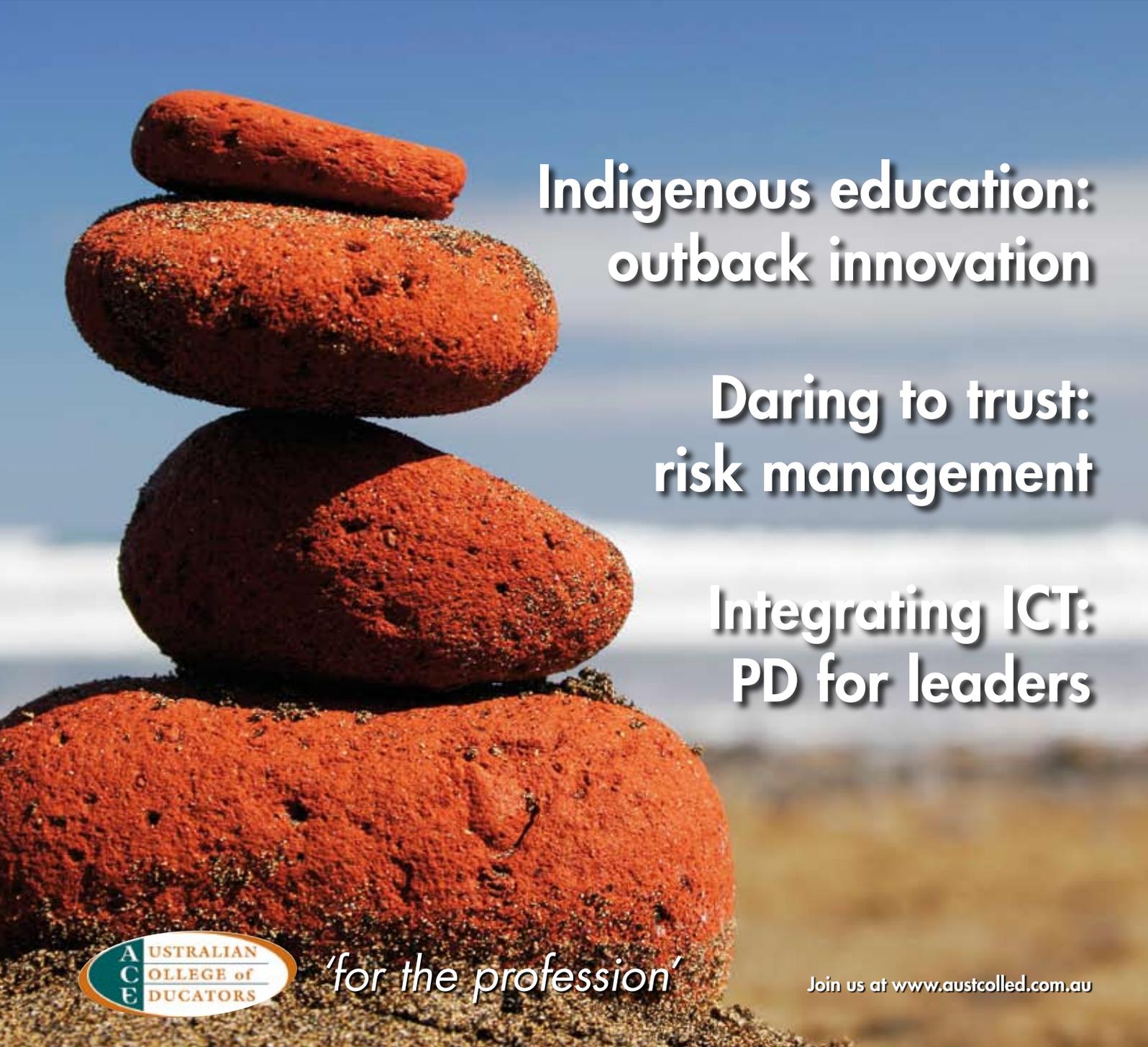


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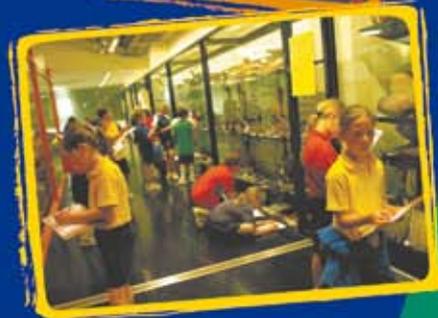
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Students at Luumpa Catholic School, WA. Photo courtesy Ted Myers. See story page 14.

2 EDITORIAL and LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

4 OPINION

- **Kevin Vallence** says educators are 'not yet competent' when it comes to competency-based training
- **Mark Wooden** examines how well young people are faring

6 FEATURE

Do more standards, regulations, compliance mechanisms and audits reduce risks and lead to safer, and better, schools? Not necessarily, says **Lee-Anne Perry**

14 TEACHING AND LEARNING

Ted Myers went to the Kimberley to experience first-hand the challenges of educating Indigenous people in remote communities

22 INNOVATION

Integrating ICT is not just about hardware, software or even online communities of practice. It's about face-to-face professional development opportunities, especially for principals, says **Neil McCallum**

30 NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE and IN BRIEF

32 ISSUES

School-based teacher education: is it the way forward? **Andrew Harvey** has some doubts

42 REVIEW

43 THE DIARY

44 AS I SEE IT... Tampering with a universal law

Danny Katz explains why having your teacher in your house is wrong

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EDITORIAL

With a federal election later this year, you can expect education to be wheeled out for media attention more than once. Education, after all, offers an opportunity for polarisation. Look in the crystal ball and what do we see? The economy? Both sides in politics will claim the 'prudent' high ground. Water management? Both sides will find plenty of fix-it money – with maybe a little federal-state fingerpointing for variation. Climate change? While there's scope for difference, climate change is always going to be a tricky hook on which to hang an election. Education? Curriculum reform and standards, teacher supply and quality, and school funding: they're the sort of thing that give politicians endless opportunities to show how different they are. All the policy fingerpointing, however, is likely to reduce the education profession to a mythical battleground between didactic disciplinarians in suits and union-zombie new-age types in beanbags. Does that reflect the reality in your staff room?

Letters to the Editor**MENTORING**

Dr Frederick Osman, Mathematics educator, Trinity Grammar School, Sydney, and Highly Accomplished Educators representative, Australian College of Educators

The Australian College of Educators hosted an exciting initiative to welcome early-career educators by putting them together with experienced educators from across Australia at the first ACE Mentoring Forum for Early Career and Experienced Educators at the Mount Schoenstatt Conference and Retreat Centre in Mulgoa, an hour west of Sydney, last August.

Forum participants enjoyed three days working with experienced educators from a variety of institutions who provided relevant practical and theoretical mentoring opportunities. The Forum was also a form of professional development to help educators establish and develop their own mentoring programs.

The power of mentoring is that it provides guidance to individuals in their professional development. While mentoring exists in a professional context such as the workplace, the developing mentoring relationship is a personal one, so the effects of mentoring permeate social, operational and professional structures and networks, both within and outside an organisation.

Mentoring involves various elements such as role modelling, counselling, sponsorship, friendship and coaching. The way that mentoring is conceptualised has an impact on all facets of a mentoring program. In particular, it influences the way the roles of mentors and protégés are understood and how they are prepared for and supported in those roles.

Some of the issues for beginning teachers identified by participants were: time and classroom management, particularly the management of difficult students; how to work with parents and communities; how to survive emotionally in a competitive education system; and how to develop varied teaching strategies to cater for different learning styles.

Mentoring is gaining popularity as a professional learning strategy for educators at all phases of their development. The majority of mentoring writers stress the importance of some kind of training for mentors. Training for protégés is mentioned less often. This training, which might be better referred to as preparation and support, is integral to the development and implementation of a formal mentoring program.

The principal theme of the forum was to develop relationships between mentors and protégés that lead to a developmental process to pursue best practice in terms of good induction and mentoring to enable successful teaching. The more specific aims of the ACE Mentoring Forum were:

- to provide support to educators in their early career through the provision of good induction and mentoring
- to make more effective use of the expertise of accomplished educators in order to improve the quality of teaching and advance the education profession
- to enhance the leadership skills of accomplished and beginning educators, and
- to harness the commitment and energy of accomplished and beginning educators with a view to generating and sustaining educational reform.

Feedback from participants was that the first ACE Mentoring Forum for Early Career and Experienced Educators made good progress towards achieving those aims. Participants agreed the event was a great and powerful hands-on experience.

SUPPORT BEGINNING TEACHERS

Bob Lipscombe, Senior Vice President, New South Wales Teachers' Federation

The annual national survey by the Australian Education Union (AEU) of 1,300 beginning teachers – that is, teachers with three years or less experience – indicates that thirty-three per cent of New South Wales beginning teachers don't believe they'll be teaching in ten years time. Figures from the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET), meanwhile, indicate that approximately forty per cent of teachers will resign or retire between 2006 and 2011. Put the two together and it's likely we'll face significant shortages in the not-too-distant future.

The AEU survey identified the following top four concerns for NSW beginning teachers: sixty-two per cent listed behaviour management; fifty-nine per cent listed class sizes; fifty-two per cent listed workload; and fifty-one per cent listed pay. Overall, the results of the survey strongly supported the campaign by the New South Wales Teachers' Federation for improvements for beginning teachers, including government action at both the state and Commonwealth level to encourage new teachers to remain in the profession. Further, it shows clearly that the Federation was right to identify improvements for beginning teachers as a priority for the state election this month.

Good support in their early years of teaching will have a great impact on retaining new teachers into the future.

Beginning teachers benefit from a well-targeted and properly-funded induction program. In their first years of teaching, beginning teachers also need a reduced teaching load to ease them into the job, as is already commonplace in many NSW private schools and some public schools in some states. Tasmania, for example, provides a two-hour reduction in the teaching load of beginning teachers in public schools, while NSW Catholic schools provide reductions ranging up to a day per week. In fact, in parts of NSW we now have DET beginning teachers with no reduction in teaching loads literally working across the street from beginning teachers in Catholic schools with a one-day per week reduction in teaching loads. Unfortunately, in the NSW public school system, one is expected to do exactly the same on the first day in a job as someone with years of experience.

Beginning teachers require and benefit greatly from support and mentoring by experienced teachers. In NSW, approximately 2,000 new permanent teachers and more than 1,000 temporary and casual teachers enter the workforce each year, yet there are only fifty full-time-equivalent teacher mentors. Although the teacher mentor program commenced in 2003, following representations by the Federation and others, the NSW government has declined to expand the numbers of full-time teacher mentors to the approximately 300 needed to support all beginning teachers. In doing so, the government has ignored an evaluation by DET's Strategic Research Directorate, in conjunction with an independent academic, Professor Christine Deer, which demonstrates just how successful it has been in those schools where it has operated. The recent release of Dr Lyndsay Connors's *Time and Tide* report for the Public Education Alliance now indicates the sheer weight of evidence that shows there is a need for significant improvements for beginning teachers in the areas of workload, mentoring and professional development.

The NSW government needs to provide support to beginning teachers in public schools, at least to the same standard as that provided to their counterparts in the private system, to maintain quality outcomes in all our classrooms.

For more on support for beginning teachers, download Time and Tide, by Dr Lyndsay Connors, at http://www.nswtf.org.au/media/latest_2007/files/20070212_time.pdf



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Is TAFE 'NYC' when it comes to CBT?

The meaning of
'competence'
in competency-
based training
has been reduced
to 'performance'
because that's easy
to understand and
assess, says
Kevin Vallence.

Kevin Vallence (FACE) and Rex Odgers completed the Victorian Qualifications Authority study, Flexibility of qualifications to meet the distinctive needs of rural and regional communities, in 2005. This article is based in part on a presentation Kevin Vallence made to a Victorian TAFE Development Centre Leadership for Flexibility workshop in November 2006. His most recent publication is Change by Design, published by Innovative Resources. NYC refers to the CBT assessment 'not yet competent.'

THERE'S a TV ad that shows a stack of shelves laden with bottles of motor oil being pushed, an inch at a time, to a checkout counter. It reminds me of the pace of change in aspects of TAFE delivery. In 2005, Rex Odgers and I named eight impediments to delivery flexibility in TAFE. Since then I've identified four more, including competency-based training (CBT), the cornerstone in the past decade of vocational education and training.

Though CBT is inherently flexible, currently the extent to which it is understood and practised creates impediments to delivery flexibility. There's been a slippage betwixt the theoretical cup and the practical lip.

Bluntly, after a decade, it's time to check what VET practitioners understand by 'competence.' It seems to me that it has been reduced to 'performance' because that's easy to understand and assess. Competence, however, has been lost because it's difficult both to understand and assess.

The passage of time, our management philosophy, our staffing patterns and the way we use language have also each contributed to the slippage.

CBT in VET is a bit over a decade old. This is a short time compared to the practices it replaced, but a deceptively long time when we think of how quickly language changes. As a practice, being only a decade old means that, with the possible exception of people trained and assessed within the armed services, few of us had our initial vocational training assessed using a competence-based methodology; and if we were teaching in a vocational context before the mid-1990s we were not using this methodology to assess.

Within this same decade there was a shift to managerialism – educators were replaced by 'managers.' As a result, some TAFE managers have neither a theoretical knowledge nor any practical experience of the assessment methodology that is central to what they are managing. This critical double blind spot means that teachers often have no one to whom they can turn for authoritative advice about CBT. Conversely, managers have no basis for judging whether CBT is either understood or being implemented as it was intended.

We don't need reminding how rapidly words, terms and acronyms come into and move through our personal and professional language. Some readers will remember when the word VET referred to a bloke who looked after the cows; SPAM was 'spiced ham' in a tin; and the nearest anyone came to googling was the great Australian spin bowler Arthur May. Yet we use the initials CBT as if everything they stand for is universally understood. Even at the simplest level of meaning this is not true. Nurses will hear CBT and think Controlled Breathing Technique; computer specialists will think Computer-Based Training; counselors will think Cognitive Behavioural Therapy; and readers with associations to certain parts of the bondage community will think of something entirely different and, I imagine, considerably more exciting. If you google for CBT, you have to scroll through a number of screens before competency-based training appears as an entry.

Many TAFE institutes employ and rely on a hidden workforce of sessional teachers. Too often these critical staff fall outside the prerequisite qualification requirements and professional development expectations that apply to contracted or permanent teachers. Officially they are unable to assess independently, and that's probably just as well since few would have the vaguest idea what CBT means, let alone that its efficacy remains problematic.

CBT has rolled off our tongues for ten years, but there is disconcerting evidence that understanding and practice have slipped, and contributed to delivery being less flexible than it might be.

Professional teachers

How Young People are Faring 2006, a report from the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, indicates that many young people continue to fare relatively poorly in the labour market, but the news isn't all bad, writes Mark Wooden.

THE Australian labour market has been experiencing boom-like conditions in recent years, so you'd expect a strong youth labour market. The key message presented in *How Young People are Faring 2006*, however, is that youth have fared relatively poorly in that market, as reflected in the continued decline in the number of full-time jobs held by young people.

Of course, young people are increasingly told that the route to future success is via education, so declining numbers in full-time employment might be a reason for celebration if that reflected rising participation rates in education. *How Young People Are Faring*, however, shows that the proportion of young people who are neither in full-time work nor in full-time education remains stubbornly high. An obvious question follows: what is this group of almost 540,000 young people doing?

The report informs us that of the 14.4 per cent of teenagers who are neither in full-time work nor in full-time education, about forty-five per cent are in part-time jobs, just over another quarter are unemployed, and a similar proportion are neither employed nor looking for work. Among young adults, the fraction in this situation is higher – 23.3 per cent – and the comparable proportions of this group in part-time work, unemployment and outside the labour force are forty-five per cent, nineteen per cent, and thirty-six per cent, respectively. Perhaps most disturbing of all, the report emphasises the high levels of underemployment among the part-time workers in this group. Around two-thirds of teenagers and almost half of the young adults in part-time employment and full-time study prefer more hours of work.

There are good reasons why some young people choose not to work or study – child care, ill-health, disability, or simply opting to take a year out – so we shouldn't automatically assume that a lack of involvement in formal education or paid employment is necessarily a sign of inactivity or that weakness in the labour market is the main cause of inactivity. Indeed, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in its September 2005 supplement to the *Labour Force Survey*, classified as 'discouraged job seekers' very few – less than 8,000 – of the almost 1.3 million people under the age of twenty-four who are outside the labour force.

How Young People Are Faring relies on cross-section data, which only tell us about the activity of people at a single point in time. More revealing would be information that enabled us to track individuals over time, such as the data from the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth. Gary Marks from the Australian Council for Educational Research has analysed these data and found relatively high rates of movement from part-time to full-time employment among young people, which suggests that underemployment appears to be a temporary phenomenon for the vast majority of young people. Even unemployment may not be a serious problem if it's relatively short-lived, and all indicators are that long-term unemployment – that is, lasting more than one year – is both declining and affects a relatively small proportion of the labour force at just under one per cent.

Policymakers should rightly be concerned with ensuring that young people are not trapped in a cycle of intermittent part-time jobs that are of little value in enhancing long-term prospects in the labour market, but it's equally important that we identify exactly who are the people most at risk of this.

Finally, a note of caution is warranted about the implicit assumption that full-time education is always beneficial. The work by Gary Marks referred to earlier, for example, suggests that many graduates of our TAFE system are not faring particularly well. Marks concludes that less emphasis should be placed on vocational education as a solution to problems in the school-to-work transition. My view is that the TAFE system needs to be overhauled with a view to ensuring it can better meet the needs of prospective students and employers.

Mark Wooden is Associate Professor and Deputy Director of the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research at the University of Melbourne.

For the full report How Young People are Faring 2006, or HYPAF At a Glance, visit www.dsf.org.au



Do more standards,
regulations, compliance
mechanisms and audits
reduce risks and lead
to safer, and better,
schools?

Not necessarily, says
Lee-Anne Perry.

EVEN a decade ago, it would have been unusual for school leaders to have listed ‘risk manager’ as one of the dominant components of their multi-faceted role; now, risk and its management are seen as integral parts of a principal’s professional repertoire, since now the commonplace activities of schooling are seen as risks to be managed. Schools and school leaders have always been held accountable, but the nature and scope of contemporary accountability and audit regimes have escalated in recent years to a point where the proportion of a principal’s time spent on addressing accountability requirements, the way these requirements impinge on their freedom to make choices about the learning environment of the school, and the deleterious effect on trust in relationships, are cause for great concern. What’s needed is a robust, flexible and systematic approach to risk management built on informed trust in human judgement to enable school leaders to manage risk in a way that fosters a dynamic learning environment.



Daring to trust

Beyond risk minimisation in schools

What's the risk?

Risk and its management are now integral parts of a school principal's role.

Standards, regulations, compliance mechanisms and audits have created a flawed model of risk management which has pushed trust in human judgement from the centre to the margins.

Effective risk management involves identifying, understanding and learning from both error and the absence of error to build an informed culture.

EVOLVING UNDERSTANDINGS OF RISK

Risk has always been with us, but its meaning has evolved over time, as have our responses to risk. 'Risk' derives from the Portuguese verb *risco*, 'to dare,' reflecting the adventurous exploits of sixteenth-century explorers setting out to discover new worlds, new opportunities and new riches. In this positive meaning, risk was outward-looking, future-focused and enterprising – the risk taker sought new and better things by taking advantage of the circumstances presented in nature.

That meaning has, in our contemporary understanding, largely been displaced by a negative concept, where risk is about danger and what could be lost, rather than what, through daring, could be gained, as Mary Douglas argues in her 1990 article, 'Risk as a forensic resource.' The seeds of this shift can be found in risk's early association with the insurance business and gambling, and with their accompanying technologies of measurement directed at uncertainty and the probabilities



The seemingly endless production and imposition of standards, regulations and other compliance mechanisms has created a society of 'auditees' anxiously preparing for audits and inspections in a climate characterised by league tables.

of losses and gains, as writers like Douglas, Peter Bernstein and Anthony Giddens have shown. Increasingly sophisticated computer technologies have meant that record-keeping, data-processing and analysis now reach into just about every aspect of life, so that risk – or risk-as-loss, simple and calculable, to be minimised or avoided – is now at the heart of what has become a 'risk society.'

While risk has become central, it's now also focused more on what people do, or don't do, rather than on the natural world. The result? The effort today is to eliminate the uncertainties in predicting human behaviour and make these behaviours more transparent in order to enable regimes of inspection. Trust in the individual has increasingly given way to monitoring and oversight. Risk associated with human activity, and the potential dangers and losses it presents, must now be identified, quantified and managed. Indeed, risk has emerged as a key organising concept in the creation of the most dominant form of accountability in our modern global society characterised, in Michael Apple's words, by 'vigilance, surveillance, "performance appraisal" and... forms of control generally.' (14) That's led to a constant demand for 'evidence' in order to show that organisations and individuals are acting such that they are risk-minimised. For schools, this is particularly apparent in the ever-burgeoning array of policies and protocols to do with child protection.

MANAGING RISK AND ELIMINATING JUDGEMENT

The seemingly endless production and imposition of standards, regulations and other compliance mechanisms has created a society of 'auditees' anxiously preparing for audits and inspections in a climate characterised by league tables and other forms of public reporting which blame and punish while purporting to show the relative efficiency, or inefficiency, of institutions. In schools, claims about the capacity to ensure student safety and wellbeing, to minimise inefficient use of often scarce resources and to maximise productivity in terms of student learning can be translated into quite precise quantitative measures that can be tracked over time and reported in a succinct form. A school, essentially, becomes 'calculable' as a risk organisation. Indeed, risk and risk management in schools have now been 'rendered normal,' as Judith Bessant, Richard Hil and Rob Watts put it in *Discovering Risk*. Consequently, as Richard Ericson and Kevin Haggerty argue, the daily work not only of school leaders but of teachers and other staff has had to change by becoming 'plugged into' an institutional communication system built around these new accountabilities.

While this has engendered risk-consciousness as part of the 'natural' pedagogic practices of principals in schools, the negative logic of risk has shaped a flawed model of risk management which has pushed trust in human judgement from the centre to the margins. There are four ways in which this has come about.

The culture of expertise Risk management is increasingly seen as a specialist domain peopled by risk management 'expert' consultants to schools. A culture of 'expertise' has been promoted that has had the effect, as Kenneth Thompson argues in his 1998 book, *Moral Panics*, of taking 'the definition and control of risk away from ordinary people.' (30) At the same time the risk-management enterprise has grown larger as a result of a regulatory framework that's information intensive and knowledge generating, as Henry Rothstein and colleagues argue. Professional 'experts' have a vested interest in maintaining and expanding the systems of accountability, and in creating a dependency and indeed vulnerability within other professional groups, like school principals, who feel themselves increasingly vulnerable within the risk society. As Frank Furedi puts it, 'Managers who are afraid to make their own decisions hire high-priced consultants to reaffirm

the obvious: It is generally safer to adopt someone else's best practice than to engineer your own..., yet for companies to thrive, employees need to feel as though they are on an open-ended journey of discovery, of which unpredictability is a key part.' (22) As a result, he argues, organisations become 'dumbed down,' and risk losing the capacity to take the sort of conceptual leaps that enterprising, and educational, activity requires.

The employment of technical knowledge The growing reliance on external experts and on the quantification of risk has also generated a belief that risk management decisions are credible only if they depend on technical knowledge derived by the use of 'numerical and calculative rationales,' which are then used to 'augment the legitimacy of decision-making, irrespective of their methodological legitimacy,' as Rothstein and colleagues point out. (97) This technical knowledge draws on data about the past, because it's available, but the effect is that context-rich, case-by-case judgement is displaced by context-poor decision rules. When risk management is based on systems primarily using historic data it tends to be reactionary and defensive rather than innovative and visionary, and tends to become self-reinforcing. Because data is continually generated that must be 'risk assessed and managed,' as Rothstein and colleagues reason, systems become 'a solution in search of risk problems.' (95)

The cataloguing of risks Ostensibly the purpose of risk management is to improve organisational practices, but it's often the case that risk management amounts merely to the naming of problems, issues or activities as 'risks.'

Shifting responsibility New risk-management strategies such as, say, community notification provisions, can shift or diffuse responsibility, particularly by replacing human judgement with inflexible regulation.

Despite the problems inherent in many risk management systems, according to Rothstein and colleagues, these systems are still seen as a way to respond to the demands both of those who govern and those who are governed for processes which are seen to be objective, rational, consistent, structured and defensible. Be that as it may, risk management systems are really, as Michael Power so nicely put it in his 1994 book, *The Audit Explosion*, about 'the control of control, where what is being assured is the quality of the control systems rather than the quality of the first order operations.' (19) Looked at this way, regulatory frameworks are objects of risk in the same way that risk has become an object of regulation and can be held to account for their own limitations, as Rothstein and his colleagues point out. Risk management based on such systems of control, however, has little to offer schools as learning organisations and is actually a greater risk to schools because it eliminates judgement and reduces trust in judgements.

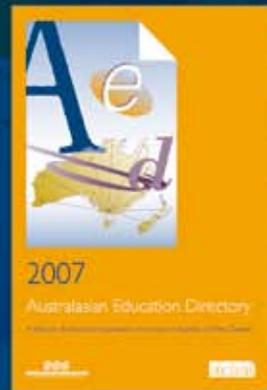
THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST

How is it that risk management that relies on experts using technical knowledge has eroded trust? Trust has been eroded by the culture of suspicion reflected in the imposition of multiple layers of compliance mechanisms on institutions such as schools. Susan Groundwater-Smith and Judyth Sachs go further: 'the greater the governance by rules,' they say, 'the less the practice of trust. These are exactly the conditions of the audit society.' (345) Trust, however, is critical to a model of risk that avoids the 'straight-jacketing' effects of overdoing audit.

Trust is a complex concept which has been explored in a range of disciplines. While there are many different definitions some common threads emerge, as TK Das and Bing-Sheng Teng identified in their extensive 2004 review of the literature. Generally, trust has both cognitive elements based on rational, instrumental

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Innovation, experimentation and daring are hardly likely to be a feature of the educational landscape when people actively avoid any idea or activity which might be seen as risky.

judgements and affective elements grounded in relationships. These cognitive and affective elements are variously expressed as competence and care, ability and dependability, competence and goodwill, or ability and intentions. A person seeking trust is looking on the one hand for evidence of competence such as a track record, quality assurance procedures, transparency and a willingness to admit errors, and on the other hand a sense of care through the demonstration of respect, responsiveness and a user-friendly service.

Risk management incorporating trust builds on the competence and care of the trustee. The prevailing dominant managerialist forms of accountability, however, involve the imposition of regulations, standards and targets indicative of suspicion and control. Moreover, managerialist imperatives privilege measurement and calculation, rather than affective elements. The consequences for schools have been significant.

Patterns of relationships such as those between parents and schools are currently being challenged and changed. Parents have traditionally placed their trust in individual teachers and principals in a school in the context of personal, face-to-face relationships and confidence in their ability to make sound judgements based on professional expertise. Complex expert systems such as school leadership and teaching are dependent on this trust because, as Haridimos Tsoukas explained in 1997, the practices integral to these systems 'cannot be made fully transparent simply because there is no substitute for the kind of experiential and implicit knowledge crucial to expertise, and which involves trust of the practitioners.' (835) Extensive media coverage of inappropriate conduct by a small number of teachers, of claims that students lack basic literacy, numeracy and other work-readiness skills, and of poor performance by some schools on the narrow performance indicators that comprise many 'league tables' have contributed to the growth of 'moral panics' about schooling and education that prompt governments, always with a close eye on public sentiment about the strength of their claim to good governance, to seek tighter and tighter controls. The effect? Trust has given way to mistrust; parental trust in the judgement of education professionals has been supplanted by reliance on government-sanctioned measures of quality and success. Indeed, Sharon Gewirtz has argued that this movement has been so pervasive as to result in the subjugation of school professionals who now 'have to live in the shadow of constant surveillance.' (361) It's not surprising that such a situation encourages risk-averse behaviour and risk-minimisation strategies within both individuals and organisations. Innovation, experimentation and daring are hardly likely to be a feature of the educational landscape when people actively avoid any idea or activity which might be seen as risky.

Two of the key elements of professionalism are trust and a high degree of self-control over activities, that is, the freedom to make and act on judgements. Beyond that, as Andreas Hoecht explains in his 2006 article on quality assurance in higher education in the United Kingdom, a profession needs to establish 'a controlling influence over the nature and provision of its knowledge and have the ability to gain trust and respect in society for the role it plays in it.' (546) Arguably, professionals in educational institutions such as schools and universities are losing control over the nature of their knowledge and purpose as these are increasingly shaped by externally imposed accountability regimes. Hoecht further contends that the response of many universities and schools, and the professionals within them, has been passive and accommodating. Reports are produced, targets are met or reset once 'failure' is admitted, curriculum changes

are made, protocols implemented, irrespective of the compromising effect these may have on other goals of the organisation.

Trust, Hoecht argues, encourages risk-taking underpinned by positive expectations of the competence and care of those being trusted. Trust in and within school systems has been compromised, however, not only by the escalation of instrumental forms of accountability but by the resulting commodification of schooling which limits the opportunity for the professionals within schools to exercise judgement. Curriculum decisions and pedagogical practices have become valued only for their contribution to productivity as measured by instruments like league tables. Educators have turned into service providers responding to consumers – parents and students – and concentrating on outputs to the exclusion of inputs. In the process, the focus of their professional practice has transferred from creatively and flexibly responding to individual student needs to identifying and measuring those factors deemed most liable to cause risk either to the individual educator or the institution, even though the idea of rendering all practices within the complex systems of leadership and teaching into calculable, recordable and thereby accountable forms is impossible. Because that's impossible we tend instead towards the less difficult means of description of practice. For example, while attendance at professional development activities can be easily calculated, measuring the learning and enhancement of actual pedagogical practice that results from such attendance is not. Staff absentee rates can be calculated, recorded and reported; measuring a teacher's wisdom, enthusiasm and responsiveness to individual needs is much more difficult. What we end up with is a reliance on atomistic and superficial measures where what is measured becomes what is valued – giving the most prominence to the most easily measured risk factors.

Accountability measures are, then, both a cause and a consequence of a lack of trust. While giving the impression of providing transparency and information, such measures conceal many of the dimensions of schooling such as character formation, adaptability and enterprise that dominate school plans, mission statements and much of government policy on education. They do little to foster innovation and learning and significantly erode the intrinsic motivation and responsiveness of professional educators who feel blamed rather than trusted.

AN EDUCATIVE APPROACH TO RISK MANAGEMENT

James Reason's work on error causation provides compelling evidence for the key role that trust in human judgement plays in developing a safety culture in organisations and in developing an educative approach to risk management that has much to offer learning organisations such as schools. His article, 'Safety paradoxes and safety culture,' explains why a safe culture requires the development of a number of interdependent subcultures including an informed and reporting culture, a flexible culture and a learning culture. (12) Let's look at these in a bit more detail and consider their implications for an educative approach to risk management in schools.

An informed and reporting culture In his 2000 article, 'Safety paradoxes and safety culture,' Reason identifies the importance of data in informing the practices of organisations, particularly practices at the margins, to identify and understand both the positive and the negative face of safety. Organisations need to identify and understand not only what has gone wrong but also what has worked well. A safe culture, in Reason's view, is one where people know where the 'edge' is, between 'relative safety and unacceptable danger.' (3) This edge is a risky place in terms of both daring and danger, where the greatest gains and the greatest

Organisations need to identify and understand not only what has gone wrong but also what has worked well. A safe culture is one where people know where the 'edge' is, between 'relative safety and unacceptable danger.'



Many educators feel overwhelmed and compromise their own professionalism by passively complying with accountability requirements.

losses can be made. Understanding where the edge lies is important in a school context. No school leader wishes to fall over the edge into unacceptable dangers like endemic poor performance, an unsafe environment or a low reputation within and outside the school. Understanding the edge is also critical to school leaders wishing to foster a dynamic learning climate in their school rather than simply adopting a maintenance approach to school planning and development. Identifying and understanding the edge involves going beyond the acquisition and analysis of historic data and the collation of measurements required by narrow, instrumental audit mechanisms. It involves the systematic collection and analysis of data on both successes and disappointments or failures. Too often, organisations devote considerable time and attention to what is working well. Moreover there is a tendency for organisations deemed successful, such as those at the top of the league tables, to be viewed as having no weaknesses, to be error-free. Reason's work suggests that this is unlikely to be so. Studies in a range of organisations reveal that even the most resistant organisations with highly developed safety processes can and do have accidents. (5) Simply basking in the glow of successful outcomes can promote complacency. In Reason's studies, successful organisations – what he calls high-reliability organisations – encourage the reporting of mistakes and less-than-satisfactory outcomes, and take an absence of error as cause for increased vigilance and attention. Effective risk management, then, involves identifying, understanding and learning from both error and the absence of error to build an informed culture.

A flexible culture All organisations have, or should have, layers of defences to protect them from damage – in the form of errors, failures or poor outcomes – and to provide a sound foundation on which to pursue their strategic goals. Reason has found that organisational defences are, paradoxically, frequently instrumental in accidents, errors and poor outcomes. This is because organisational defences depend on control, aimed at minimising variability in human behaviour, and because the elements of organisational defences that are revealed and concealed are not always clear. Reason argues that while controls in the form of standard operating procedures, protocols and regulations are clearly essential, such controls rely on historic data to inform future generalised practice and as such are not always well suited to dealing with local conditions and variations. Rule-based controls work well in many situations but local variations may make them inapplicable or, when a situation has never been anticipated or was believed to be inconceivable, irrelevant. When rule-based controls are inapplicable or irrelevant they're a source of other risks.

Defences can also be compromised when they get bigger and more complex. Defences include 'hard' defences like alarms, other automated safety devices and design features, and 'soft' defences like procedures, rules, training and other measures predominantly reliant on people and paper. These defences can enhance the safety of the organisation but they can also compromise safe practice when practitioners become overwhelmed by the number and scope of defences, and gaps appear in implementation. On occasions, certain defences, such as multiple computer backup mechanisms, allow failures or errors to go unnoticed. This process can conceal the accretion of error over time and create holes in the organisation's defensive layers.

These kinds of problems prompt many organisations to try to reduce or even eliminate variability in human behaviour – because human variability is allied in the minds of many with human unreliability. Because variability, however, means people can respond to the unknown and the unexpected, organisations would be

better off developing a capacity to make sense of this variation based on a shared understanding of the values, mission and goals of the organisation, in other words, to enhance human judgement to build a flexible culture, although one that is still critically dependent on the concurrent development of an informed culture.

In most organisations, major catastrophes or errors are, fortunately, relatively rare. The data that helps to develop an informed culture, therefore, must come from both the successes and the smaller and usually more frequent errors or disappointing outcomes.

A learning culture A key element in generating an informed and reporting culture is the type of approach used by an organisation in determining, and responding to, error causation. Most organisations focus on the mistakes, procedural lapses or incompetencies of people at the ‘pointy end’ – those in direct contact with the individuals affected – creating an environment of blame rather than the trust which is a fundamental condition of a reporting culture. Not only is trust eroded, the approach is misdirected. Typically, ever-more detailed policies, procedural manuals, protocols and assessment frameworks evolve, ‘experts’ are appointed to investigate and formulate appropriate responses, trust is further eroded and the opportunities for the organisation itself to learn from the error are lost. Of course, some errors are caused by individual ‘blameworthy’ actions which must be appropriately sanctioned, but the primary focus should be on the information that can be gained through an ongoing process of reporting that enables an organisation to learn from its mistakes.

Focusing on an individual also fails to recognise the underlying factors that are significant contributors to an adverse outcome. Reason argues that such factors are rarely isolated or random but, rather, are usually part of a recurrent pattern or linked to other instances of systemic error caused not by the active failures of individuals but by systemic latent conditions – what he calls in *Human Error* ‘resident pathogens.’ Latent conditions include time pressures, understaffing, unworkable procedures, inexperience, lack of professional development and poor supervision. In schools, they can also include such things as policy imperatives which direct activity towards particular ends like high-stakes testing rather than the development of critical thinking, problem solving or independent learning. When an organisation takes a systemic approach, it’s able to look at many layers including the individual, the group, the task, the target, the organisation itself, and internal and external policy imperatives. Within a reporting culture built on trust, a systemic approach allows the organisation to build a learning culture in which human judgement is supported and harnessed to the advantage of the organisation.

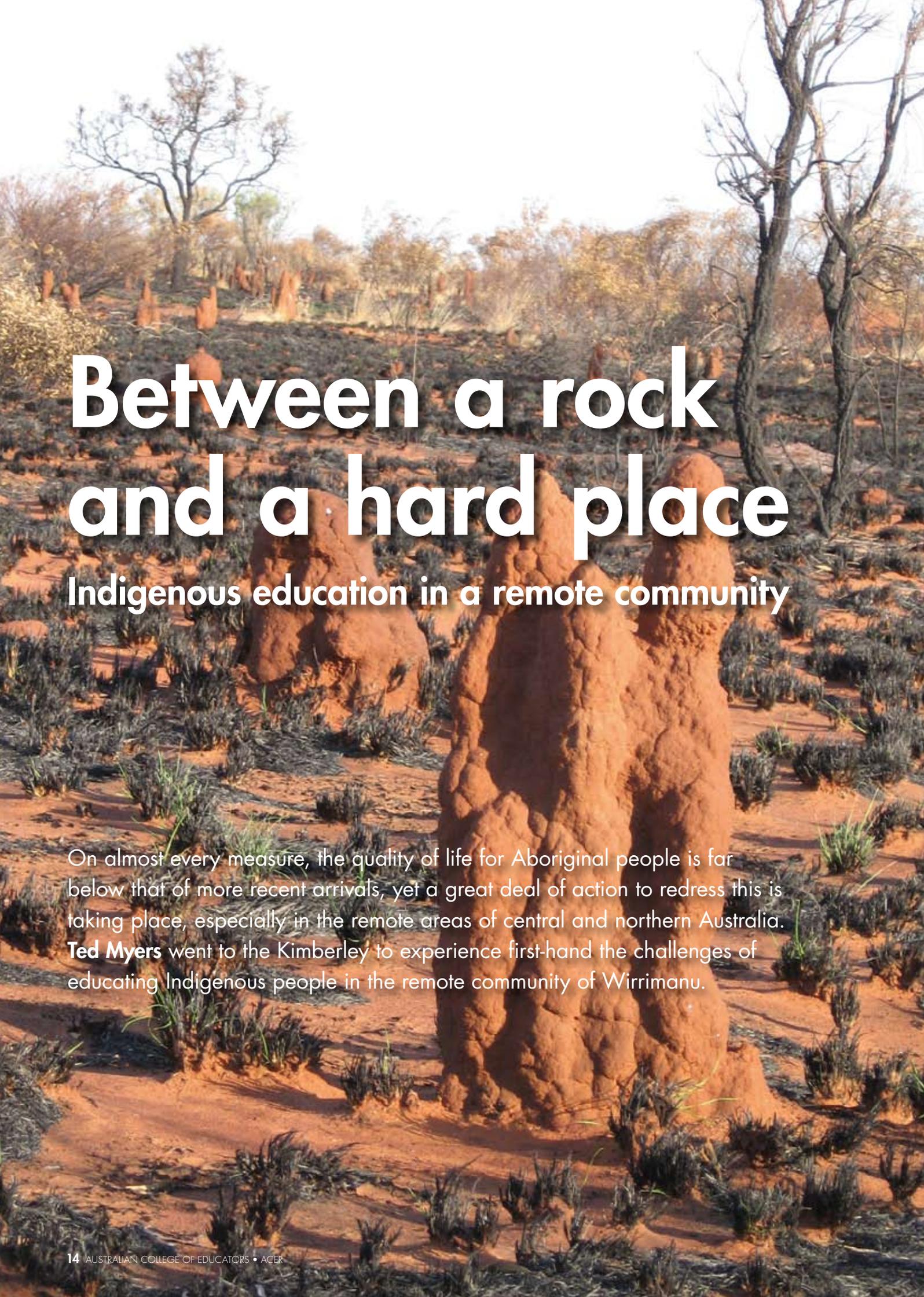
Current approaches to risk management in most organisations are based on simply minimising risk and responding unreflexively to tightly specified, decontextualised protocols, policies, benchmarks and targets. The reactionary nature of these responses derive, in part at least, from the pressures of an audit society where organisations and individuals feel called to account according to the prescriptions laid down by external agencies such as governments. This audit-centred form of accountability, with ever-burgeoning controls, limits the autonomy and reduces the capacity of professionals to provide flexible and adaptive responses to particular circumstances. The result? Many professional educators feel overwhelmed by the escalating pressures of systemic controls and compromise their own professionalism by passively complying with accountability requirements. Schools need to engage with risk management and accountability by developing an informed and reporting culture, a flexible culture and a learning culture. When they do, not only will they be safer, they’ll also have a greater capacity to respond to opportunities to dare and to grow.

Ask yourself

- *Does an audit-centred form of accountability in your educational institution restrict your educational objectives, programs or practices?*
- *Do procedures exist in your educational institution to identify and understand not only what has gone wrong but also what has worked well?*
- *Does risk management in your educational institution rely on rule-based controls and do these controls prevent or allow for human judgement?*

Lee-Anne Perry is the principal of All Hallows’ School, Brisbane.

For references go to www.acer.edu.au/professionaleducator/references.html



Between a rock and a hard place

Indigenous education in a remote community

On almost every measure, the quality of life for Aboriginal people is far below that of more recent arrivals, yet a great deal of action to redress this is taking place, especially in the remote areas of central and northern Australia. **Ted Myers** went to the Kimberley to experience first-hand the challenges of educating Indigenous people in the remote community of Wirrimanu.

WIRRIMANU is about as remote as you can get. A tiny community built on the red pindan soil and surrounded by endless spinifex plains punctuated by termite mounds, it houses slightly less than 500 people. Located in the southeast Kimberley region of Western Australia, it's on the edge of two vast deserts – the Great Sandy and the Tanami. The nearest town, Halls Creek, is 285 kilometres to the northwest along the dusty, corrugated Tanami track.

The Wirrimanu community site, originally called Balgo Hills back when the settlement was established in the early 1930s as a Catholic Mission, is part of the 2.6 million hectare Balwina Aboriginal reserve, home for the Kukatja, the Walmajarri and the Jaru peoples.

From 1965 to 1983, the Education Department of WA ran a primary school in the settlement, but the community elders, who respected the legacy of the former missionaries, wanted to establish a Catholic school. In 1982 the De La Salle brothers and the Sisters of Mercy agreed to take the school over – and Luurnpa Catholic School was born.

Luurnpa's Principal, Br Bernard Cooper, says the Catholic Education Office (CEO) in Perth and the Education Department of WA helped in the development of the school. 'There were many requests from Aboriginal remote communities for the establishment of new schools as the outstation movement progressed and people started moving back onto their land,' Cooper points out. Wirrimanu was one of the first. Others were established throughout the Kimberley region.

Luurnpa Catholic School educates around 100 students from Pre-primary to Year Ten. Its bilingual focus is helped greatly by the presence of Aboriginal Teaching Assistants.

Cooper took over in 1999 after a seventeen-year tenure by foundation principal, Br Leo Scollen. 'When the vacancy occurred in 1999, I decided to take it on,' he says. 'I felt I could do more good here than softer options down south.'

CHALLENGES FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

After working for nearly thirty years as a De La Salle brother in schools in four Australian states and the highlands of Papua New Guinea, Cooper knew the new position would further challenge his view of the world. Remote communities in outback Australia, he says, have challenges like no other place he has experienced and everyone living there has much to contend with – and much to learn.

'The Aborigines are no fools,' he says. 'They are plagued by disadvantage and their particular circumstances – code for government policy and a tragic history of dispossession and genocide – that have effectively captured them.'

'Balgo is really a detention centre without the barbed wire – because the people here don't have choices. They are severely limited in what they can do in the community and they can't move. Most are stuck here whether they want to move or not.'

Funding for essential services – from the community store to rubbish collection, sewerage to a water supply – is always a problem.

The way Cooper sees it, the government plays a 'divide and conquer' game. There's never enough funding, he says, and whatever funding there is seems to be provided on an ad hoc basis, with constantly changing policies and programs whittling away at an already inadequate base.

There is, he says, no viable social contract forcing the government to provide necessities such as health. 'The system is based on an unequal treaty. The land ownership issue has not been finally settled here and things are simply getting worse.'

At a glance

- *Luurnpa Catholic School serves the Wirrimanu community – population 489 – in the southeast Kimberley region of Western Australia. The nearest town – Halls Creek: population 1,300 – is 285 kilometres away.*
- *Summers reach forty-five degrees, winters drop to a chilly five degrees; average rainfall is just 300 millimetres.*
- *Locals crowd together in just twenty-two houses – unless they want to use one of eighteen houses already condemned, or sleep rough.*
- *Unemployment, boredom, substance abuse and domestic violence are major problems.*
- *Stability in personnel and a stable curriculum at Luurnpa is providing students with something that goes beyond the short term.*
- *Overall attendance is at sixty-seven per cent.*
- *Improvements in the acoustics in every classroom are tackling conductive hearing loss – a major problem for Aboriginal children.*
- *Luurnpa could send up to twelve students to Broome for Year Twelve but the boarding hostel only has nineteen places for students in the Catholic system for the region as a whole.*



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BR BERNARD COOPER

Electricity is a major cost – and becoming increasingly expensive. 'This community closes down without electricity to pump water out of the artesian basin,' Cooper points out. 'It's generated by diesel around the clock and the bills are huge.' Air-conditioning the Kindergarten classroom sucks out 100 kilowatts per hour, the cost of which is subsidised by the CEO.

'It's imperative that the agencies work together for the school and other community functions to perform at their optimum level,' he says.

'At the last census, Balgo had 489 people. In Sydney, based on an average of three persons per house, they would live in 163 dwellings. Here, there's a total of forty houses, of which eighteen are condemned and four need knocking down. Overcrowding is a major issue which has a direct negative impact on children's learning.'

Unemployment levels are incredibly high in most remote Indigenous communities and Balgo is no exception. Art is the biggest employer in the community, but nearly everyone is unemployed, with families existing on diminishing Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) payments and other social services. The result of this aptly named 'sit down money'? Boredom.

It's the women who tend to hold families together and many earn a little money producing traditional art, while unemployment is particularly a problem for men – of all ages. 'How do you maintain dignity when you don't have a job?' asks

Cooper. 'What happens to your identity when you no longer perform a meaningful role? Self-esteem falls through the floor. How do you deal with failure that is constantly in your face? This is why substance abuse of alcohol, drugs and petrol, the cheapest option, is rife. This also leads to high levels of domestic violence, with the women the victims of abusive, drugged or drunk men.'

How does the school operate in this environment? 'Successful outcomes,' he says with remarkable understatement, 'are hard to achieve.'

EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES

Br Rick Gaffney has been the Literacy Coordinator at Luurnpa Catholic School for the past two years while working towards a PhD looking at how English operates as the language of learning in situations where students speak their native tongue at home and in the playground – which is just what happens in the Balgo community where students speak mainly Kakatja at home and amongst themselves, with English increasingly prevalent in the classrooms.

Gaffney believes that education, as it's practised in remote areas, has to change dramatically. 'What's done in remote schools is very similar to what you'd see happening in Broome or other urban centres,' he says, 'and that can't be the right way because the classroom is such a foreign environment for Indigenous kids. To be within four walls in a similar age group is such an unusual thing for them. The amount of time they spend inside four walls outside the classroom, other than sleeping, which is also often outside, is minimal.'

'Education in a classroom is so different and foreign to them – and challenging. The bottom line is that you have to be able to sit in your seat and do what the teacher says. Now that's difficult for all students, even of European background, but for these kids here it's a much greater challenge. And then the layer on top of that is that they are learning in a language that is not their own, and on top of that they are being taught by people who are not of their own culture. There must be a better way to do it. I think we are doing great work here, but there has to be a fundamental change.'

OUTCOMES: IMPROVING SLOWLY

'We're not doing brilliantly,' says Cooper, 'but we are turning things around slowly.'

Stability and routine With only two principals in twenty-four years and the continuous presence of the De La Salle brothers, the community's desire for stability has been achieved and that, Cooper emphasises, has been essential.

'First of all, people have to stay here long enough to develop more than superficial relationships. Teachers need an induction program so they can understand and connect with Aboriginal culture. Aborigines are bit like the Japanese. They'll smile and say "yes" to anything to avoid causing offence, while they might be thinking "no." It's difficult to find out what they might really be thinking,' he says. 'You need to suspend your normal European mindset in this job.'

'It takes time to build people's trust in you. When I first came here, I'd go down to the community store on a Saturday morning and simply sit around talking to people.'

Stability in personnel is one thing but staff at Luurnpa also had to stabilise the curriculum to provide something that goes beyond the short term – and that relates to the realities of life for the local people.

'I'm happy for systems and policy to override the attractions of independent or creative learning,' Cooper says. 'The kids need routine. They need to know what

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BR BERNARD COOPER



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Attendance Erratic attendance is a problem for most remote Indigenous schools. The students are mostly engaged until Year Eight and then things tend to fall apart – most drop out well before Year Ten. 'We've managed to get attendance up to sixty-seven per cent overall, which is the highest ever,' Cooper says. 'We have up to eighty per cent in the primary years, but it's much lower at the secondary level. As a rule, if the parents want their children to come, they will.'

Mental and spiritual health 'Before a student can learn effectively, they need to feel good about themselves,' Cooper points out. 'We believe this also depends to a degree on spiritual health. We use the CEO WA Religious Education units, which have been adapted especially for the Kimberley region, that explore the special ways Aborigines express their faith. The God thing is not imaginary for Aborigines. It forms a real presence in their lives. They are a sacramental people, so the crossover between Aboriginal and Catholic faith is very successful. It's complementary and there is no real conflict.'

Improved acoustics 'Conductive hearing loss is a major problem for Aboriginal children with up to half our students affected,' explains Cooper. Caused by chronic infections and runny noses which affect the eardrums, conductive hearing loss means learning becomes extremely difficult for students since they don't hear what the teacher is saying. Many will pretend they can hear, when they can't. One solution – improved acoustics in every classroom – makes a big difference.

Teacher recruitment A major problem, Cooper says, is finding staff who can work effectively with the Aboriginal Teaching Assistants and students. 'They are challenged to grow, just as I am, on a daily basis. It's difficult to get the right people and then keep them for an extended period,' he says. 'We've been successful in obtaining a number of quality teachers who also stay the distance – for more than a few years. I use every strategy possible to get good teachers. Most seem to come from Victoria, but I'd like more secondments from WA.'

A pool of Aboriginal Teaching Assistants Luurnpa has cultivated and retained a good pool of local people – mainly women – over the years to help out in the school. After art, the school is the biggest employer of local people in the community.

National Accelerated Literacy Program 'We've taken this program on,' Cooper says. 'It's making a big difference.'

Information and communication technology If Indigenous students are to keep up with the modern world, they need help with using mobile phones, internet banking, email and computer skills generally. 'The information and communication technology teacher has the hardest job in the school,' Cooper says, 'and is slowly making headway.' Students are being trained to keep part of the school website up to date.

Vocational education and training If you want students to want to come to school, Cooper says, they must see value in the courses that will help them to

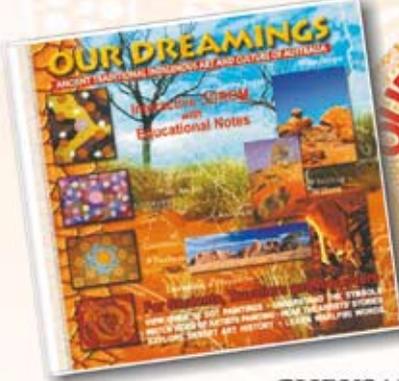
'The failed CDEP system stops the development of anything. When jobs are available, the pathway is clearer for people to see a reason to be involved in education.'

BR BERNARD COOPER

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*'The white man's way
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Aboriginal people have
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BR CAL CUSACK

*Ted Myers is the Head of
Communications for the Sydney
Catholic Education Office.*

Photos courtesy Ted Myers.

*For further information about
Luurnpa Catholic School visit
<http://www.luurnpa.wa.edu.au>*

make meaningful choices and develop independence skills, which he points out is something their culture encourages.

The local TAFE College at Halls Creek has provided 1,000 hours of vocational education and training for secondary classes. 'It's crucial that this program continues,' he says, 'but funding cuts are always hovering.'

IMPROVING THINGS FURTHER?

Suppose he had unlimited resources and power, what would Cooper do to make things better still? First, he says, he'd adopt a development model that looks at using government funds to deliver employment – say in the building industry. 'There's a shortage of housing, so why pay tradesmen to come from Perth at outrageous prices when local people could do it?

'We need to create jobs in this community and the way to do that is to get rid of CDEP and recognise the jobs that are here, as happens in a normal town. Government departments need to start delivering them – be it the water authority, the power station, the housing trust. All these mechanisms are normal things in Halls Creek, but they don't exist out here.

'The failed CDEP system stops the development of anything. When jobs are available, the pathway is clearer for people to see a reason to be involved in education.

'The second thing I'd do is to strengthen the boarding hostel in Broome to take the high flyers. With units related to life in the Kimberley, there's a stronger chance that students will remain engaged to Year Twelve level and then on to university, TAFE and access to apprenticeship, but unfortunately there are only nineteen places for the whole Catholic system this year. We have four strong candidates and could send twelve down from this school alone, but they don't have the capacity to take them. We know that if we send them to other boarding schools down south in Perth, they're more likely to fail and be returned. They can become very homesick.

'For those students who stay on in their local community – by far the majority – there needs to be more access to further education. Balgo has an Adult Education Centre but it struggles to fit into any of the established systems. TAFE and the state systems don't support it strongly enough and it's really a little outside the responsibility of the Catholic Education Office,' he says.

'People are trying to do too much in too many areas and it's not possible to deliver. There's a tendency to force white culture onto Aborigines who don't really want it or understand it. There is a generation that is coming through that hasn't done well at English – and they're not terribly worried about that because it's led to a strengthening of their own culture and language. At the same time, it appears that all of the money for language and culture is disappearing fast and being replaced by the dominant cultural language of English.

'After all this education in a caring environment, most students still don't have sufficient levels of literacy and engagement skills to interact effectively with the rest of mainstream Australia. Balgo is home. This is where they were born. This is where most will remain. With virtually no jobs, young people have an uncertain future, at best. If there's to be any progress, there has to be some kind of compromise, of whites accommodating blacks and vice versa.'

As Cooper's colleague and fellow De La Salle brother, Cal Cusack, put it, 'The white man's way is not the only way and a lot of the time it's not the best way. The Aboriginal people have many things to teach us. We don't have all the right answers.' After more than thirteen years living and teaching at Wirrimanu that's a wisdom worth learning, and worth passing on.

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If you want to integrate information and communication technology you need to think about more than hardware, software and even online communities of practice.

You need face-to-face professional development opportunities, especially for school leaders, says **Neil McCallum.**



Integrating ICT

The basics of successful strategic leadership

FEW school principals have been prepared for their role as technology leaders, and few have had opportunities for meaningful experiences in using computers with children. While millions of dollars have been spent on information and communication technology (ICT) in schools by state governments in recent years, according to John Schiller most of the money has been spent on hardware, software and infrastructure rather than on staff development for teachers and principals. The concern, according to a study by Denise Meredyth and colleagues, is that despite this large expenditure, the potential for ICT to alter how teachers teach and students learn in Australian schools has not been fully realised.

Accepting the huge impact of ICT on our lives, education and work, it's vital that school leaders understand what they need to do to make the best use of technology for learning. As Ken Walsh pointed out in 2002, they need both to understand the big picture and develop the skills required to make crucial deci-



sions about school budgeting and staffing that affect the integration of ICT into student learning.

Those who want to see greater use of ICT for teaching and learning have focused on what goes on in the classroom despite the fact that the key to success is the school principal. Sure, many principals have a good understanding of the management and leadership of change in schools, but further support in the area of professional development in the integration of ICT is needed. One of the main conclusions from John Schiller's 2003 study of school principals as a change facilitator in terms of ICT in New South Wales was that there's a need 'for policy makers, professional associations and for system-level decisionmakers to reflect on and devise support mechanisms and strategies to assist principals to further develop their knowledge, skills and dispositions about ICT in their work and at their schools.'

AT A GLANCE

Strategic Leadership in ICT

What does the Strategic Leadership in ICT, or SLICT, provide for school leaders? SLICT gives participants:

- *information, time and space to evaluate where they are now, and to review and develop their vision*
- *space to share practice*
- *scope to address the issues relating to ICT and its potential for learning*
- *a chance to address their personal development needs*
- *the licence to challenge each other in terms of their thinking about current and future ICT*
- *a chance to think long term, while identifying short-term solutions.*



Ask yourself

- *What existing and potential networks or communities of practice are available to you to support the integration of ICT?*
- *How does your educational institution account for expenditure on ICT infrastructure? Does it account for the total cost of ownership?*
- *Does your educational institution have enough technical support staff to support robust network functions?*

Since schools in England are more advanced than most Australian schools in terms of the implementation of ICT, it's worth looking at the way school leaders there are formally supported.

School leaders in England – or headteachers, as they're known – can participate in a program called Strategic Leadership in ICT or SLICT. Managed by the National College of School Leaders (NCSL), SLICT is a government organisation set up in 2001 to provide information, resources and professional development for school leaders across England. NCSL is supported by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta), another government organisation which provides support and information on ICT for teachers and school leaders. Local authorities also run SLICT courses in cooperation with the NCSL.

The SLICT program brings school leaders together to share, challenge and support each other. The program is based on the principles of vision, review and planning. SLICT mixes self review with school review, and provides online and residential contact for participants as well as visits to host schools where ICT has been identified as a strength. The idea is to give school leaders more opportunities to see good practice and leadership in the use of ICT. Leaders visiting host schools focus their observations and discussions around the three key areas of pedagogy, resources and organisation.

SLICT is about exploring and sharing good practice in the use of ICT. Rather than looking for a 'universal ICT solution' that can be applied to all schools, school leaders aim to identify the role that ICT can play in their own school.

The approach is to engage school leaders in developing and implementing a vision for their school, starting by building their confidence in their own informed professional judgement. It's not a skills course.

A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Two weeks before the residential component of the SLICT program, participants are invited to join an online password-protected community on talk2learn, hosted by the NCSL, and to undertake a self-review of their school's use of ICT. Talk2learn provides a community of practice where headteachers can discuss ideas, share practice and develop policy. Becta's Self-Review Framework (SRF) enables schools to rate their progress on aspects of ICT, providing examples for various levels in thirteen categories as well as a guide to demonstrate how schools can move forward with ICT.

Talk to the school leaders involved and most say the SLICT course has been of great value, ranking the course's three-day format, the school visit and the opportunity to discuss real issues with host-school leaders and staff as the most valuable. They could see what approaches worked in the host school and could think about how they could implement them in their own school. They also saw benefits in working with like-minded leaders motivated by the potential of ICT.

Most school leaders also say the online self-review tool is useful, and use the framework to plan for the future as it covers all aspects of ICT in their school. They also say that online tools and techniques provided by the Training and Development Agency for Schools assist them in managing the process of change.

School leaders work with their whole staff or an ICT team to examine their curriculum so as to integrate ICT into the teaching and learning program. ICT doesn't drive the program, the curriculum does, which means ICT is used only where it enhances, enriches and extends the curriculum and engages, enthuses and empowers students.

Once schools reach a specified standard across all thirteen areas of the SRF Framework, they can apply to Becta for accreditation in the form of what's called the ICT Mark. They need to have successfully integrated ICT across the school in order to attain the ICT Mark. The ICT Mark offers significant status since it recognises the work being done in the school and can be used to market the school to the community.

Participants in the SLICT program are shown how to use talk2learn, developed by the NCSL. One of the largest online educational learning communities in the world, talk2learn has more than 70,000 school leaders registered. Participants include headteachers, deputies, middle-level leaders, bursars, school business managers and advanced skills teachers.

The aims of the talk2learn online community are to reduce isolation among newly appointed heads, promote the sharing of good practice and offer emotional and professional support.

A 2005 NCSL study into the talk2learn online community called *70,000 heads are better than one* – available at www.ncsl.org.uk/onlinecommunities/extractedlearning/70000/index.cfm – found that the ever-increasing complexity of leadership responsibilities, as well as the need to operate beyond traditional school boundaries, demanded new approaches to leadership through authentic collaboration of the kind provided through talk2learn. (6)

According to *70,000 heads*, one of the key aspects to the success of this – or any – online community is the role of the facilitator. Where facilitation is withdrawn or inconsistent, community activity often decreases. Where it's proactive, consistent and visible, communities tend to flourish, provided purpose and expectations are

The SLICT program brings school leaders together to share, challenge and support each other. The idea is to give school leaders more opportunities to see good practice and leadership in the use of ICT.

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Online communities may be useful in some cases, yet as the NCSL's David Jackson has noted they're no substitute for face-to-face interaction.

clear and understood by the participants. (32) In talk2learn the e-learning facilitator encourages, supports and enables participants to share their learning while maintaining a friendly environment so they feel comfortable in discussion, share information and publish their own items. The facilitator also provides technical support backed up by means of a dedicated phone helpline.

The problem with an online community approach, however, is with takeup.

Ninety per cent of school leaders visit the online community so they get to know colleagues who are about to attend the same residential event, although engagement drops off, sometimes quite alarmingly, afterwards. That's to be expected immediately afterwards when heads return to their school and are thrust into fighting the spot fires that have been sparked in their three-day absence, but the fact is many post-residential communities simply wither and die while a small number thrive with heads really exploring issues and learning together.

NCSL staff have found that the 'if we build it, they will come' approach doesn't work. That's not how online communities grow. Working online communities take into account the natural nervousness experienced by some people when working and collaborating online. Small communities work well when all members are actively involved and buy into it, but this can't be expected from a group of school leaders thrown together by the happenstance of attending the same event.

That's why a blended learning experience is now offered by SLICT. It begins with a cohort online community involving those providing the course, to practise the online techniques required to collaborate online, which is then exploited fully at the face-to-face event. Post-event, participants can join national discussions facilitated by those who provided their course according to a strict and clear timetable of events. A monthly ICT update and access to further content and video case studies through a link with the Learning Gateway also help to maintain participation in the online communities. (53) Even so, while beginning heads find the online community a useful resource, experienced heads say they prefer to use their local networks. Some say they're overwhelmed by talk2learn's 70,000 members and prefer email, phone and face-to-face interaction. Some use talk2learn to browse topics and to search for specific information but few use the forum facility.

Several local education authorities, like Durham, have developed their own local version of SLICT. The response has been positive: participants find the local course more relevant to them and their schools; courses are non-residential and therefore cheaper; access to a local host school is easier; a network is developed among forty participants who generally already know each other and are in close proximity to each other; and a facilitator from the local authority coordinates the community.

Online communities may be useful in some cases, yet, as the NCSL's David Jackson has noted, they're no substitute for face-to-face interaction, although they can support it and sustain it.

ISSUES THAT AFFECT ICT INTEGRATION

Technical support Both English and Scottish governments have realised the importance of providing appropriate technical support in schools so that computer systems operate well and can be repaired quickly. Some larger schools have fulltime technicians, which absorbs a considerable proportion of the overall ICT budget. Jamie McKenzie, Editor of the educational technology journal, *From Now On*, points out in 'The true cost of ownership' that, 'In the business world, standards for technician support levels usually call for one technician for every fifty to seventy-five users. In school districts (in the United States), there may be only one

technician for every 300 to 500 desktops. This lack of staffing usually leads to an unstable network, a backlog of malfunctioning desktops and much frustration for end users. Understaffing also chokes off the development of many network services such as storage, email and the provision of information services as crisis management becomes the main focus of activity. Network starvation occurs when IT departments do not have enough staff to support robust network functions.’ (6)

Total cost of ownership The total cost of ownership (TCO) of a school’s ICT infrastructure is the sum of all the costs associated with the purchase, implementation, operation and maintenance of the service. Some of these costs can be easily quantified while others, although significant, are much more difficult to identify and quantify. Capital expenditure on ICT in schools and colleges represents only a small part of the ongoing costs of incorporating technology into education. Decisions made today with regard to technology, management, curriculum, policymaking, ICT training and support will have a direct influence on the costs an institution will incur tomorrow. Understanding the relationship between these decisions and future costs is becoming increasingly important. Senior managers in schools are now more aware of the need to plan effectively to ensure that ICT provision is sustainable in the long term.

The TCO website – at <http://schools.becta.org.uk> – provides an Excel spreadsheet and an online model for heads to calculate the total cost of ownership for their ICT. Samples on the site clearly itemise ICT costs in terms of professional development, technicians, consumables, security, furniture, cabling and peripherals.

Decisions made today with regard to technology, management, curriculum, policymaking, ICT training and support will have a direct influence on the costs an institution will incur tomorrow.



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If we want to remain competitive against other industrialised countries then the Commonwealth and state governments needs to make a substantial investment in ICT.

According to McKenzie, there are six aspects of TCO that decision makers need to consider, not the least important being the need for professional development. ‘Few teachers are naturally equipped to make productive use of new technologies,’ he points out. ‘They often require fifty to 100 hours of intensive adult learning to grasp the potential of new technologies to transform student learning. Very few districts are equipped to offer much more than software training, a trap that reduces the chance of making an impact upon daily classroom practice.’ (5)

Computer labs or computers in classes? There has been a steady move away from computer laboratories in UK schools to having more computers in classrooms. Another popular initiative has been trolleys with banks of wireless laptop computers.

Strategies The effective integration of ICT depends on effective strategies, such as:

- focusing first on good teaching – ‘If ICT can be incorporated, great; if not, don’t use it’
- developing a ‘web of support’ to avoid having one person being the expert – ‘If you identify and support some “champions” on staff then hopefully the rest will follow’
- creating an ICT team on staff rather than having a coordinator
- providing USB drives and CDs so that teachers can take work and software home to trial
- developing a vision for ICT – leaders said that ‘the review and audit tool was useful in identifying where we were at and where we wanted to go’
- getting blockers onboard – leaders felt that ‘reluctant staff may come onboard once they see the need and impact of the technology and software’
- providing in-house professional development, especially short sessions after school
- immersing kindergarten and pre-school classes with a wide variety of technology
- developing an environment where staff are happy to share ICT expertise with other staff and take risks with ICT
- remembering that change takes time – incremental changes at a pace suited to the staff and school, and where success is celebrated, are best
- piloting an ICT initiative before full implementation – leaders said ‘we learned from the pilot and were then confident with implementing the full program.’

Interactive white boards Interactive white boards (IWBs) have been installed in many UK classrooms in recent years and a considerable amount of research has been completed. In addition, there are extensive resources for IWBs available for teachers through Teachernet and Becta. Several London schools have purchased visualisers as a presentation technology in preference to IWBs. Visualisers can be displayed on a larger screen and are supported by the use of a graphics tablet upon which the teacher and students can write or draw which is then displayed on the screen.

Many UK heads and teachers say IWBs have had a positive impact on teaching. This evidence is supported by research by Mal Lee and Arthur Winzenried on the successful introduction of IWBs in Australia and overseas. The teachers in their study embraced the use of IWBs and embedded the technology in their everyday teaching so they can ‘capitalise...upon the ever-emerging digital opportunities.’ (23) Lee and Winzenried say there are two main reasons for this success: the

focus is on enhancing the quality of teaching; and principals facilitated funding, provided a whole-of-school focus and supported the program coordinator. (24)

When you combine the introduction of IWBs in most UK schools and many classrooms, the considerable funding provided by the English and Scottish governments, and the establishment of Becta, the NCSL and the National Grid for Learning and Teacher.com.uk, you have a recipe for the effective integration of ICT in schools. Technology alone doesn't lead to change or improved outcomes for students. All it can do is support the curriculum and provide a variety of useful and motivating resources for teachers and students. What's really needed is professional development. In the UK, that has been effective and well researched, and has given school leaders the confidence and tools both to develop a vision for their school and to manage the change process effectively.

Commonwealth and state governments in Australia must undertake research and deliver quality professional development opportunities for principals, including the provision of online communities and the coordination of facilitators at the district level.

ICT accreditation would be of considerable use to many Australian schools. It would be motivating for the school community and a recognition of excellence. It would also be a positive marketing tool for schools in their community.

The conservative estimate is that installing IWBs in every classroom in Australia would cost \$1 billion – meaning there's a further TCO figure of another \$500 million needed for professional development and other costs. If we want to remain competitive against other industrialised countries then the Commonwealth and state governments needs to make a substantial investment in ICT.

Neil McCallum is the principal at Craigie Primary School in Perth's northern suburbs. He was awarded a fellowship for research on which this article draws from the Western Australia Leadership Centre. The full report is available at: <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/lc/index.html>

For references go to www.acer.edu.au/professionaleducator/references.html

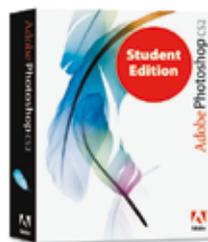
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A shortage of qualified Maths and Science teachers is not the only problem, reports **Steve Holden**. Australia also faces a possible shortage of primary teachers and of school leaders.

National perspective

A **LABOR** government would cut university fees for Science and Maths undergraduates by almost half, with more cuts for those who become teachers, according to Opposition leader Kevin Rudd.

Labor's self-styled 'education revolution' policy would cut the annual HECS fee for Maths and Science undergraduates from \$7,118 to \$3,998, the same level as for nursing and teaching. Labor estimates the policy would cost \$111 million over four years. Announcing the policy last month, Rudd said Maths and Science were critical to Australia's economic competitiveness and long-term economic prosperity.

According to a report commissioned by the Australian Council of Deans of Science (ACDS), 'The Preparation of Mathematics Teachers in Australia,' published last July, seventy-five per cent of teachers of senior school Maths held a Mathematics major, but a worrying eight per cent of Maths teachers had studied no Mathematics at university, while one in five had not studied Mathematics beyond first year. The report by Kerri-Lee Harris and Felicity Jenz from the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne also found that three in four schools reported difficulties recruiting suitably-qualified Maths teachers, especially in more remote regions and in Queensland.

Those findings largely confirm the situation regarding Science teaching published in 'Who's Teaching Science?' prepared by Harris, Jenz and Gabrielle Baldwin for the ACDS and published in January 2005. According to that report, nearly forty-three per cent of senior school Physics teachers lacked a Physics major, one in four not having studied the subject beyond first-year, while one in four Chemistry teachers lacked a Chemistry major, and fourteen per cent of senior school Biology teachers lacked a Biology major. Thirty per cent of schools reported difficulty in filling vacancies for Chemistry teachers, while forty per cent had difficulty recruiting suitably-qualified Physics teachers.

Qualified Maths and Science teachers aside, predictions of a looming teaching shortage suggest the world will need an extra eighteen million primary school teachers in less than ten years. According to Fred van Leeuwen, General Secretary of the global education union, Education International, a global shortage would hit Australia's public schools hard if funding for public schools remains low. Speaking at the Australian Education Union Federal Conference in January, van Leeuwen said the problem for Australia is that it ranks in the bottom half of OECD countries in per capita education expenditure, and government funding is extremely low.

If retirement lies behind a looming global teaching shortage it's also behind a looming, and possibly worse, school leadership shortage. According to *Leadership Succession: Securing the next generation of school leaders*, a report by Britain's National College for School Leadership (NCSL), schools in Britain face a double whammy: too many school leaders will retire over the next five years and there are too few aspirant leaders to replace them since the average 'apprenticeship' is twenty years – fifteen as a classroom teacher and five as a deputy. The NCSL's solution? Systematic talent spotting of aspirants and the provision of opportunities for them to lead earlier in their careers in order to reduce the leadership apprenticeship period. Schools and systems in Australia, New Zealand, the United States and, well, everywhere can expect similar measures to address their school leadership shortages sooner than later.

In brief

COMPUTER USE IMPROVES ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Students who are established computer users tend to perform better in key school subjects than those with limited experience, according to an OECD report, *Are students ready for a technology-rich world?* published in January. The study provides the first internationally comparative data in this area, based on the OECD's PISA 2003 assessment of educational performance by fifteen-year olds. The study identifies a relationship between computer use and student performance in Mathematics. Students who have used computers for several years mostly perform better than average. By contrast, those who don't have access to computers or who have been using computers for only a short time tend to lag behind their class year. Girls remain less confident than boys in performing computer functions, especially high-level tasks such as programming or multi-media presentations. Girls also tend overall to use computers less frequently than boys, who are more likely than girls to have computers at home in most OECD countries and more likely to play computer games and do programming.

RESOURCE OR PROPAGANDA?

An Inconvenient Truth, Al Gore's controversial film on climate change, is being provided free in DVD format to every high school across Australia, a program bank-rolled to the tune of \$80,000 by renewable energy company Jackgreen and coordinated by John Dee, the founder of Planet Ark. Critics say the film is propaganda and its supply to high schools illustrates a lack of 'balance.'

CHEAT CHECKER CHECKED BY COPYRIGHT

The Student Union at RMIT University is attempting to prevent RMIT using the anti-plagiarism software, Turnitin, on the basis that the web-crawling software used by Turnitin breaches the intellectual property rights of the authors of papers in the Turnitin database. According to Liz Thompson, a students' rights officer at RMIT's Student Union, the Turnitin database of student papers breaches Australian intellectual property laws because copyright remains with each student author and authors neither provide the papers nor permission to Turnitin. 'When people sign online for enrolment (at RMIT) there's a little bit down the bottom that says you agree to have your work transmitted for the purposes of detecting plagiarism. If you don't sign on for that, you can't enrol. That is taken by RMIT as permission for Turnitin, who then use it to make a whole lot of profit,' Thompson says.

BOOKS FOR TANZANIA

Help the School of St Jude in Tanzania to honour its motto – 'Fighting poverty through education' – by sending donations of relatively recent fiction and non-fiction primary and secondary library books, class sets of English readers for all ages, or pencils, markers, chalk and exercise books. The School of St Jude was opened in 2002 by Australian teacher, Gemma Sisia, as a sponsorship-supported English Medium School for orphaned and vulnerable children from the lowest socio-economic backgrounds. To send donations, contact Richard and Joan Hardham by email at hardham@hyperlink.net.au

IN YOUR STATE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Thousands of ACT students and scores of teachers began the new school year at a new school after the ACT government closed three preschools and seven primary schools in its first round of closures.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Police officers from the Commercial Crime Division in Western Australia alongside investigators from the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) raided the Australian Islamic College at Kewdale in Perth's south in January, seizing three truckloads of documents and computers. The raid was part of an investigation of fraud allegations. It's alleged the school has been rorting Commonwealth and state student subsidy systems. Australian Islamic College is the highest funded non-government school in the country, receiving \$18.5 million a year in subsidies from the Commonwealth and state governments. No charges have been laid.

QUEENSLAND

More than 29,000 children made history as Queensland began its first year of Prep. The initiative required 416 new classrooms, 420 refurbishments and 1,000 minor upgrades, as well as \$2 million for professional development and \$15.8 million for curriculum resources to support principals, teachers and teacher aides. An additional 100 teachers have also been employed to support the introduction of Prep.

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Against school-based teacher education



THE model of school-based teacher education (SBTE), explicitly articulated in the Centre for Independent Studies report, *Good Teachers Where They Are Needed* (Buckingham, 2005), has received considerable attention in Australia and appears to be influencing teacher education programs as some universities, like Central Queensland University, move to increase the school-based component of courses.

The most likely way the SBTE model would operate is as a paid internship, with applicants placed directly into schools and completing some form of qualification part-time while they teach in the classroom, and while it's initially an appealing model, and while it identifies a number of problems with current approaches to teacher education, the case for enabling teacher education to be conducted primarily within a school environment is not compelling. In fact, the research suggests that the widespread introduction of SBTE is likely to be expensive, systemically inefficient and unlikely to reduce teacher shortages. To say this is not to refute the centrality of professional practice to teacher education courses, nor the need to improve relationships between schools and universities in the preparation of teachers; it is to say that effective teacher education, involving complex pedagogical and content knowledge, requires a research-embedded culture, and that an apprenticeship model is inappropriate for preparing graduates to succeed in, and adapt to, a teaching environment characterised by rapid and constant change.

TEACHER SHORTAGES

A major argument of proponents of SBTE is that it solves the teacher shortage problem. In 2001 the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs estimated that shortages of up to 30,000 were possible by the end of the decade. (MCEETYA, 2001) The Australian Council of Deans of Education, meanwhile, has consistently warned of teacher shortages and advocated the need for more places to be made available within universities. (ACDE, 2004) Discipline areas of particular concern are Science, Mathematics, Technology (SMT) and Languages, while rural, regional and poorer schools are also frequently characterised as hard-to-staff. Supporters say SBTE could address areas of teacher shortage, primarily by 'reducing the disincentives to entering the teaching profession.' (Buckingham, 2005: 1) Rather than sacrificing a year's income, the argument goes, an internship model would enable teaching candidates to earn a salary while studying. In theory, this would encourage more talented applicants who may already be earning substantial incomes, particularly from the SMT fields, to enter the profession.

A notable weakness of this argument is that it focuses exclusively on attracting teachers. Teacher shortages, by contrast, are caused not primarily by a dearth of beginning graduates, but by high attrition rates and uneven distribution. The attrition issue was explicitly addressed in *Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future* (DEST 2003: 87), which noted that around twenty-five per cent of teachers leave the profession within five years. Of course, the reasons for such high attrition rates are not all negative, and include the fact that teaching degrees provide highly portable skills. Nevertheless the figures represent a challenge, the full extent of which is revealed by international research showing the relationship between attrition rates and teacher shortages.

As Darling-Hammond and Sykes note, 'retaining teachers is a far larger problem than training new ones – and key to solving teacher "shortages."' (2003: 3) In the United States, attrition rates after five years are broadly comparable to Australia, and the turnover of staff in low-income schools is estimated to be fifty

School-based teacher education: it promises to reduce teacher shortages, increase the classroom experience of trainees and expand the diversity and raise the quality of applicants. Is it the way forward? Andrew Harvey has some doubts.

School-based teacher education

- *won't* reduce teacher shortages
- *won't* improve the quality and diversity of applicants
- *isn't* a cost-effective alternative to traditional pathways
- *does* identify problems in pre-service teacher education.

per cent higher than the rate in affluent schools. (Ingersoll, 2001: 516) In Australia in 2006, the National Centre of Science, ICT and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia (SiMERR) National Survey found that, 'Teachers in Provincial Areas were twice as likely, and those in Remote Areas about six times as likely, as their Metropolitan and Provincial City colleagues to report high annual staff turnover rates (greater than twenty per cent per annum) in their schools.' (DEST, 2006: vi)

Clearly a continual influx of inexperienced teachers is not ideal, and is a particular problem for low-income, rural and regional schools. Research indicates that teacher effectiveness improves markedly after the first two years of service (Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin, 1998), yet while some means of countering teacher attrition – such as better salaries and conditions, more support in the early years of teaching and improved professional development – have been well documented, one important factor has been largely overlooked.

The type of preparation received by teachers is likely to be a factor in teacher attrition. Extensive US research suggests that the length of teacher preparation is linked to the likely length of teaching service, which leads to the somewhat surprising conclusion that the most cost-effective way to train a teacher may in fact be through a five-year degree, due to lower attrition rates after teaching commencement. (Darling Hammond & Sykes, 2003: 22) There is less research in Australia on this issue: a recent study from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) found that 'teachers who completed a four-year undergraduate course generally reported more favourably on their course than teachers who completed a postgraduate (shorter) degree' (Ingvarson, 2005: 7), but there's little evidence to show whether this translates to time spent in service.

Look at SBTE, however, and the international research is discouraging. Numerous studies confirm that teachers with little pre-service education leave the profession at two or three times the rate of those with more substantial initial preparation. (Henke et al., 2000; Grey et al., 1993) In the US, interestingly, the results are similar for Teach for America (TFA), the program often lauded by proponents of SBTE. TFA students, who are high-achieving university graduates who choose to work in low-income and hard-to-staff schools, have higher attrition rates than certified teachers in similar conditions. So even if fully-certified TFA graduates perform at around the same level as traditionally-certified graduates after two years of teaching, as Buckingham maintains (2005: 10-11), there remains the problem that they don't stay in the profession for as long. A study by Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2005: 26) showed that the vast majority of TFA recruits left after their second or third year of teaching.

High attrition makes SBTE an expensive model of provision, as acknowledged by its supporters. (Buckingham, 2005: 14) Apart from the initial expense, the economic costs of continually re-hiring are manifest, and are exacerbated by the fact that teachers with experience perform better than those without. While the full costs of SBTE are difficult to calculate, they're likely to be much higher than its supporters concede.

Another major cause of teacher shortages is uneven distribution across both geographic and discipline areas. While there may in fact be an over-supply of teachers in metropolitan areas and in some disciplines, there are still manifest difficulties in filling rural and regional posts, and positions in disciplines such as Science and Mathematics. In part, these difficulties can be addressed by scholarships, debt waivers and other financial incentives. In the case of regional and rural students, however, the preservation of strong Education faculties in regional Australia is



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Whatever the form and length of professional experience, it's essential that graduates have the opportunity to reflect and build on their practice, and that theory and practice are interconnected. Merely providing more time in schools, along the lines of an apprenticeship model, is unlikely to produce the teachers required for the Twenty-first Century.

essential. The SiMERR survey notes that, 'about seventy-three per cent of respondents who lived in rural centres while completing their initial teacher education are currently teaching in Provincial Area or Remote Area schools.' (DEST, 2006: vi) The Rural Education Forum of Australia has also outlined a number of measures to improve the number and quality of placements in rural and regional areas, following the argument that those who study in a regional area are more likely to remain working there. (REFA, 2005)

In the longer term, attracting applicants from the SMT fields depends on improving the status of the teaching profession. A quick fix like SBTE may be neither quick nor a fix. Rather, it may lead to even higher rates of attrition and a diminution in status of the teaching profession. Put simply, the professions attracting the highest-quality applicants are those of high status. Lowering the bar for entry into teaching is unlikely to raise the status of the profession. Indeed, contrary to the early-entry model of SBTE, the limited evidence available suggests we need to move away from one-year, end-on degrees and require all teachers to study teaching for between eighteen months and two years, albeit in increasingly diverse programs. Replacing the traditional Diploma of Education with a longer degree, as proposed by the University of Melbourne, may have short-term implications for teacher shortages, but may also lead to a better knowledge base and greater retention of quality teachers. Teaching is a complex profession in which the depth of the pedagogical and content knowledge required is substantial. As with similar professions, substantial pre-service education is required to create a cohort of professional practitioners.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Advocates also argue that SBTE provides the necessary classroom experience currently lacking in teacher education courses. According to Buckingham, SBTE 'effectively addresses widespread concerns that university teacher education courses do not provide trainees with sufficient classroom experience, and that graduates are ill-prepared for taking on full teaching duties.' (2005: 1)

This claim involves two separate but related concerns. The first is that the quantity and quality of classroom experience is currently insufficient. Evidence cited for this claim includes the 1998 *Ramsey Review*, the 2005 *Victorian Parliamentary Report into Teacher Education* and the views of some principals. (See, for example, ASPA, 2003) Most of this evidence is anecdotal, however, and there remains little research into the effect of shorter and longer periods of practical experience.

Few if any teacher educators would dispute the belief that professional practice should be at the heart of teacher education. Indeed, there are many cases of partnership and practicum arrangements in this country that have led the world. (ACDE, 2002) As *Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future* noted, 'Many institutions have been pioneering new approaches to extending the amount of practical experience and diversifying its content.' (DEST, 2003: 140) In acknowledging the extent of this innovation, the authors of that review noted that: 'Several programs use the opportunity of practicums for students to undertake focused action research projects.... A number of teacher education programs provide student teachers with exposure to schools beyond the formal practicums.... Organisations providing social support (for example, the Smith Family) and a range of cultural organisations now recruit students annually to support their work.' (DEST, 2003: 140)

Unfortunately there has been little attempt to map this innovation systematically or to compare existing diverse approaches, and research into these areas would be welcome.

Today's students may not be as dissatisfied about classroom experience as is often claimed. As the ACER survey for the Victorian Institute of Teaching (2004) highlighted, teachers generally rated their courses quite favourably, and within that analysis, 'school experience was rated higher than other elements of teacher education programs.' (Ingvarson, 2005: 7) Substantial innovation is being undertaken within teacher education courses to improve the classroom and other practical experience of students. Possibilities for the expansion of professional practice are nevertheless limited by curriculum constraints, by the cost of placements, by resource limitations reflected in worsening student-to-staff ratios and by bureaucratic impediments, particularly within the one-year, end-on degrees.

Whatever the form and length of professional experience, it's essential that graduates have the opportunity to reflect and build on their practice, and that theory and practice are interconnected. Merely providing more time in schools, along the lines of an apprenticeship model, is unlikely to produce the teachers required for the Twenty-first Century. As Fraser highlights, 'The apprenticeship approach works well in preparing people for a profession as it is currently practised. It does not work very well in preparing people to be reflective or to innovate and be leaders of change.' (2002: 8) SBTE would privilege the practical component, but fail to account for the complexities of teaching in the knowledge economy.

The cry for greater classroom experience is aligned to the second claim identified by Buckingham, namely that 'graduates are ill-prepared for taking on full teaching duties.' To examine that claim, it's worth looking at the expectations other professions place on their graduates. Teaching remains virtually alone in the lack of structured assistance available to beginning practitioners, despite the

It's not reasonable to expect 'teacher-ready' graduate, whether they graduate through SBTE or the traditional method.

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Inadequate diversity is a problem across higher education. The percentage of applicants to Australian universities from low socio-economic areas and non-English speaking backgrounds, as well as those with disabilities or Indigenous heritage, has remained largely unchanged over the past decade.

fact that it's a complex profession in which the speed of change is manifest and full teaching duties are frequently combined with administration, social work, counselling, nursing and other duties in the classroom with the effect that few beginning teachers could be considered 'teacher-ready' in the ambitious sense laid down by the *Victorian Parliamentary Report*. (2005) The solution to a perceived problem of inadequate preparation is not to reduce the preparation. If there is any truth to the claim that teachers are not ready to teach at the point of their professional entry, the most obvious solution is to extend and expand pre-service education as required.

The complexities of contemporary teaching also underline the importance of ongoing professional development. Changes in discipline and pedagogical knowledge 'require the continual renewal by teachers of their own knowledge and understanding' (DEST, 2003), but professional development is under-resourced, undervalued and generally inadequate to the task. (Senate Report, 1998) Higher education could provide a considerable part of the professional development needed through award and non-award courses, but there are few incentives and many inhibitors to teachers participating in the postgraduate study that could extend their professional expertise. (Ramsey, 2000)

It's not reasonable to expect 'teacher-ready' graduates as defined by the *Victorian Parliamentary Report* (2005), whether they graduate through SBTE or the traditional method. Teaching is a complex and rapidly changing science. Just as doctors and lawyers need to continue to learn and adapt throughout their careers, so do teachers. The purpose of any teacher education program must therefore be to establish sound foundations on which knowledge and experience can be built over time. The widespread success of Australian school students in international tests such as PISA and TIMSS suggests that teacher education programs are currently providing these foundations relatively well. (OECD, 2002) A more serious problem lies in the characterisation of the Australian school system as a 'high-quality-but-low-equity' model. Improving educational outcomes in low socioeconomic and regional and rural areas requires, among other measures, greatly improved teacher retention in those areas. SBTE is unlikely to lead to improved teacher retention which, in turn, affects the teaching quality desired by all.

GREATER DIVERSITY AND BETTER APPLICANTS

Advocates of SBTE frequently refer to the current dearth of high-quality teaching applicants, particularly in SMT areas. Irrespective of the veracity of this claim, the clearest way to improve the quality of applicants is to improve the status of the teaching profession. Paying all teachers higher salaries might well have this effect, but the realities of current funding arrangements make significant progress on this front unlikely. A more financially palatable option is to pay only some teachers more; in this case, those with higher qualifications. Rewarding higher qualifications could either be done systemically by simply adjusting current salary scales, or as part of a more radical decentralised system of merit-based pay, a model now favoured by the Commonwealth government. Such models have been criticised for their inability to define 'merit' in a transparent and meaningful way. One determinant of the level of salary, however, could be the level of qualification, similar to schedules adopted in some US jurisdictions. As Lovat outlines: 'In Pennsylvania, teachers beyond the top of the normal scale can move to new salary levels by undertaking a range of professional development options, including further university training. A relevant masters attainment, for instance, can be worth an extra \$15,000 and a doctorate that much again. The result is that a teacher who never leaves the classroom for administration



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If the teaching profession is acknowledged to be as complex as law, medicine and other professions, this needs to be reflected in the investment of governments and in the structures of teaching.

can elevate salary by approximately sixty per cent, so enhancing their personal wealth, lifestyle and early retirement options.’ (Lovat, 2003: 17)

While such a salary calibration would increase the quality of the current teaching workforce, it would also attract more talented applicants to the profession, both within SMT and other disciplines. With or without merit-based pay, greater recognition of qualifications held would lead to a more skilled and educated workforce. Depending on the flexibility of the governing model, recognition could apply both to formal qualifications such as masters or doctoral degrees and to less formal professional development. If the teaching profession is acknowledged to be as complex as law, medicine and other professions, this needs to be reflected in the investment of governments and in the structures of teaching. Commissioning further research to examine the links between postgraduate study and teaching quality would be a useful first step along this path.

Increasing the diversity of applicants is also important, and ideally the teaching profession would be broadly reflective of the society in which its members operate. Inadequate diversity is a problem across higher education. The percentage of applicants to Australian universities from low socioeconomic areas and non-English speaking backgrounds, as well as those with disabilities or Indigenous heritage, has remained largely unchanged over the past decade. All of these groups are under-represented in higher education, and the imbalance underlines the need for greater targeted funding in the cause of equity. Teaching, of course, suffers further by a dearth of male applicants, particularly at primary level. This specific problem could be addressed by the measures already outlined which would increase the status of the profession, and also by opening up classrooms. By introducing team teaching, by encouraging para-professionals and other experts into the classroom, and by breaking down the ‘one teacher, one classroom’ model, the risk of accusations of impropriety against male teachers would be reduced. In short, changes to the profession itself are most likely to increase diversity, rather than measures which simply bypass university pre-service degrees.

CURRENT AUSTRALIAN MODELS

Advocates of SBTE may look to the Bachelor of Learning Management (BLM) at Central Queensland University, reported in the August 2006 issue of *Professional Educator*, as an example of the model in practice. The BLM involves appointing candidates to a teaching-accredited school from their first week at university, and attempts to embed students in the work of the classroom. The program has received a highly favourable evaluation in a published ACER study (2005), but the study itself explicitly refutes the idea that the BLM can be used to support SBTE: ‘It would be a mistake to assume that this study provides support for simply increasing the amount of time future teachers spend in schools during their training or, worse, for moving responsibility for teacher education out of universities and into schools.’ (Ingvarson et al., 2005: 84)

Despite this disclaimer, it’s possible that advocates of SBTE could use the ACER study to support their argument, or at least to support the argument for a much greater practical component to education courses. The study finds that BLM graduates are much better prepared than traditionally prepared graduates from CQU, largely because the BLM course provides strong links between theory and practice, and an authentic partnership between schools, employing authorities and the university. (Ingvarson et al., 2005: 81-82)

It’s difficult to place any faith in these conclusions, however, due to the inherent methodological weaknesses of the study. There were three elements of the

ACER study: observational study of graduate teachers; a survey of graduate teachers; and a survey of principals at schools employing graduate teachers. The initial observational study involved just thirty-one teachers who had graduated in 2003. Eighteen of these had graduated with a BLM from CQU, while thirteen had graduated with a Bachelor of Education from a variety of Queensland universities. The survey itself concedes that ‘it was only possible to implement to a limited extent the plan of using schools that had both a BLM graduate and a non-BLM graduate,’ and that the selection of graduate teachers ‘was more opportunistic than random.’ (Ingvarson et al., 2005: 19) The authors further acknowledge that the location of the study – near CQU – ‘may have led to a bias in favour of the BLM course,’ and that the thirteen Bachelor of Education teachers cannot be said to be representative of the several hundred primary teacher graduates across Queensland in 2003. (2005: 24) Thus, not only was the sample size small, but the commensurability of the two sets of graduates was questionable even by the authors’ own admission. Taken together, these limitations must call into question the validity of any findings related to the observational study.

The second element of the study was a questionnaire of graduate teachers. Of approximately 2,000 teachers who had graduated from a Queensland-based teacher education program in 2003, 536 returned questionnaires for evaluation. Once again, the statistical significance of the findings is undermined by that response rate – around twenty-six per cent. The final element of the study involved a questionnaire of principals, and asked for feedback about one teacher at each school who had graduated from a Queensland-based teacher education program in 2003. The questionnaire delivered a nominal response rate of forty-five per cent, but over half the respondents did not indicate the type of course in which their teacher had graduated. The effective response rate, then, was around twenty per cent, which once again makes the drawing of any firm conclusions difficult.

As it stands, the ACER study recommends more content knowledge, and explicitly refutes the idea that such knowledge could be provided by SBTE: ‘Teacher education programs that might be highly “practical,” in the sense of giving heavy emphasis to skills in classroom management for example, will not make up for a deficiency in the aspects of content knowledge identified in this study.’ (Ingvarson et al., 2005: 60) That conclusion is consistent with the argument for rigorous pre-service teacher education embedded in a research culture. Nevertheless, more research is required: the BLM may well be an effective model, but the only available research into its efficacy lacks methodological rigour.

Sadly, it’s still necessary to debunk the myth that anyone can teach, a myth that’s implicitly embedded in the SBTE model and one that continues to receive support from some community groups and, at times, governments. The case against SBTE is strong: it’s unlikely to reduce teacher shortages, improve the quality and diversity of applicants, or provide a cost-effective alternative to traditional pathways. Its proponents, however, have identified a number of problems with the teaching profession that do demand policy shifts. Pre-service education should be strengthened not weakened; rewards should be provided for teachers to undergo professional learning, which should itself be widely available; differential salary scales should be introduced to reward those undertaking formal postgraduate qualifications; and we need further research into the effectiveness of different pathways into teaching, the diversity of teacher education programs, the relationship between teaching qualifications and quality, and the root causes of inequity in educational provision. Recognising the complexity of teaching is the first step towards improving its status.

Sadly, it’s still necessary to debunk the myth that anyone can teach.

Dr Andrew Harvey is the Deputy Director (Academic) of the Bendigo campus of La Trobe University.

For Jennifer Buckingham’s Centre for Independent Studies report, Good Teachers Where They Are Needed, go to www.cis.org.au/IssueAnalysis/ia64/IA64.pdf

For references go to www.acer.edu.au/professionaleducator/references.html



The Management Contradictionary

The Management Contradictionary, according to its cover, is a book which shouldn't be judged by its cover. That maxim is true enough of its front cover; a quick glance at the back cover, however, gives a very clear insight into the mindset of its trio of authors. Ben Marks describes himself as 'born into slavery to the Commonwealth of Australia; he also works for the tax office.' Rodney Marks 'is Australia's (mis)leading comedian,' and Robert Spillane 'has written more than 110 professional articles that nobody reads.' This is definitely a book for those who, like the authors, are not prepared to take themselves too seriously, or who would like to challenge those who do.

There's a tendency in today's society for management to be seen as the answer to all problems. Management language is evolving at an exponential rate to cater for the multitude of issues it's supposed to be able to address. Those who don't fully understand this new language are thought to be out of touch and obviously not suited to higher levels of managerial leadership. Even education is being infiltrated, slowly but surely, by the pseudo-scientific jargon of business management. But wait. What is *The Management Contradictionary* definition of leadership? 'Leadership,' the authors explain, is 'What a leader does. And a leader shows leadership. Only a leader can see this apparent paradox as truth. The corollaries of this truth are: (a) if you think this reasoning is circular, you'll never make it to the top, and (b) if you're not confused, then you really don't understand what's going on.' If you're really confused, however, it's probably best to check the meaning of a paradox: 'When a manager says: "All managers are liars."' Hmm.

Think for a moment of some of the management language that was so readily bandied around at your last staff or faculty meeting. Did your leaders or colleagues use words like accountability, added value, change management, competence, life-long learning, multi-tasking, relevance, senior management team, vision? Did you really feel you understood what these terms meant? Here's how *The Management Contradictionary* defines some of them.

Change management: fallacious belief that people want to change their work behaviour or that, even if they want to, they can. A popular way to implement a change management program is to change management.

Competence: getting away with it.

Relevance: the standard by which all education is judged irrelevant.

Senior management team: oligarchy that thinks it is an aristocracy.

In the hectic pace of today's world, it's disconcerting to note how easily many people have become brainwashed into readily accepting that jargon and clichés can somehow encapsulate enduring truths. Marks, Marks and Spillane have set out to reverse this trend by providing alternative definitions to over 1,000 management terms. *The Management Contradictionary* provokes new and humorous ways of thinking about commonly accepted interpretations of these words and phrases. The result is a surprisingly entertaining dictionary which, once read, will never again allow you to apathetically accept mindless linguistic obfuscation.

In most workplaces we find people in managerial positions who, on some occasions, have a proclivity to take themselves a little too seriously. *The Management Contradictionary* is a timely publication which may just be an effective resource to help you help them to combat the proliferation of pseudo-scientific business management jargon.

BY

Benjamin Marks, Rodney Marks and Robert Spillane

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Brian Brennan

*Brian Brennan
is a Senior Education Officer
– Secondary
at the Catholic Education Office,
Sandhurst.*

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17-19 MAY

EVENT 'Middle Schooling: Reaching New Heights, Building Our Future' 5th International Conference of the Middle Years of Schooling Association Increase your knowledge and understanding of adolescence, and of positive learning environments to help build bright and rewarding futures for young people.
PLACE Conrad Jupiters, Gold Coast
PHONE 07 3844 1138
FAX 07 3844 0909
EMAIL mysa2007@icms.com.au
WEB www.mysa2007.com.au

15-17 JUNE

EVENT The Alliance of Girls Schools Australasia Annual Conference The Alliance of Girls Schools Australasia conference addresses: leadership in education to mentor and develop staff; demographic trends in girls' education; knowledge management, learning communities and change management; and the use of data to inform teaching and learning. This year's conference is hosted by Lauriston Girls' School.
PLACE Lauriston Girls' School, Melbourne
CONTACT Jan Butler, Executive Officer
PHONE 07 3488 2686
EMAIL jan.butler@internode.on.net
WEBSITE www.agsa.org.au

6-9 JULY

EVENT 21st Biennial Conference of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers 'Mathematics: Essential for learning, essential for life' The 21st AAMT conference is a chance

for teachers and researchers to work together, and share ideas. There's also a day of joint sessions with the conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia.

PLACE University of Tasmania, Hobart
CONTACT AAMT
EMAIL office@aamt.edu.au
PHONE 08 8363 0288
FAX 08 8362 9288
WEBSITE www.aamt.edu.au/2007

29 JULY-1 AUGUST

EVENT Directions for Catholic Educational Leadership in the 21st Century: The Vision, Challenges and Reality 4th International Conference on Catholic Educational Leadership hosted by ACU will focus on new leadership views and paradigms for a globalised and rapidly changing world.
EMAIL conferences@acu.edu.au
WEBSITE www.acu.edu.au/conferences

12-14 AUGUST

EVENT 'The Leadership Challenge: Improving learning in schools' The 2007 Research Conference of the Australian Council for Educational Research The conference will address key issues related to building leadership in schools that makes a difference to student learning outcomes.
PLACE Grand Hyatt Hotel, Melbourne
CONTACT Margaret Taylor, Conference Secretariat, ACER Centre for Professional Learning
PHONE 03 9835 7403
FAX 03 9835 7457

EMAIL taylor@acer.edu.au
WEBSITE www.acer.edu.au/workshops/conferences.html

18-26 AUGUST

EVENT National Science Week Celebrate science and technology in your school during National Science Week.
EMAIL scienceweek@dest.gov.au
WEBSITE http://www.scienceweek.info.au

30 SEPTEMBER-3 OCTOBER

EVENT 'The Roaring Forties: Winds of change' Australian Secondary Principals Association National Conference ASPA's 2007 conference is an opportunity for educators to sail into Hobart and discover what's going on.
PLACE Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart
WEBSITE http://www.aspa.asn.au

3-5 OCTOBER

EVENT Australian School Library Association's biennial National conference 'Hearts on Fire: Sharing the Passion – Learning, Literature and Literacies' ASLA XX is a national forum for teacher librarians, school library staff, information specialists, school leaders, classroom teachers and school library academics to share their knowledge.
PLACE Adelaide Convention Centre
CONTACT Aleks Duric
PHONE 02 9437 9333
EMAIL aleks@conferenceaction.com.au
WEBSITE www.asla.org.au/pd/conference



Tampering with a universal law

Danny Katz explains
why having your teacher
in your house is wrong.

MY sucky-crawly parents. Can you believe what they did to me? Every year of my primary school they would commit the most flagrantly abusive act of peachy over-eager saccharine sucky-crawliness... and actually... invite my teacher... round for dinner. **MY CLASSROOM TEACHER WOULD ENTER MY HOUSE AND SIT AT MY TABLE AND EAT FOOD WITH ME AND MY FAMILY IN A NON-EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT.** It was wrong, very wrong. Having your teacher inside your own home is tampering with universal laws – it’s like trying to force together baked beans with ice cream, or sandals with socks, or Avril Lavigne with Hilary Duff.

I don’t know why my parents did it: maybe they thought it was the polite thing to do, or maybe they wanted to meet new friends, or maybe they wanted to discuss the state of my mental development, because by the age of seven I was still having trouble with my two-times tables, and I couldn’t pee standing up. Whatever the reason, it was a much-dreaded annual experience; the first teacher they invited round was Mrs Gaffnee, my Grade Two teacher. She showed up one night with a bottle of wine, and my parents sat her down and they all chatted, **LIKE THEY WERE BUDDIES** – even calling her by her first name, Helen. **SINCE WHEN DID MRS GAFFNEE HAVE A FIRST NAME?** I remember sitting at the dinner table, not saying a word, watching them eating and drinking and laughing, thinking to myself ‘I might just grab that pair of salad tongs from the three-bean salad... and ram them through my own throat.’ **BECAUSE THIS WAS MY SCHOOL TEACHER:** the woman who made me stay back on Fridays to finish my subtraction, who made me pick up rubbish at lunchtime for drawing a willy on my worksheet, who gave me a B for a brilliant story I wrote called ‘My Trip To The Zoo,’ while Glenn Ludlow got an A, and his was crap, he didn’t even know how to spell ‘armadillo.’

Then at eight-thirty, when it was time for me to go to bed, I had to say good-night **TO MY TEACHER**, wearing my seahorse jammies **IN FRONT OF MY TEACHER**, then I headed off to my bedroom **WHILE MY TEACHER HUNG OUT IN MY HOUSE, AT MY TABLE, WITH MY PARENTS.** It was freaky, lying in bed, listening to them chatting and laughing until late, every now and then hearing odd muffled words like ‘Danny’ and ‘standing’ and ‘pee,’ then more laughing.

The next morning, on my way to school, I wondered how this would change my school life – was Mrs Gaffnee still my teacher, or was she a family friend now? – and were we supposed to hang out together during lunchtime, chitter-chatting beside the Gestetner machine? **THE FABRIC OF THE SCHOOL-HOME SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM WAS ALTERED FOREVER.** When Mrs Gaffnee finally walked into the classroom, we all said ‘Good morning Miss Gaffnee’ and she said ‘Good morning children – oh, and Danny, you tell your parents that I had a very pleasant dinner at your house last night. And by the way I really like your seahorse jammies!’ I said ‘Thank you.... Helen,’ and at recess I got such a titty-twister from Glenn Ludlow, thirty-five years later I still struggle to find one of my nipples.

Many other teachers came to our house over my primary school years, each dinner more traumatic than the last: Mrs Elliot came round with a bottle of wine, and Mr Maron showed up with a bottle of wine, and even old Principal Mealy was invited round one night – he brought a bottle of wine, and wore his nylon hair-piece back to front, so the sideburns kept getting caught on his ears.

As humiliating as all these dinner parties were, I suppose I did learn an important life-lesson from them: they made me realise that teachers are people like anybody else – they’ve got first names, they’ve got families, they like a good laugh, and they enjoy nice food. And most of all..... they really seem to like drinking wine. They drink lots and lots of bottles of wine.

RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2007

The Leadership Challenge: Improving learning in schools

Early registration is recommended
to avoid disappointment.

Contact: Margaret Taylor
Tel: 03 9835 7403
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