointed Shears as Director-General in 1971 and worked closely with him.

When Henry Bolte retired as Premier in 1972 (the year I became a Victorian MP), Dick Hamer succeeded him. Thompson became Deputy Premier but in 1979 moved from Education, to become Chief Secretary.

In 1979 Education was given two Ministers – Alan Hunt (father of the current Federal Minister for the Environment, Greg Hunt), and Norman Lacy, who became Minister for Educational Services. Hunt was a lawyer; Lacy had been a tradesman

(plumber) then made the surprising transition to becoming an Anglican priest.

Hunt and Lacy, both progressives, grew increasingly critical of Victoria's centralised and over-bureaucratic education system. Despite their affection for Thompson, both thought that he should have been more interventionist as a Minister.

In Dr Peeler's account, Lawrie Shears became a victim. The department was reconstructed and he was pushed out as Director-General in January 1982 and put into the ill-defined backwater of 'Coordinator-General' (1982-84) while Rev. Dr. Norman Curry was appointed Director-General.

Bicephalous leadership was doomed from the outset. The reasons for its adoption were (and remain) mysterious and Dr Peeler might well have devoted more pages to forensic analysis.

Both Hunt and Lacy were looking for reforms which could be adopted rapidly, especially as the Liberal Government, after 27 years in office, was sliding towards a precipice. When Lindsay Thompson at last became Premier, in 1981 he supported his Ministers, not his Director-General.

Again, I should declare an interest. I worked closely with Norman Lacy on the abolition of the death penalty. He was also an effective Minister for the Arts, very much in the Hamer tradition.

When Labor, led by John Cain, swept to power in April 1982, Robert Fordham became Minister for Education. He was a strong admirer of Lawrie Shears, thought he had been grievously wronged and commissioned some valuable policy papers which are included, in summary form, in *Footprints...*

Shears came under some criticism for sending his children to private schools, which suggested that he had some reservations about the system he was running.

Lawrie Shears was a great activist – involved in UNESCO, and several times a delegate to its General Conferences, a founding father of the Australian College of Educators (as it now is), the central figure of the Victorian Institute for

Educational Research (VIER), a member of the Monash University Council, Chairman of the College of Nursing, an active Anglican (like his successor Norman Curry), an assiduous editor and researcher, affable, diplomatic, a good negotiator, but very tenacious.

I raise one issue, with some hesitancy, because I am directly involved.

On p. 22 Dr Peeler quotes from my Dean's Lecture given at Melbourne University in May 2007. The words are accurately quoted but given out of context so that I appear to be adopting a position which is contrary to my beliefs.

The 1872 Victorian Education Act was a remarkable, and idealistic, achievement for its time. (Matthew Arnold was quoted eight times in the Minister's second reading speech). However, in practice, secondary education in state schools was extremely limited for 70 years, and the system produced the privates and NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers) in Australia's industrial army, workers and workers' wives.

This biography is written in natural language, refreshingly (unusually) free of Education-speak. Its emphasis is determinedly Victorian, and that raises some questions about balance. It would be regrettable if this discourages potential readers in other States and Territories.

Barry Jones is a Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne. He used to be a politician, writes a lot and proffers advice whether it is sought or not.

References

p. 142 CB, not CBE

p. 281 Governor, not Governor General

Index

VIER and VSTA not in index at all

Footprints of a twentieth century educator: Lawrie Shears by Eleanor Peeler

(Hybrid Publishers, Melbourne, 2014)
RRP: \$27.95 (www.booktopia.com.au)

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August 2014
Volume 13
Issue 4

professional
EDUCATOR