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EDITOR
Nic Barnard

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
Ross Dean, John Graham, Ann Taylor and Nic Barnard

DESIGNER
Peter Lambropoulos

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Editorial correspondence should be directed to Nic Barnard, *Professional Voice*, Australian Education Union Vic Branch, 112 Trenerry Crescent, Abbotsford VIC 3067. Phone: 03 9418 4841. Email: **nic.barnard@aeuvic.asn.au**

The AEU Victorian Branch can be contacted at:
112 Trenerry Crescent, PO Box 363, Abbotsford 3067
Tel: 03 9417 2822 **Fax:** 1300 568 078
Web: www.aeuvic.asn.au

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The National Agenda
- Part two

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EDITORIAL

Past, present and FUTURE

NIC BARNARD

AS THIS ISSUE of *Professional Voice* goes to press, the federal election is looming large. Whichever party wins control, we can expect to see major changes to the face of education in Australia.

In that context, this *PV* continues the theme begun last issue of the National Agenda. The first part looked at some of the broader themes facing the education system, as well as particular challenges in the TAFE and early childhood sectors. It considered performance pay, a national curriculum and the struggle for power and influence between the federal and state governments — on the outcome of which much will hinge.

This issue expands upon some of those arguments, and addresses some new areas.

In particular, two writers analyse the past and continuing impact of the Howard Government on public education. That impact has been profound and may even prove irreversible; it has been characterised by a relentless attack on public schools and their teachers, and the simultaneous promotion of private education — in faith schools or the independent sector — as an alternative under the rubric of parental "choice".

AEU federal research officer Jenni Devereaux pulls apart the use of federal funding

to pursue this agenda, and the way that cash has been redirected to private schools under the guise of "fairness". Educational consultant Trevor Cobbold examines the ideological underpinnings of this attack and the tactics used by the Coalition to this end.

For Cobbold, public education is a victim of John Howard's dogmatic belief in the private sector, privatisation and small government. Education was always going to be in his sights: only health rivals it in terms of government spending. But to achieve its aim of slashing away at the public sector's role in providing services, the Government has, Cobbold argues, perpetrated three great frauds on the public: that there is a crisis in education, that the market can do better, and that this will aid low income families.

This issue of *PV* also offers a reminder — given the sometimes oppressive nature of the current debate around education — that teachers count among this nation's greatest assets, and that their work underpins the very democracy which will be practised at the forthcoming election. Glyn Davis's essay is adapted from his Australia Day address earlier this year, but is perhaps more timely now than ever.

Given this, how good is Australia at investing in the next generation of teachers? Sue Willis, president of the Australian Council of Deans of Education, offers her assessment, picking apart the challenges to teacher education highlighted in the recent House of Representatives inquiry. Among her conclusions is the stark contrast between the inquiry's recommendations and the actions subsequently taken (or not taken) by the Government. She also notes bluntly that the level of teacher bashing conducted by press and politicians translates directly to the level of interest in teaching as a profession.

It now seems certain that whoever wins the election, Australia will see the introduction of some form of national testing which may lead to league tables. Both Federal Education Minister Julie Bishop and her ALP opposite number Stephen Smith have expressed their support. In this, they are following in the footsteps of other Western nations, notably the United Kingdom. Indeed, Ms Bishop made this explicit when she set out her agenda earlier this year, dropping references to former UK prime ministers Tony Blair and Margaret Thatcher.

We say United Kingdom, but we should say England, since, tellingly, the Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish since devolution have turned their backs on these reforms. And the English verdict? Two contributors offer some insights: John Bangs, long-serving head of education with the National Union of Teachers, believes they have largely been a triumph of spin over substance, and that the greatest impact on the quality of education has occurred when teachers have been given more autonomy.

Meanwhile, Warwick Mansell, a journalist who, with the *Times Educational Supplement* in the UK, has spent several years covering the impact of testing and tables and recently wrote a book on the matter, concludes that the entire regime rests on a fundamental — and entirely unevidenced — mistrust of teachers' motives. Ironically, reports from the UK suggest a growing disillusionment with the testing regime, even among its previous supporters, just as it is being contemplated here.

American academic Linda Darling-Hammond takes up the issue of teacher accountability and ties it to the question of performance pay. How do we measure teacher performance, she asks? Is it even possible? Her answer suggests it is, but that it is a complex task that will require much more than a simple analysis of student results.

Finally, what of the next generation of teachers, those people who, as Glyn Davis argued, are the safeguards of our democracy? Sue Willis, president of the Australian Council of Deans of Education paints a worrying picture of a sector neglected by government and facing increasing demands with diminishing resources. That represents a significant challenge for an incoming administration, but the recent House of Representatives report — notable for its lack of hysteria — offers some useful pointers if only ministers will listen.

This edition is rounded off with the first part of an interview with Canadian educationalist Ken Leithwood — like Professor Darling-Hammond, a recent visitor to Melbourne as a guest of (among others) the Victorian Educational Leadership Consortium, a training body hosted and co-funded by the AEU. He too offers his thoughts on (*inter alia*) teacher quality and the deep-seated problems of tying performance to pay.

Federal politicians, please take note.

Teachers – the real Australian heroes

GLYN DAVIS

FACED WITH THE ancient question, "How should we govern ourselves?" we've found our answer — not perfect, not always living up to our aspirations, but the foundation nonetheless for a working representative democracy.

It is a system of self-government reinforced by our legal and political institutions, reflected in the political passions of our citizens, accepted as legitimate by the networks of public associations, private companies, voluntary organisations and family, ethnic and religious groups that make up Australian society.

Democracy is underpinned by assumptions we take for granted — that, for example, every Australian can read and write and so participate in public life.

Our political system presumes, without much examination, that Australians understand the purpose and operation of democracy, the value of free expression, the importance of the rule of law, the intrinsic rights of every person.

There was a time, of course, when such assumptions could not be made — when education and literacy were not universal, when essential civic knowledge might not be absorbed at school, to be carried through life.

We had to learn how to live together in peace, and we did so in large part through education.

The first Australian schools appeared soon after settlement in Sydney, supervised by chaplains. They relied on five convicts assigned to teach. No government funds were offered to support education, suggesting the reach of such schools was probably erratic and incomplete.

Attempts at reform in the early 19th century foundered on the question of who should run education — state or church. A compromise in the National Education Board Act of 1848 established two school systems in New South Wales, one denominational and the other government-run, setting a pattern still familiar across Australia.

It was here in Victoria that reformers first pressed the case that a democracy requires education for all. A visionary Premier — James Goodall Francis, Chief Secretary of Victoria from June 1872 to July 1874 — pushed through the necessary law.

In 1872 he proposed, and saw passed, the Victorian Education Act, the first in the world to set up a centralised public school system based on the principles of free, secular and compulsory education. With this legislation, ahead of similar moves elsewhere in Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States, the colony of Victoria created government schools that would educate all children for their future lives.

The philosophy underpinning the Education Act was simple and clear. Victorian children would attend school because literacy and numeracy matter for a productive life but, even more, because self-government requires educated citizens who can understand, analyse and participate in public life. Schools would become the cradle of citizenship.

The Victorian lead was followed over the next 20 years across Australia. By the time of the federation debates of the 1890s, almost every Australian child could read and write, knew something of the history of this continent, and could bring an informed and independent mind to the great issue of nationhood.

In the years following federation, a further wave of educational reform improved the quality of schools and teacher training.

Here in Victoria, the extraordinary work of Frank Tate, a teacher at Box Hill and then inspector for the Mallee district, exemplified the commitment to improve education. Tate introduced new teaching methods then gaining popularity in Britain, encouraged debate about teaching and, eventually appointed director of education for Victoria, reformed school administration. He expanded the network of secondary schools and encouraged professional training for teachers. He forced a reluctant University of Melbourne to introduce the state's first diploma of teaching.

Other eminent Victorians made important contributions to ensuring the educated population we now take for granted. Charles Pearson, for example, the first Headmaster of Presbyterian Ladies College, worked hard to give girls access to an education at least equivalent to boys'. Francis Ormond, in one of the greatest acts of philanthropy in colonial Victoria, donated a considerable part of his fortune to create the Workingman's College in 1887, the foundation of the modern RMIT.

But paying attention just to the education leaders can overlook the most essential element of a successful education system — great teachers.

School teachers remain the unacknowledged legislators of every generation.

Take, for example, the work of Debney Park Secondary College in equipping a new generation for citizenship.

This small and unassuming college sits near Flemington in the Melbourne suburbs, under the leadership of Brett New for many years, and now with Michael O'Brien as the inspiring school principal. Over the gate is the school motto: "Towards Equity and Excellence — Every Child Matters".

Its catchment includes large communities of Somali and Sudanese refugees. Many are very recent arrivals. Margaret Simons (2006) reports that "in their home country most had been semi-nomadic peasants". There are some 43 different nationalities among the school's 340 students. "Some arrived without ever having held a pen or handled a book." More than half live in public housing, and some children arrive at the school suffering post-traumatic shock.

"And yet," notes Simons, "almost beyond belief" the school consistently sees about a quarter of its VCE students achieve ENTER scores above 80. In the most recent VCE round, more than 10 per cent scored over 90.

A 2005 Victorian Department of Education "On Track" survey of Debney Park graduates a year after completing school found that 96 per cent had gone onto tertiary education or training. The remainder were in employment or apprenticeships. None was unemployed.

Debney Park SC is an example of a small and disadvantaged school that inspires its students to learn. The school is not afraid to look outward for support and advice — to other local schools, to business organisations such as the Boston Consulting Group, and to the Faculty of Education and the Victorian College of the Arts at the University of Melbourne.

This year, the college hopes to launch an international exchange program, again encouraging its pupils to look beyond their immediate circumstances to the possibilities beyond the school gate.

This small example — one of many from our education system — shows that with imagination, hard work and community support, a school can make a huge difference to those it serves. Refugees from societies that have fallen into traumatic civil war find calm, opportunity and encouragement in one of those free, secular and compulsory schools bequeathed to Victoria more than a century ago.

Every student at Debney Park has an individual learning program. The school runs extra literacy programs. It has constructed a soundhouse to promote student learning, engagement and wellbeing. Parents are closely involved through the Debney Advisory Group. The teachers are talented and committed. They have created, with their pupils, a culture of learning.

As principal Michael O'Brien says: "It is simply the best environment to work in. The most wonderful job you could ever have."

As reporter Margaret Simons wandered through the school, she observed African boys playing, the variety of headscarves worn by the girls, the defiant but impeccably polite graffiti. She sat in on a Year 10 class learning about the Australian political system. They knew who the Prime Minister was. They were less clear on the leader

of the Opposition. Is it Mark Latham, one asks, "the man who wrote the book?" They know about Steve Bracks, the Premier of Victoria, because he is Lebanese. One student carries on about this so much that the teacher jokes with him that he must want to be Lebanese.

"No, Miss," he replies. "I want to be white."

The Year 11 class includes three students who are fasting for Ramadan as they study, by their own choice, *10 Things I Hate About You*, a modern retelling of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. The students dissect the morals underpinning this high school movie about the perils of dating, in which everyone is beautiful, smart, middle class and very white. They identify the values promoted by the American filmmakers, but draw their own, different, conclusions.

School teaching is often thankless work, noticed at best in the classroom and by parents. Yet Debney Park Secondary College, like public and private schools across this state and nation, quietly builds our democracy. Schools ensure the latest arrivals to this nation can share the inheritance, understand the values, and be part of shaping the future.

So here is my modest proposal: when we next talk about nation builders, about famous sports stars, successful entrepreneurs, leading politicians, let's recall who does the work, every day, to sustain the foundations of democratic Australia.

You would not guess that contribution from public discussion. School teachers are routinely criticised rather than praised when education is discussed. Australians apparently little value the dedication and the contribution of school teachers. We are unlikely to contemplate a National Teachers Day, as happens through much of Asia, when adults take a flower to the teacher at school or university who most inspired them.

Instead, school teachers get attacked all the time — by politicians, by newspaper columnists, by people who should know better.

As Professor Sue Willis, president of the Australian Council of Deans of Education, observes, the current sport of bagging teachers will see fewer young people make teaching their career of choice.

"The capacity to attract our brightest and best young people into teaching … is directly related to the way (the profession) is constructed both in the media and by politicians," Professor Willis told the *Sunday Age*.

"It's absolutely clear that we have downturns in application rates (for university courses) and an increased loss of teachers from the profession, when they are constantly being slammed. … If we really want to attract the brightest and best into state schools, we've got to start talking them up."

She's right. Teachers get blamed for problems in the education system more properly sheeted home to poor rates of pay, lack of equipment and inadequate facilities. We characterise teachers as unionised ratbags rather than as a profession like lawyers or doctors.

Our kindergarten teachers are often the first great formative influence beyond the family. School is usually our first experience of working with a group of strangers around shared goals, of living alongside difference. School gives us a glimpse of

something bigger than ourselves and our immediate circle.

These early lessons make it possible to live together as adults. Research by Jan Pakulski and Bruce Tranter (2000) demonstrates a clear correlation between levels of education and civic identity as an Australian. "Aussie values" are not innate. We learn them, along with multiplication tables and critical reasoning.

Democracies are fragile. They endure only when the rules about living together are understood and accepted.

We learn those rules from our families and those who do the essential but unrecognised work of fostering democracy from the ground up — our teachers.

The value of education is more than skills learned and employability. Great teaching changes lives. It sees the potential in students, respects their ability, inspires a passion for learning, provides the young with a trustworthy setting in which to set aside personal fears.

Teaching is the preparation of the next generation to take on the burden of self-government. Through education we transmit, to those who will follow, the knowledge, the virtues, the values necessary to preserve and carry forward our democratic society.

So next time a public speaker takes a cheap shot at school teachers, reflect for a moment on just how much our political system, our way of associating, our peaceful streets and national consensus about the norms of public life, are learned from teachers like those today at Debney Park Secondary College.

And when next reminded how some of our poorest schools struggle to cover costs, recall just how fundamental their work is to our way of life. As the motto says, Every Child Matters.

The Great School Fraud:

Howard Government school education policy, 1996–2006

TREVOR COBBOLD

THE HOWARD GOVERNMENT has transformed the delivery of school education in Australia. It is developing a national school system under the control of the Federal Government which incorporates an extension of market-based measures to promote choice and competition as well as increased privatisation of schooling.

This transformation has been assisted by the perpetration of three great frauds on the Australian public. At the same time, it has largely ignored the critical problem facing the Australian schooling system – a high degree of social inequity in school outcomes. Indeed, it is exacerbating the social divide in education.

In essence, the Howard Government has restored mainstream political acceptance and legitimacy of privilege in education.

THE TRANSFORMATION IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

The development of a market-based education system has been largely driven through increased privatisation of schooling supported by increased federal funding for private schools; reduced restrictions on new private schools; and the establishment of privately-operated technical colleges with privileged funding.

This has been supported by requirements for reporting school results and increasing school autonomy. As well, the stage has been set to integrate school education more extensively in the global education market.

Private school enrolments increased by 22 per cent during 1996-2006 compared to an increase of 16 per cent over the previous 10 years. In contrast, government school enrolments increased by 1 per cent.

The number of private schools increased by 168 in 1996-2006 compared to 46 in the decade before; 95 per cent were independent. The number of government schools fell by 186 in the same period.

This shift was supported by a massive boost in federal funding for private schools — $1,584 per student in the five years to 2005 compared to $261 per government school student.

At the same time, the Federal Government has developed national approaches to curriculum, teaching, assessment and reporting standards and certification, using its funding powers to ensure state and territory compliance, and also provided substantial funds directly to schools.

Its stated goal is one national school education system, in which case, state and territory governments would become mere administrative centres for the implementation of federal government policies.

There are two fundamental contradictions embedded in this transformation. First, the Howard Government is an advocate of limited government, but in vastly increasing funding for private schools has increased their dependence on government, and expanded education bureaucracy.

Second, the Liberal Party has traditionally been a firm supporter of states' rights, yet has vastly increased federal government control over states' policy areas, including school education.

The transformation of school education has been aided by three great frauds perpetrated by the Howard Government.

FRAUD NO. 1: THERE IS A CRISIS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

The Howard Government has unashamedly lied about school outcomes, unfairly attacked the quality of teaching and disparaged curriculum in order to impose federal control over school education, extend the role of the market in the delivery of education and increase the privatisation of schooling. As part of this fraud, it has undermined public confidence in schools, especially government schools.

The Prime Minister and successive federal education ministers have claimed that over 30 per cent of students do not achieve adequate literacy standards. It has consistently failed to produce independent evidence to support this claim, which is refuted by international and national test data.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results for 41 countries in 2003 shows that 15 year-old students in Australia have among the best average results in the world, with only Finland achieving statistically significantly higher average results.

Australia's outstanding school results suggest that the foundations of teaching and curriculum in our schools are solid. So why has it embarked on a transformation of school education? There are several answers.

First, the Howard Government is ideologically committed to enhancing the role of markets and reducing the size of the public sector. Government schools are an obvious target because they form such a significant component of the public sector. Privatisation of schooling extends the "user pays" principle of markets to education, reducing government expenditure and the call on taxation. The Government has been quite explicit about this rationale.

Second, the Howard Government sees school education as a key site of the "culture wars" and the long campaign of the Liberal Party against radical or progressive thought. It wishes to establish greater control over what is taught in schools so as to eliminate challenges to traditional and conservative views about society.

An essential component of this is to exert greater control over what teachers do. This is to be achieved through greater control over curriculum, greater control over teacher training and increased standardisation of teachers' work.

A fundamental objective is also to reduce the influence of teacher unions in education policy. The Government sees the AEU as a significant opponent of its education policies and attributes much of the blame for the mythical crisis in education to the influence of teacher unions.

FRAUD NO. 2: MARKETS IN EDUCATION DELIVER BETTER OUTCOMES

The fundamental premise behind the Howard Government's school education policies — that increased choice and competition will improve student achievement — is not sustained by the weight of international research.

Markets are more likely to exacerbate the social divide in education outcomes. The weight of evidence from the best designed and most comprehensive research studies is that:

- Increased choice and competition between government schools has little impact on student achievement
- Student outcomes in charter schools in the United States are more often than not lower than in traditional government schools
- Private school competition has little to no effect on student achievement in government schools
- There is little difference between student outcomes in private schools and government schools.

Studies of the impact of small voucher programs in the US that allow students to attend private schools are mixed. Studies of large-scale voucher programs show little effect on overall achievement, but a significant increase in disparities in school performance.

While few research studies have been undertaken in Australia, the evidence suggests that the Howard Government's enhancement of market mechanisms has had little impact on average levels of achievement. There has been no improvement in the proportion of students achieving the national literacy and numeracy benchmarks since 1999, allowing for statistical uncertainty associated with the measures.

At best, the overall evidence on the effects of markets is a shaky foundation for the education policies of the Howard Government. On the other hand, there are significant disadvantages associated with market-based policies and privatisation. They:

- Fail to increase innovation and diversity in curriculum and pedagogy
- Reduce collaboration between schools
- Increase effective choice largely only for the middle class
- Contribute to socio-economic and racial segregation in schooling
- Increase disparities in performance between schools
- Increase social inequalities in student achievement.

Marketing and promotion of schools appear to be more common responses to competition than curriculum and teaching innovation. Many studies in different countries have also found that the most popular schools tend to "cream-off" high achieving students from other schools.

FRAUD NO. 3: SCHOOL CHOICE WILL HELP LOW INCOME FAMILIES

The Howard Government claims its funding model for private schools increases choice for low income families and targets schools with the greatest need. In fact, the largest increases have gone to the most well-resourced sectors and schools.

Moreover, it is middle and high income families who are able to take advantage of choice and it is often schools who choose the parents rather than parents who choose the school.

The independent school sector has the largest proportion of students from high income families. Yet, it has received the largest increases in federal funding under the SES model — $1,658 per student between 2000 and 2005 compared to $1,427 for Catholic schools, nearly double the increase in percentage terms. This reversed the pattern of increase in previous years.

Some of the wealthiest schools in Australia receive high levels of federal funding. Four in 10 independent schools (and many Catholic schools) are funded beyond their entitlement under the SES model. Despite the large increase in federal funding, private school fees have continued to increase by much more than inflation.

Choice tends to be restricted to those families who know what the choices are and how to access them, and who do not need support to get to a school. International studies have found that parents who actively choose schools are better educated and better off than those who do not.

In Australia, private schools and specialist government schools have considerable power over enrolment, and selection processes are designed to sort out the high achieving students.

SOCIAL INEQUITY IN SCHOOL OUTCOMES IS BEING IGNORED

The Howard Government has ignored the most critical issue facing education: that Australia has a high quality but low equity education system.

There is a large difference between the highest and lowest outcomes for 15-year olds in Australia in comparison with other high-achieving countries. The PISA 2003

study found Australia had the largest range of outcomes of the top 10 achieving countries apart from New Zealand.

According to the OECD's former Director for Education, Professor Barry McGaw, the most socially disadvantaged students in Australia lag about 18 months to two years behind the reading ability of the poorest students in Canada, Japan, Finland and South Korea.

The National Goals for Schooling in Australia commit Australian governments to a dual equity goal, that all students achieve a minimum standard or level of education and that the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students and Indigenous students improve and come to match those of other students.

But despite Australia's pretensions to an egalitarian society, the Howard Government has pursued only a weak version of this goal. It has largely ignored the second part of it. Indeed, it has dismissed claims that a social divide exists in the Australian school system. It even rejects the significant influence of socio-economic factors on student achievement and has called this well-documented research finding a "statistical artefact".

As a result, the large differences in outcomes for students from different social backgrounds are likely to persist. This failure of education policy has significant social and economic implications. Much talent is wasted, and health and other social problems tend to be more concentrated in such social groups. Both these have costs.

It also constitutes a major social inequity. It means that low socio-economic and Indigenous students are condemned to accepting lower income and lower status occupations and less influence in society.

High income students will continue to consolidate their access to positions of influence and wealth in society through privileged access to higher education and the higher-paying occupations and status positions in society.

INCREASING THE SOCIAL DIVIDE IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

While the Prime Minister is fond of labelling his critics as consumed by "class envy", his government has implemented the most discriminatory, class-based education policy in recent memory, favouring higher income families and their children.

There is a strong social hierarchy in Australia's school system. Government schools have much higher proportions of low income students than Catholic or independent schools. Independent schools have a much higher proportion of students from high income families than the Catholic sector while Catholic schools have a higher proportion than government schools.

This social hierarchy is compounded by the Howard Government's funding and privatisation policies. The largest increases have gone to the most privileged sector and schools, and with no diminution in fee increases, private schools remain the bastions of relative privilege.

Increased privatisation and competition are likely further to entrench social segregation between sectors and schools, which in turn tends to increase academic segregation because of the strong relationship between socio-economic background and achievement.

Increased academic segregation means increased disparities in average school performance. It is also likely to exacerbate social inequalities in student outcomes as higher concentrations of students from low SES backgrounds in schools tend to lead to lower levels of achievement.

The essential egalitarian values of Australian society are threatened by the transformation of school education being imposed by the Howard Government. Increasing privatisation and competition in schooling are not consistent with the achievement of greater equity, and may well promote further inequality, both in terms of outcomes for groups defined by socio-economic differences and in terms of outcomes for different ethnic groups. Social inequity and social segregation in school education feed social and racial intolerance, division and conflict.

Continuing school education inequalities constitute a serious breach of the Australian value of a "fair go for all".

Private school, PUBLIC PURSE

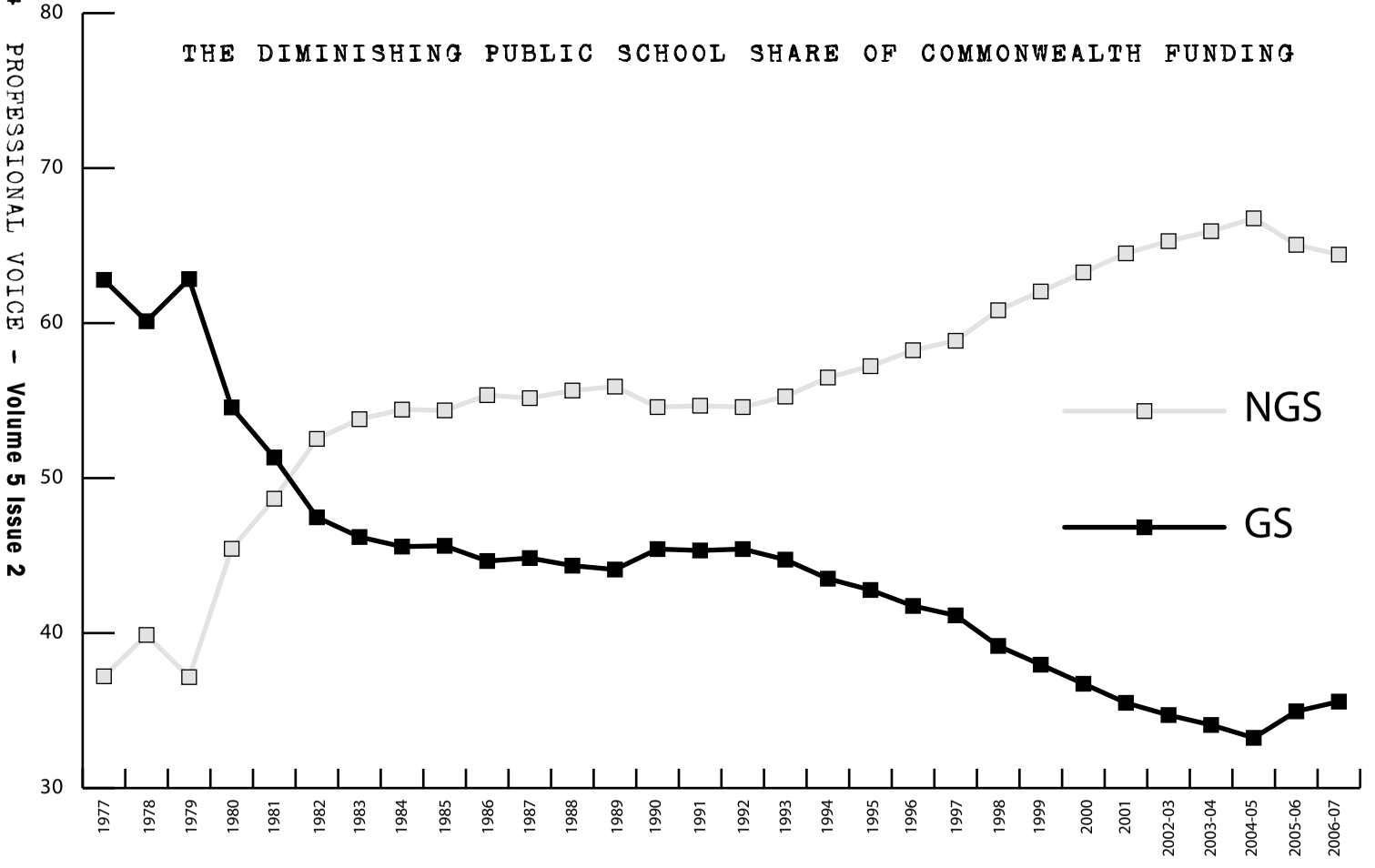
JENNI DEVEREAUX

EVEN BEFORE THE election of the first Howard Government in 1996, private schools in Australia enjoyed one of the highest levels of public funding in the world. Since that time, under Prime Minister John Howard and his education ministers, David Kemp, Brendan Nelson and Julie Bishop, their funding levels have soared to levels which few would have predicted, and the public school share of education funding has declined dramatically.

Critics of these developments in the Australia presided over by successive Howard governments are frequently accused of propagating and perpetuating lies and myths about the Coalition's education policies and programs.

We are told that we are "socially divisive", engaging in "old-fashioned class warfare", fuelled by "the politics of envy".

So let's look at some of the realities of education funding in Australia.


THE DIMINISHING PUBLIC SCHOOL SHARE OF COMMONWEALTH FUNDING
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The graph on the left dramatically depicts the major increases to private schools and corresponding decline in public school share of funding through the Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment (EBA) which was introduced by Dr Kemp in the first Howard Government budget. The EBA saw a loss to public schools of almost $128 million between 1996 and 2001: $11.9m in 1998; $21.1m in 1999; $43.5m in 2000 and $51.3m in 2001.

This funding inequity was intensified with the replacement of the EBA by the socio-economic status (SES) funding model, which benefited all private schools but was heavily biased to the wealthiest schools, in 2001.

The SES funding model uses different rules from the equivalent public school funding systems, which are administered by the state and territory governments. To access SES funding from the Federal Government, all a private school needs to provide is the addresses of its students. Its funding is then determined according to the number of students it draws from areas identified by census codes as disadvantaged.

From 2001 to 2004, private schools increased their funding advantage over public schools from about 7–8 per cent in 2000–01 to 12–17 per cent in 2004. Catholic system school funding improved from 8–9 per cent below government school expenditure in 2000–01 to being on a par with government schools, while other private schools increased their funding advantage over government schools from 31–36 per cent in 2000–01 to 40–44 per cent.

In 1996, public schools received 42 per cent of federal education funding, a figure which is now down to 35 per cent. Budget projections contained in the recent 2007–08 Budget show an estimated $1.7 billion increase in recurrent funding to private schools over the next five years, which will bring their total recurrent funding to $7.5bn. Public schools in contrast will receive only a projected $300m increase over the same period, increasing their funding from $3.1bn to $3.4bn. This means that private schools can expect a funding increase of 30 per cent over the next five years, compared to 10 per cent for public schools. Based on these projections, the private school share of federal education funding will be 69 per cent; the public 31 per cent.

Yet public schools have the most students from low-income families and the least from high-income families. Most students in both Catholic and non-Catholic private schools come from higher-income families, and fewer in both sectors from low-income families. It is not true, as is sometimes asserted, that "Catholic students have as many poor students as public schools".

- Nearly 88 per cent of Indigenous students attend public schools — 4.5 per cent of students in public schools are Indigenous compared to 1.4 per cent in private schools
- 82 per cent of students with disabilities attend public schools — 4.1 per cent of students in public schools have a disability compared with 2 per cent in private schools
- 3.2 per cent of students attending public schools live in remote areas compared to 1.2 per cent for private schools.

FUNDING BLACKMAIL

The federal education agenda entered a new phase with the re-election of the Howard Government in October 2004. Their current agenda was signalled in their policy paper, *The Coalition's Plan for Higher Standards and Values in Schools,* released several days before the October 2004 federal election and legislatively enshrined in the Schools Assistance (*Learning Together — Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity*) Act passed in December 2004.

This sees the Government using its funding powers aggressively to tie all education funding to implementation of its so-called "choice and accountability" agenda. Under this legislation, the states and territories are blackmailed into implementing a number of politically motivated and educationally questionable "accountability" requirements, which range from the publication of student and school information which will be used to pit school against school, to the expansion of standardised testing and the compulsory flying of the Australian flag, as a condition of Commonwealth funding of schools.

One of the most iniquitous aspects of the funding arrangements is the mechanism known as the Average Government Schools' Recurrent Cost (AGSRC), which sees private-school funding directly linked to calculations of how much it costs, on average, to educate a student in a public school. The effect of this is to guarantee bigger increases to private schools as costs rise in public schools; costs associated with educating the majority of students from poorer backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with disabilities, in remote locations, and with special needs of all kinds.

This is despite the fact that a 2002 Senate report stated that Catholic schools then had an income 15.2 per cent higher than the cost of educating public school students, and other private schools had an income 52.2 per cent higher. And that was before the big funding deals Howard negotiated with the Catholic and independent schools sectors in the run up to the October 2004 election.

The way the funding formula works at both Commonwealth and state levels, there is a direct link between the *average* AGSRC and the *actual* amount delivered to private schools. New South Wales Teachers' Federation research officer Sally Edsall argues that the inequity of the AGSRC mechanism is such that it is not unfeasible that some private schools receive more in total government funding than some public schools, because public school figures are averages whereas private school figures are actual.

The Howard Government justifies its inequitable funding policies on a number of grounds. Accompanying their convenient statistics, they say that the states have constitutional responsibility for funding public education, which therefore obliges the Commonwealth to look after the private sector. This conveniently overlooks the fact that the Constitution does not prescribe a role for the Commonwealth in the funding of schools and that the decision to do so has been political rather than constitutional. It also overturns the principle that the primary obligation of governments is to use public funds for public schools; rather than the situation we have now whereby the best-resourced private schools receive more Commonwealth funding than any state school.

Education writer Jane Caro sums it up pointedly when she says, "…challenged about this, the various holders of the federal minister for education title (Kemp, Nelson, Bishop) have washed their hands of it, claiming that state governments have responsibility for public schools, while they look after private. If this is so, the title of the minister should be changed immediately to the minister for private education, to avoid all confusion."

She wonders "how that would go down with the electorate".

The Government also claims that funding increases have been driven by increased enrolments in private schools. Again, this is not true. While total enrolments in private schools have increased over the last decade, the increase is modest by comparison with the magnitude of the enormous increases in private school funding. In reality, funding increases have been driven by Government policy.

The enrolments of some private schools which have received the biggest funding increases have either not increased or have even gone down; yet their funding has still increased. In South Australia, for example, research on enrolments and funding levels in Adelaide's elite private schools since 1996 shows that five of the "Top 10" had enrolment decreases of between 3 and 38 per cent, yet all received funding increases of between 100 per cent and a staggering 320 per cent. Another of the Top 10, which received an increase of 350 per cent, did in fact have an enrolment increase, but it was a much more modest 19 per cent increase.

By contrast, Melbourne's Haileybury College has had a more significant increase in its enrolment, from 1,479 in 2001 to 2,165 in 2005, but again its funding increase is out of all proportion to its enrolment increase: from $1,980,517 in 2001 to $7,207,208 in 2005.

Across Australia, research shows that not only are funding increases out of all proportion to enrolment changes, but also that a high level of Government funding is in fact a precondition for the existence of many non-government schools.

> *This is … no longer state aid but an inbuilt, recurrent guarantee of funding … That is, progressive drift to private schools has not occurred in a free market vacuum; the drift has been made possible by guaranteed permanent federal and state government funding … [of] costs that were once borne exclusively by the private schools themselves* (Aulich and Aulich, 2003).

This is all said to be in the name of supporting parental choice. However, when the largest increases in funding have gone to the wealthiest schools with the highest fees, fees which continue to go up no matter how much money these schools receive from the Government, it is difficult to see how this is genuinely increasing anyone's "choice" or making elite schools more accessible to "average Australians" as the Federal Government would have us believe.

Not only has the increase in non-government school enrolments been significantly lower in percentage terms than the funding increases, it appears to need ever-higher levels of government funding to be sustained and a policy environment in which

the Federal Government itself actively works to undermine confidence in the public school system. The current enrolment figures are an inevitable result of the Federal Government's funding policies, which have starved public schools of resources while massively increasing the resource base of private schools.

Despite the mantra of parent choice, in reality, private schools choose their students. They are "exclusive" to the extent that they are free to select and exclude on whatever basis they choose, be it parental income, religion, beliefs or academic criteria. The preferred choice of the majority — to attend well-resourced public schools — is being undermined by the Coalition line that "good parents pay for private schools for their children: the rest deserve what they get".

The public education system was founded on the democratic principles of being free, compulsory, universal and secular. Most educators know that working together for the good of all children is at the heart of democracy, yet Howard and his government deliberately foster individual self-interest and an "escape from public schools at all costs" mentality. The ongoing privileging of the private education sector over the public sector, and the continuing attack on our public schools and teachers seriously undermines Australia as a genuinely democratic society. Concepts like choice and equality are being redefined "as an individual's consumer right with little regard to the quality of choices or to the community's responsibility to all its members". This stands in opposition to the democratic goal of providing a quality secular education for all children.

Old wine in new bottles

The English experience

JOHN BANGS

TEACHERS IN ENGLAND will have noted with interest that Australia's Federal Education Minister, Julie Bishop, approvingly cited Tony Blair earlier this year as she outlined the reforms she would like to see in education.

After 10 years of a Labour government, how much has changed in England's public schools system? If we look closely at the reforms introduced under Tony Blair, we can see that many of them actually had their roots in the Thatcher era — and those reforms, which appear to appeal most strongly to the Howard Government in Australia, are the ones which the NUT would argue have been least successful.

If there is a message for a reforming government in Australia, it is that the most effective changes seen in the UK have not been to do with the choice or diversity agendas, but have related to investment, professionalism and teacher autonomy.

The past 10 years in England are supposed to have seen the most fundamental reform program in education in 60 years. But, despite the sense that the education service has experienced a blizzard of initiatives under Tony Blair in the past decade, there are undercurrents of the Thatcher and Major education reforms of the late 1980s and mid-90s in much of the current education debate.

For example, there is little difference between the 400 Academies run by private sponsors proposed by Mr Blair recently, and the grant-maintained school status

introduced by the Conservative Party in the 1980s — except, ironically, that the Conservative Government was less keen in 1996 on the use of outside sponsors.

Testing and assessment links to school performance tables were introduced nearly 20 years ago. This approach has failed to raise standards. In fact, all the evidence from research reviews, such as that conducted by the Assessment Reform Group in England, has shown that groups of pupils, such as those who lack confidence or who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, suffer in their confidence and learning from testing.

Numerous studies, including research commissioned by the National Union of Teachers from Cambridge University (MacBeath and Galton, 2002, 2004, 2006), have shown that testing radically narrows the curriculum to that which is tested and encourages teaching to the test.

Despite the evidence against "high stakes" testing and school performance tables which has accumulated over 20 years, the current UK government has yet to introduce radical reforms to this damaging system. Indeed, the Labour Government, when it was elected, introduced a system of national targets based on test results on top of existing school performance tables. The targets have been arbitrarily set by the Labour Government without any prognosis of whether schools could reach them. Failure by schools collectively to reach those targets actually led to the resignation of a previous Secretary of State for Education.

Teacher organisations have not been quiet on the issue. All the teacher organisations in England have rallied together to call for a radical review of National Curriculum testing, national targets and school performance tables.

Pressure is also building from elsewhere to change the current system. Ken Boston, chief executive of England's Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (and a former director general of the Department of Education in NSW), has called for radical reform of the testing system.

High stakes accountability, whether through tests, targets or school performance tables, has been accompanied by high stakes school inspections. Introduced in 1994, the Office for Standards and Education (Ofsted) has conducted regular inspections of schools. School failure has been punished by principals losing their jobs and sometimes by schools closing.

The range of overlapping, high stakes accountability systems in England has led to high teacher turnover and, in particular, a shortage of future school leaders. The NUT has, however, been pressing consistently over the years for positive alternatives.

In 1996, we saw the launch of *Schools Speak for Themselves,* commissioned by the NUT: Professor John MacBeath's examination of whether the Scottish model of school self-evaluation could be adopted for England and Wales. It captured the imagination of David Bell, the then chief education officer of Newcastle local education authority. He introduced the self-evaluation model into school inspection when he became Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, in charge of Ofsted. The nature of self-evaluation and its relationship to the *New Relationship with Schools* agenda is still an issue.

Yet, there has been fundamental change. Until now, successive Labour governments have injected around 5 per cent annual growth into English financial settlements. These additional resources have made a visible difference, particularly to the previously dilapidated school building stock and to schools' capability in information and communications technology. In fact, the impact of this qualitative change has influenced the Conservative Opposition to such an extent that major reductions in education expenditure are not on their current agenda.

There is another change. Ten years ago, the global pressure to expand the UK's knowledge and skills base was much less than it is now. Today, China and India have invested massively in their education systems. The growing awareness that the UK might learn from other education systems has led to the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) becoming a key reference point for debate about that works.

Nowhere was this more evident than during the passage of the Education and Inspections Bill. The Government had identified examples of education systems in its White Paper, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*, which it believed illustrated the benefits of choice and diversity. One such example was the Swedish education system.

During the debate on the Bill, the NUT highlighted Sweden's own National Assessment Agency report, which found that "choice and diversity" of school provision led to social segregation of young people from minority ethnic and socially deprived backgrounds. It argued that the OECD's PISA report had highlighted Finland as the top performer; a performer which had all the characteristics of a classical comprehensive education system without choice and diversity of provision and without a high stakes accountability system, including national tests, targets and punitive inspection.

The NUT's own education statement, *Bringing Down the Barriers*, has had a powerful influence on the debate. The statement drew heavily on international comparisons and gained further traction by being validated by Professor Peter Mortimore, former director of the University of London's Institute of Education, in his own evaluation of the English education system, *Which Way Forward?*

This kind of discourse, which linked international developments integrally with debates on the future of education in this country, would not have taken place in 1996.

And how has the teaching profession changed over the past 10 years? Teachers and support staff number have increased to an all-time high and, undoubtedly, teachers are the best trained in generations. Yet, no-one could argue that a parallel concept of a profession which defines its autonomy and expertise has been fully developed. All the evidence remains that the Government still does not trust the teaching profession to deliver the standards that it expects without coercive accountability mechanisms.

The situation is changing, however. There is now a debate taking place in the Government and among the opposition parties about how much autonomy should be given to teachers. The current testing system is being questioned, even if the questions have not been answered. Even the Conservative Party has asked whether teachers should be released from the "constraints under which they currently work" in exchange

for stronger self-regulation.

There are still "known unknowns", as a discredited American secretary of state put it. The former chancellor, Gordon Brown, who has succeeded Tony Blair, has already signalled some of his priorities, such as a focus on adult skills and the needs of families — but not all of them.

Ten years ago, achieving a self-regulating and autonomous teaching profession was only a glint in the eyes of teacher organisations. By the next UK election, issues of autonomy, central control and the nature of a self-confident profession may, yet again, dominate the educational terrain.

Knights & Knaves:

When accountability goes too far

WARWICK MANSELL

IT SEEMS THAT whoever wins the forthcoming federal election in Australia, schools can expect to be subjected to greater accountability in the form of national tests, league tables, and some form of performance pay.

What drives these proposals for greater teacher accountability? And at what point does it stop being a driver of school improvement and become a burden on the system, one that distorts and damages the education our children receive?

Some answers to this can be found by looking at the English experience of tables and testing, a version of which politicians of both main parties seem intent on introducing to Australian schools.

At their heart lies a fundamental question about why teachers do what they do. Are they motivated principally by an altruistic drive to serve their pupils? Or are they more selfish than that?

It is a question which English politicians have never properly resolved, even as they created an education system structured around tests, results, inspections and league tables — a system I have named "hyper-accountability", to signify its effectiveness in signalling to teachers that improving exam scores is their *raison d'être*.

I want to show how Government uncertainty about teachers' aims helps to explain many of the damaging effects of the results obsession in English schools.

To do so, I am going to analyse arguably the leading text describing the theoretical framework on which Britain's New Labour Government has built its reform of the public services.

Julian Le Grand's 2003 treatise, *Motivation, Agency, and Public Policy: Of Knights and Knaves, Pawns and Queens,* sets out a useful set of metaphors, which are helpful in seeking to understand the web of power relationships in education, health and other services.

Although postdating by eight years Tony Blair's accession to Downing Street, it explains the thinking behind English public service reforms.

Le Grand is the Richard Titmuss Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Though hardly a household name, he is an extremely influential figure. He was the British Prime Minister's adviser on public service reform, specialising in health, from 2003 to 2005.

In his landmark work, Le Grand draws on thinkers including David Hume and Adam Smith to establish a shorthand for discussing the aims of public sector professionals. The central question is whether these workers should be thought of as "knights", motivated mainly by a desire to do the right thing for their pupils, patients or whomever they serve, or as "knaves", guided only by self-interest.

On this, Le Grand says, much hangs. If we could be sure that all our teachers always acted in their pupils' best interests, and that doctors always served the public good, there would be little need to monitor their performance. These "knights" would simply be trusted as professionals and left to get on with it. Le Grand says this was the central characteristic of British public services before the Thatcherite reforms of the 1980s.

Margaret Thatcher reversed this position, he argues. It was dangerous to assume that professionals always put those they were meant to serve first, she believed. In fact, they were more "knaves" than "knights", driven largely to protect their own interests. Thus Thatcher's neo-liberal administration, and others like it elsewhere, implemented reforms designed to use market mechanisms to put pressure on these individuals to act in the public interest.

Le Grand draws back from characterising public sector workers as overwhelmingly selfish, or "knavish", arguing that there is no clear evidence for this and that in fact it does not matter. Governments need simply to design systems which give public servants incentives to improve performance. These incentives should be structured so that there should never be a reason for a selfish individual to act against the public interest.

Put another way, such systems would be designed to give teachers self-interested reasons to improve, while not compromising the aims of those "knights" who were naturally driven to help others.

Le Grand believes that the structure by which teachers are held to account by the public for their performance fulfils these criteria. I want to show why he is wrong.

His analysis is undoubtedly powerful. The pre-Thatcher era in England was too trusting of teachers. It seems undeniable that simply assuming that every professional

will act in the public interest at all times carries major risks. But hyper-accountability, in which teachers are told through league tables, Government targets, inspections and performance pay that they must improve test results, goes to the other extreme. This is hardly risk-free. In fact, it is highly damaging.

Le Grand argues that if the public or government is ignorant about people's motivations, it might be better to try to design "robust" incentive structures. He writes: "Such structures would not be dependent on a particular assumption concerning motivation and hence are robust whatever assumption is made." So politicians put pressure on teachers to improve results at ages seven, 11, 14, 16 and 18 because those results are claimed to be important for the pupils.

That is, test results are seen to be a proxy for good education. For pupils, it is claimed, good test scores are the key to their future success. Effectively, by being held to account for pupil performance through test scores, teachers are forced to put their pupils' interests first.

Unfortunately, life is not that simple. In reality, my evidence from nearly five years reporting on the implications of hyper-accountability in schools shows that teachers' and pupils' interests have not been aligned.

The claimed matching of public servants' and citizens' needs — in this case, the alleged common interest teachers and pupils have in test scores rising — is a mirage.

Pupil results at 11 and 14 are not important, in themselves, to those children. A teacher who chooses not to pay much attention to them, but instead concentrates on providing her charges with a good grounding in their subjects which will help them in the long-term, is serving them well, in my view. She is not, however, under hyper-accountability, helping her own cause.

Hyper-accountability says her best tactic is to coach those children endlessly in the precise requirements of particular tests, for that is the best route to good results in the short term. Elsewhere in my book, I report on widespread concerns that test scores can and have been improved by dubious tactics by schools, many of which have little to do with education and some of which border on the corrupt.

Primary schools, a survey by the Government's testing regulator showed, spend on average almost half of their teaching week on test preparation in the four-month run up to exams for 11-year-olds, on which these schools are ranked in league tables.

Much of this work focuses on test technique, rather than teaching for understanding. At the next set of major exams at 14, the situation is just as dire, with most of the school year devoted to test preparation. Pupils are assessed on two scenes from a Shakespeare play, stipulated in advance, for example, and schools spend months drilling their pupils on what to expect.

Organisations including the Royal Society (Britain's learned body for scientists), most teachers' subject associations and the unions, would argue that it regrettable that teachers follow these approaches. Dr Ken Boston, the exams regulator, also told me the time spent on test preparation was often excessive.

But it is also highly understandable.

For a teacher, under pressure to improve her test results come what may, the approach documented above is the one which self-interest says she should adopt. It is what she should do as a knave. But it is not knightly behaviour, I believe. The knightly thing to do would be to downplay test preparation and teach for long-term understanding and engagement.

In relation to the exams English students take as they near the end of schooling — GCSEs at 16 and A-levels at 18 — the situation is more complex, because the results of these courses are very important to the student in their own right. But the question is whether pupils and the nation as a whole are well-served by a teaching force which must now prioritise results above all else. If nationally grades go up because of this pre-occupation, the individual student is entitled to ask whether he or she really benefits, since employers and universities will simply ask for higher marks as grade competition becomes more intense. The cost, however, is clear, as English students have to sit through class after class of exam preparation. I sat in, for example, on a seminar in which a senior examiner for French GCSE told teachers that the best way to get pupils through their oral assessment was to tell them what the questions and answers were and get them learning suggested responses up to two years in advance.

So the incentives guiding what teachers should do if they were acting in a knightly way, and what they feel compelled to do through self-interest, are now dramatically out of line, I believe. This means Le Grand's other point — that it does not matter whether we assume professionals are knaves or knights — becomes fundamentally important.

For in fact, the assumptions matter hugely. Hyper-accountability, I believe, only works in a world in which, left to their own devices, most teachers would act knavishly. All the discussion above might not matter if, in fact, most teachers were actually motivated, without hyper-accountability, to act selfishly.

It could be argued that such a strong monitoring system as this, though flawed, might be needed because without it, the situation would be even worse. Just left to their own devices, teachers would simply not bother helping their pupils achieve anything at all. Hyper-accountability, then, if this were true, has helped them raise their game.

An alternative reading, however, is that, the typical teacher, left to get on with it, would actually do the right thing for her pupils.

Hyper-accountability, then, could only be understood as justifiable if it were a regrettable, but necessary, reaction to a situation in which most teachers would otherwise let down their pupils.

The relative proportions of knights and knaves is hugely significant. If it were the case that 80 per cent of teachers, without hyper-accountability, would do their best for their pupils, hyper-accountability might not be so necessary.

If the figure were 45 per cent, its mechnanisms would be adjudged to be of more value. It might be seen to be essential.

Which scenario is right? Are most teachers mainly knights, or knaves? Le Grand

says there is no clear evidence either way, and he reiterated this in an interview with me in November 2006.

This is appalling. To put it simply, the government has assembled an incredibly complex monitoring mechanism by which to check teachers are doing their job correctly. Yet it lacks any robust evidence on whether they need this monitoring.

As Le Grand pointed out, I cannot, of course, prove that teachers are not overwhelmingly knavish in outlook. But neither can the Government, which has set up this system, prove that they are. It is astonishing that such an elaborate structure for holding teachers to account, which has so many clear downsides compared to a situation where teachers could be trusted to do what was right for their pupils, has been imposed without a properly researched understanding of what drives these professionals.

If most teachers actually are knights, who even without monitoring would do their best for their pupils, hyper-accountability is doing huge harm in English schools.

Recognising and enhancing teacher effectiveness

LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND

AS THE NATION'S attention increasingly focuses on the outcomes of education, policymakers have undertaken a wide range of reforms to improve schools, ranging from new standards and tests to redesigned schools, new curricula, and new instructional strategies.

One important lesson from these efforts has been the recurrent finding that teachers are the fulcrum that determines whether any school initiative tips toward success or failure. Every aspect of school reform depends on highly-skilled teachers.

Reformers have learned that successful programs or curricula cannot be transported from one school to another where teachers do not know how to use them well. Raising graduation requirements has proved to be of little use where there are not enough qualified teachers prepared to teach more advanced subjects well. Mandates for more maths and science courses are badly implemented when there are chronic shortages of teachers prepared to teach these subjects. Course content is diluted and more students fail when teachers are not adequately prepared. In the final analysis, there are no policies that can improve schools if the people in them are not armed with the knowledge and skills they need.

Furthermore, teachers need even more sophisticated abilities to teach the growing number of public school students who have fewer educational resources at home,

those who are new English language learners, and those who have distinctive learning needs or difficulties.

An aspect of this transformation is developing the means to evaluate and recognise teacher effectiveness throughout the career, for the purposes of licensing, hiring, and granting tenure; for providing needed professional development; and for recognising and rewarding expert teachers. A goal of such recognition is to keep talented teachers in the profession and to identify those who can take on roles as mentors, coaches, and teacher leaders who develop curriculum and professional learning opportunities, who redesign schools, and who, in some cases, become principals.

Some policymakers are also interested in tying compensation to judgments about teacher effectiveness, either by differentiating wages or by linking such judgments to additional responsibilities that carry additional stipends or salary. An integrated approach connects these goals with a professional development system to create a career ladder.

EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND TEACHING

It is important to distinguish between the related but distinct ideas of teacher quality and teaching quality. *Teacher quality* might be thought of as the bundle of personal traits, skills, and understandings an individual brings to teaching, including dispositions to behave in certain ways.

Research on teacher effectiveness, based on teacher ratings and student achievement gains, has found the following qualities important:

- Strong general intelligence and verbal ability
- Strong content knowledge
- Knowledge of content pedagogy, in particular how to use hands-on learning techniques and develop higher-order thinking skills
- An understanding of learning and development — including how to assess and scaffold learning, how to support students with learning difficulties, and how to support learning for those not proficient in the language of instruction
- Adaptive expertise that allows teachers to make judgments about what is likely to work in a given context.

Although less directly studied, most educators would include in this list a set of dispositions to support learning for all students, to teach in a fair and unbiased manner, to be willing and able to adapt instruction to help students succeed, to strive to continue to learn and improve, and to be willing and able to collaborate with other professionals and parents in the service of individual students and the school as a whole.

Teaching quality has to do with strong instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn. Such instruction meets the demands of the discipline, the goals of instruction, and the needs of students in a particular context.

Teaching quality is in part a function of teacher quality — teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions — but it is also strongly influenced by the context of instruction. A "high-quality" teacher may not be able to offer high quality instruction in a context where there is a mismatch in terms of the demands of the situation and his or her knowledge and skills; for example, an able teacher asked to teach subject matter

for which s/he is not prepared may teach poorly; a teacher who is prepared and effective at the high school level may be unable to teach small children. A high-quality teacher in one circumstance may not be a high-quality teacher for another.

A second major consideration in the quality of teaching has to do with the conditions for instruction. If high-quality teachers lack strong curriculum materials, necessary supplies and equipment, reasonable class sizes, and the opportunity to plan with other teachers to create appropriate lessons and a coherent curriculum, the quality of teaching may be suboptimal, even if the quality of teachers is high.

Many conditions of teaching are out of the control of teachers and depend on the administrative and policy systems in which they work.

Strong teacher quality may heighten the probability of strong teaching quality, but does not guarantee it. Initiatives to develop teaching quality must consider not only how to identify, reward, and use teachers' skills and abilities but how to develop teaching contexts that enable good practice on the part of teachers.

EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING

Interest in including evidence of student learning in evaluations of teachers has been growing. After all, if student learning is the primary goal of teaching, it appears straightforward that it ought to be taken into account in determining a teacher's competence.

At the same time, the literature includes many cautions about the problems of basing teacher evaluations substantially on student test scores. In addition to the fact that curriculum-specific tests are not typically available in many teaching areas, these include concerns about overemphasis on teaching to the test at the expense of other kinds of learning; problems of attributing student gains to specific teachers; and disincentives for teachers to serve high-need students, for example, those who do not yet speak English and those who have special education needs (and whose test scores therefore may not accurately reflect their learning). This could inadvertently reinforce current practices in which inexperienced teachers are disproportionately assigned to the neediest students, or schools discourage high-need students from entering or staying.

At the same time, some innovative career ladder and compensation programs (in Rochester, New York and Denver, Colorado, for example) have found valid ways to include evidence of student learning in teacher evaluations.

THE USE OF VALUE-ADDED ACHIEVEMENT TEST SCORES TO EVALUATE TEACHERS

Because of a desire to recognise and reward teachers' contributions to student learning, a prominent proposal is to use *value-added student achievement test scores* from US state or district standardised tests as a key measure of teachers' effectiveness.

The value-added concept is important, as it reflects a desire to acknowledge teachers' contributions to students' progress.

However, there are serious technical and educational challenges associated with using this approach to make strong inferences about *individual* teacher effectiveness, especially for high-stakes purposes, as opposed to studying the effectiveness of

groups of teachers in a research context.

Among other things, for example, when researchers are aggregating data about large groups of teachers for research rather than decision-making purposes, they make various assumptions about how to treat missing student data, which students to include, or how to choose among models using different statistical controls that change the results of their estimates. They need not worry whether their decisions disadvantage particular teachers.

Indeed, the emergent strategies being used to analyse student learning data to assess potential teacher effectiveness produce very different results depending on the different decisions researchers make about how to handle the data. Leading researchers agree that, while it is useful for research purposes, value-added modelling is not appropriate as a primary measure for evaluating individual teachers.

The career ladder or compensation systems that do use student achievement data only do so alongside evidence from standards-based evaluation systems, teacher performance assessments, or other evidence about teacher qualifications and practices. Often these data come from classroom, school, or district assessments rather than state tests. These data are triangulated and interpreted to understand a teacher's practice in a multi-faceted way, rather than using a single measure to draw inferences that may be problematic.

USING OTHER EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING

The fact that value-added analysis of test score data in large-scale testing systems is not always appropriate or available does not mean that states or districts cannot recognise and reward excellent teachers who produce strong student learning, or create incentives for them to help other teachers and serve the neediest students. It is possible to use other measures of student learning in evaluations of teaching, sometimes pre- and post-tests of learning conducted by districts or schools, or even learning evidence that is assembled by the teacher him or herself.

Such evidence can be drawn from classroom assessments and documentation, including pre- and post-test measures of student learning in specific courses or curriculum areas, evidence of student accomplishments in relation to teaching activities, and analysis of standardised test results, where appropriate. The evidence can be assembled in a teaching portfolio by the teacher, demonstrating and explaining the progress of students on a wide range of learning outcomes in ways that take students' starting points and characteristics into account.

In some schools, teachers use their own autumn and spring classroom assessments (or pre- and post-unit assessments) as a way of gauging student progress. As part of a portfolio of evidence, these typically offer more authentic measures of student learning. They are also more likely to capture the effects of a particular teacher's instruction and be available for most or all students.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

Efforts to institute versions of merit pay or career ladders in education have faltered many times before – in the 1920s, the 1950s, and most recently in the 1980s, when 47 US states introduced versions of merit pay or career ladders, all of which failed

by the early 1990s.

The reasons for failure have included faulty evaluation systems, concerns about bias and discrimination, pitfalls of strategies that rewarded individual teachers while undermining collaborative organisational efforts, dysfunctional incentives that caused unintended negative side-effects for serving all children, and lack of public will to continue increased compensation.

The initiatives detailed in this paper demonstrate that systems can provide recognition for demonstrated knowledge, skill, and expertise that move the mission of the school forward and reward excellent teachers for continuing to teach, without abandoning many of the important objectives of the current salary schedule — equitable treatment, incentives for further learning, and objective means for determining pay. Promising beginnings have been made in some states and local districts, using multiple measures of performance, typically considering three kinds of evidence in combination with one another:

- Teachers' *performance on teaching assessments*
- Evaluation of *teaching practices*
- Contributions to *growth in student learning.*

All three of these strategies are used in Denver, Rochester and Minnesota. These systems demonstrate that rewarding teachers for deep knowledge of subjects, additional knowledge in meeting special kinds of student and school needs, and high levels of performance measured against professional teaching standards can encourage teachers to continue to learn needed skills and enhance the expertise available within schools.

CONCLUSION

Initiatives to measure and recognise teacher effectiveness appear to be timely, as the press for improved student achievement is joined to an awareness of the importance of teachers in contributing to student learning. Such initiatives will have the greatest pay-off if they are embedded in systems that also develop greater teacher competence through mentoring and coaching around the standards and through roles for teachers to help their colleagues and their schools improve.

Initiatives will have a greater likelihood of survival and success if they also build confidence in the validity of the measures and create incentives for teachers to work with colleagues and teach the neediest students. Federal, state, and local partnerships to create increasingly valid measures of teacher effectiveness and to support the development of innovative systems for recognising and using expert teachers can make a substantial difference in the recruitment and retention of teachers to the places they are most needed and, ultimately, in the learning of students.

Extracted from Darling-Hammond, Linda, *Recognising and Enhancing Teacher Effectiveness; A Policymaker's Guide,* (written for the Council of Chief State School Officers), 2007.

Teacher education: the challenges ahead

SUE WILLIS

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, preparing for a speech at the graduation of new teachers, I began to jot down any suggestions I heard or read in the public sphere about what teachers needed to be "trained" to address. Within a few weeks my list included rural isolation, gambling, alcohol and drug abuse, peanut allergies and epileptic attacks, the shortage of mathematicians, understanding migrants and migration, too few males in teaching, financial literacy, the depression epidemic, autism, good parenting, "Australian" values (but not ideology), difficulties associated with gender identification, bullying, inactivity in children and that they were getting fat from drinking too much orange juice.

But wait — have I left anything out? Oh yes, of course: literacy, numeracy and the history of great men.

Even an experienced teacher could not be on top of all this, let alone a beginning teacher. And the list does not include the basic or extended education of the full range of children in Australia's schools in science, the arts, information technology, and so-on. Nevertheless, there is little on the list that could not reasonably be considered as part of the job of education. The problem is that it is *all* too important and it is *all* too much. Teacher education is supposed to produce teachers who can do and be everything and who can do so from their very first day of teaching.

On the whole, Australian teachers and Australian teacher education rise to these challenges. In 2005, appearing before a House of Representatives inquiry into teacher education, the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) began:

> *We believe that Australia has reason to be proud of its teaching profession, that it is no accident that Australian teachers, often young and relatively inexperienced, are in demand internationally. They are enthusiastic, knowledgeable, skilful, flexible and committed and they handle diversity and complexity well. And these teachers are graduates of a wide range of teacher education programs offered in Australian universities, representing a variety of educational philosophies and models of teacher education.*

The report of the inquiry, *Top of the Class*, tabled in February this year, surprised many by presenting a generally positive view of teacher education:

> *It is important to state that the teacher education system is not in crisis. It currently serves Australia very well but could do better*.

While the report was not always flattering — indeed, at times quite critical — the tone was positive and constructive, encouraging and challenging us to find and remove those aspects of our practice that prevented us from being "top of the class".

BAD PRESS

Unfortunately, the positive tone and fair conclusions of the House of Representatives report has not, on the whole, been reflected in the tenor of commentary about teacher education elsewhere or indeed by the Government itself. The Federal Minister of Education did not even comment upon the report, let alone endorse it. The report was expected to generate a lot of media attention but did not; even-handed news is not interesting it seems.

The constant barrage of bad press for teaching and teacher education in recent years is often couched in terms of improving standards, even in the face of evidence that Australian does very well in international comparisons. This has a number of worrying consequences, not least for applications for teacher education which are very responsive to morale in the profession and the tone of commentary.

During the 1990s, schools, particularly state schools and teachers, were constantly and publicly criticised, and every social ill — imagined or real — placed at their door. Applications for teacher education fell dramatically and as a result so too did the minimum entry-level achievement of students. The late 90s, however, saw something of a mood swing in the public commentary; politicians and some of the media started talking up teaching, resources in schools started to improve and there were commitments to decreasing student/staff ratios. There was an almost immediate impact on applications to teacher education.

We do not have a problem attracting people into teacher education at present, and can largely select students for whom teaching is their first preference and whose achievements give them other options. As a result, the academic quality of entrants has increased dramatically and measurably.

Unfortunately, we are undergoing a new surge of teacher and teacher education-bashing and we should all be concerned at the impact it may have upon the attractiveness of the profession. Teachers do not generally ask a lot: respect, recognition of a job well done and sufficient resources to do the job as well as they know how. Teacher educators ask for much the same. It is the least they have a right to expect.

DIVERSITY AND STANDARDS

Although overall levels of achievement for entrants to teacher education have improved over recent years, the range of students in teacher education programs is considerable, and there is wide variation in entry requirements. This is no bad thing. In conjunction with the various pathways into teacher education, it provides the flexibility needed to address equity and access issues and to ensure a diversity of people in the profession.

Top of the Class suggested that the blanket imposition of entry requirements for teacher education (in literacy and numeracy in particular) was likely to have an adverse impact upon diversity and the recruitment of teachers from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. It suggested that exit standards from teacher education were more critical and that diagnostic processes accompanied by special support programs were the preferred approach. It recommended a diversity fund to which universities could apply to develop and implement support programs. Instead, in the last budget it was foreshadowed that from 2009 institutions will be required to meet literacy and numeracy standards that have yet to be established. No diversity fund or any other support to enable this to happen has been suggested.

Diversity among student teachers implies the need for a diversity of programs. In our view, there is no single best model of teacher education. Different approaches will suit different students, different locations and contexts, and different circumstances. Indeed, the quality and sustainability of the teaching profession is as dependent upon diversity of entrants and programs as any system. Schools will be much more vibrant, productive and innovative places, and children's education the richer, if the teachers come from a variety of backgrounds and educational experiences and philosophies. Diversity of students and programs cannot mean, however, that anything goes. We must be prepared to stand accountable for our practice and the outcomes of our programs.

TEACHER ACCREDITATION

Around 13 years ago, the ACDE persuaded the Commonwealth Government to fund an investigation into the development of a national system of accreditation. It led to a report, *Preparing a Profession* (ACDE, 1998), and a strategy that was practical but demanding. Unfortunately, it was before its time, and the necessary support from governments was not forthcoming.

A decade later, national accreditation is back on the agenda. The ACDE supports it. The states and territories through their registration boards support it. The Commonwealth supports it. *Top of the Class* recommended it. The general population, if it cares at all, appears to support it.

And so you would think that it would be an easy matter. Not at all. Instead we have

two opposing parties, each with their own view of what it should look like and who should control it. One of these parties is Teaching Australia, funded and owned by the Commonwealth; the other is AFTRAA, the Australasian Forum of Teacher Registration and Accreditation Authorities, a sub-committee of the state, territory and federal education ministers' council MCEETYA.

The states and territories have constitutional responsibility for teachers and schools, and consequently for registration of teachers and accreditation of courses; but the Commonwealth funds teacher education. The last federal budget made it clear that Canberra is prepared to use funding as a lever to force teacher education faculties to do its bidding. We could easily find ourselves having to go through both national and state accreditation processes with no guarantee they will be the same or even consistent.

THE SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Clearly, the placement of students in schools to develop and practise their teaching skills is a critical part of a teacher education course. Many universities however have significant difficulty delivering the existing number of days of placement. Crisis has been the operative word in a number of places. As *Top of the Class* pointed out, "while universities are required to provide practicum placements for their students, there is no obligation on employing authorities or schools to offer places" (p 70).

This is a major challenge for teacher education and one that is about to become harder. Inexplicably, the last federal budget allocated funding for placements contingent upon a minimum 120 days (for three and four-year courses) and 60 days (for one and two-year courses). We are bewildered by this imposition, which has no evidentiary basis that we can identify. Neither *Top of the Class* nor the report of the literacy inquiry, *Teaching Reading*, recommended an increase in placement days; indeed the latter made no recommendations at all pertaining to the practicum. Both reports pointed to the quality and the nature of students' experiences on placement as the critical issue. This budget, focusing on quantity instead, will make it even more difficult to provide a quality experience.

We are also concerned that many students, particularly on one-year graduate diploma courses, already struggle to afford the amount of placement required. More than 40 per cent are aged over 30 and often are career changers with family commitments. Many need to take leave from paid work and/or pay for full-time childcare while they are on placement. For some, 12 weeks of placement per year will be the final straw. All of this might be acceptable were there evidence that increasing the number of days' placement would improve the quality of teachers.

Even with considerable good will, schools will struggle to meet the additional demands upon them, and universities risk being unable to deliver the dramatically increased number of school placement days. Even institutions that currently are compliant may find it increasingly difficult to find placements as the pressure on schools increases. In a time of looming teacher shortage, we could find ourselves unable to graduate otherwise successful students who have done their part and who would meet existing state requirements.

OVERALL FUNDING FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Top of the Class identified teacher education as badly under-funded, with many submissions saying it was the single most important issue facing the inquiry.

It suggested that teacher education could progress little without improved resources and recommended that education units be "funded at the same level as that applying to the Foreign Language, Visual and Performing Arts cluster" (p 113) and, furthermore, that the Government "commission an examination of the cost of providing practicum and increase the amount of the loading for practicum to fully reflect its costs" and "calculate the amount of funding for the practicum component on the basis of the quantum of placement rather than taught load" (p 117).

None of these recommendations has been supported; indeed education is now relatively less well off than it was. Four years ago, education was funded at the same rate as social studies and behavioural sciences. Now, as a result of being declared an area of national priority, education can charge students only the minimum HECS and therefore earns only 92 per cent of social studies and behavioural sciences ($1000 less per student). Had it been placed in the cluster recommended, Commonwealth contributions would be almost $2000 more.

A placement fund of up to $450 per student has been set up but in many cases will not cover the additional cost of the placements. For example, a graduate diploma program currently offering 45 days of placement would have to find an extra 15 days, costing approximately $400 in teacher payments alone. In preparing data for the House of Representatives inquiry, we estimated that in 2005 the average cost of 50 days' placement on a graduate diploma was around $2500, including teacher payments, placement costs and two visits from university staff. $450 is not even in the ballpark!

In February, with the tabling of a substantial, thoughtful and well-researched bipartisan report that had taken almost three years to produce, we were optimistic about the future. Six months later, that optimism appears misplaced — the challenges remain but the support and encouragement are less forthcoming.

We believe that high quality teacher education is critical for Australia's future and are committed to working cooperatively with a wide range of partners to deliver this. We are actively engaged in progressing a national approach to the accreditation of teacher education courses. We are also, with the support of the Carrick Institute, scoping the possibility of a national data repository for teacher education directed at quality enhancement for the sector. We believe, however, that successive budget and regulatory decisions of recent years have undermined our capacity to deliver.

KEN LEITHWOOD

Teacher Quality, Teaching Reading and Performance Pay

INTERVIEW BY JOHN GRAHAM

THIS IS THE first part of an interview with Kenneth Leithwood, Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy at the Ontario Institute of Educational Studies at University of Toronto. It was conducted during his visit to Australia as a guest of the Victorian Educational Leadership Consortium (VELC) in conjunction with the Department of Education and Deakin University. He ran a number of workshops for VELC on distributed leadership, teacher emotional intelligence and parent engagement.

JG: There is a major debate occurring here and in other countries about teacher quality. What would you identify as the main issues in that debate?

KL: Let me identify three of them — you can decide if they are main or not. I think that one of these is a definitional issue. What we mean when we say "quality" is closely aligned with how we measure it. I think it is kind of wrapped up in what we believe is good teaching and that is probably the most fundamental issue. Are we really disagreeing whether we have quality or not, or is this a disagreement about what good teaching means?

There was an editorial in your local paper this morning for example, in which the idea of constructivist learning was dismissed as having no implications for teaching. It suggests that if kids learn through some sort of construction of knowledge on their own part, this means that teachers don't do anything. Well, in fact, that's nowhere close to my understanding of what we do if we believe that kids construct through knowledge. Even though the idea of construction or constructivism has a number of different meanings associated with it, the largest amount of evidence we have at the present time supports the idea that kids learn by building on what they already know. They make sense of new things by mapping them on to what they already know or they adapt their existing ideas in some fashion.

I think that there cannot be too much debate about the fact that learning is a constructive process. Much of the time kids adapt and accommodate new ideas by bouncing their understandings off other people, whether it's a teacher or another child. New ideas are often accommodated by working them out with someone whose own mind is a little closer to their own, which would be other kids. We also appreciate that learning is often situated, which is to say that less transfer is required if people learn something in the context in which their knowledge is going to be applied.

JG: The teacher becomes the learning facilitator in these circumstances?

KL: Teaching is facilitating that construction in many different ways. In contrast, the kind of teaching that comes out of the behaviourist notion of learning for the most part doesn't represent the complexity of what people are thinking at all. So, the debate right now could be framed in terms of do we as an education system want to adopt the behaviouristic or constructivist view of learning.

Now clearly, the editorial writer today would say behaviour is the most favoured way of explaining learning and what that means is that I'm going to lecture the kids, I'm going to provide them with that knowledge, I'm going to do a lot of drill and practice, I'm going to reinforce their activities and at the end of the day they will have learned by rote. Anybody who is trying to do it a different way is engaged in poor quality teaching. I find very little support for that view of the world in any research that I am involved with.

So, I think that the definitional question is important when you are making a judgement about whether quality teaching is going on or not. If you are observing in a classroom where the teacher's view is what I'm trying to do is foster deep understanding on the part of the child by making sure they can understand new ideas in a way that is consistent with their current knowledge, you are going to get very low marks from some "drill and practice" observers.

JG: Can the two approaches to teaching work together in some situations?

KL: There is a position that says there is

a place for both views of learning, or at least both views of how you should teach. Perhaps the basics that we really need to learn by rote can be accommodated best by a certain amount of drill and practice and a kind of construction.

So, it is important to ask the question "what is the goal here?" What does quality teaching look like to develop arithmetic skills for example? What does quality teaching look like when we are trying to help kids understand important concepts in science, maths and social studies? I think the two will look different.

So I think that the teacher quality debate is often framed much too broadly to acknowledge some of those distinctions that to my mind are quite important. "What is the goal?" always has to be asked when we are making judgements about quality teaching.

JG: What about the link between qualifications and teacher quality?

KL: In the working conditions study I'm doing now for the Teachers Federation in Ontario, there are a couple of obvious things that stand out that really impinge on teacher quality. Teachers do a better job if they are actually teaching areas they are prepared for. A surprising number of teachers find themselves working outside their own speciality. So, this is the kind of obvious thing to do, let teachers teach in areas they are prepared for.

Some of the press that I have been reading while I'm here report that beginning teachers feel pretty insecure about teaching reading for example, and secondary teachers report much the same. I can see that if I was a beginning teacher I would probably feel insecure about almost any question I was asked, so it did not surprise me very much. This is particularly the case for teachers who have never had any training in teaching reading. It does seem to be an important thing to give secondary teachers some training in reading. It is probably the one thing in education we know how to do best.

JG: The big debate over here is about the place of phonics in teaching reading.

KL: At the end of that debate is a balanced literacy program. I organised a large literacy conference in Toronto about two to three years ago when I was dean of research. We brought specialists from all over the world together to the conference, either on video or in person, and the big debate was about now that we have all decided that a balanced approach to literacy is the best one, what do we mean by "balanced literacy"?

So within that idea of balanced literacy programs there is still a lot of argument about how much time "balanced" means for each of these different approaches. But again, I would come back to the notion that there isn't a whole lot of debate on how to teach reading well. The distinctions around whether it should be phonics-based or something else are often resolved within the literature by determining what level the kid is at, what their skills are at the present

time, what level of reading they are trying to reach.

My reading of phonics literature, and I do not profess to be an expert on this, is that teaching phonics beyond the first couple of years of teaching reading is kind of a waste of time. So let teachers teach where they know how to teach. If they have to teach in areas that they are not prepared for, give them some preparation. It seems kind of simple to me.

JG: There is a problem when you get kids reaching the beginning of secondary school who are still not reading properly. Clearly, some children are slipping through. That is an important issue in relation to encouraging secondary teacher training in reading.

KL: Doing some things to avoid slippage is pretty important, because if they have reached secondary school and they are struggling to read, that means they have missed a huge amount of the rest of the curriculum. One of my colleagues in the States sort of invented the notion that the K-3 curriculum is the "learning to read curriculum" and everything after that is a "reason to learn curriculum". His suggestion here, and he works largely in challenging circumstances, is that you really have to make sure that it happens in the first three years. Because there is a progressive increase in the gap in achievement between readers and non-readers after that in everything else, due to what they don't get by reading.

You might want to really front end load the emphasis on reading in many different ways and acknowledge the different challenges you face. Kids have a wide variety of backgrounds but I'm almost to the point of saying, nobody gets out of Grade 3 until we are satisfied that we have done everything possible to ensure they can read. Think of all the maths they haven't learnt. You have to be able to read to actually learn the maths curriculum. Think of all the social studies, arts etc they have missed.

JG: What role, if any, does performance pay play in improvements to teacher quality?

KL: Well, I have seen this in the media recently and it really took me back to performance pay in the USA. They had a huge romance with this for a very short period of time until they backed off in a big way. Some states I think, Tennessee and Kentucky, are trying to do it again. There is one side of me that says why should it be any harder in education than it is in anything else.

JG: The performance pay proposals from our federal government are seen by teachers as having almost no positive features.

KI: I think it hinges on whether or not student achievement results are going to be measured for teacher performance rewards. I think if that is the case, you are clearly going down a path towards disaster because we just don't have measures that are

sensitive enough to do this kind of job well. But you know, you could base performance on a portfolio of measures from student achievement through a contribution to decision-making in the school, working with parents, helping colleagues, contributing to professional development in the school.

Most performance appraisal systems have multiple criteria by which people are being judged. In the final analysis it is not about adding up the numbers and calculating the average. A judgement is made about whether or not all this together looks like it ought to be rewarded. If I had to go forward with a performance-based scheme and nothing else at school, I would go forward with it that way.

JG: You seem to be saying that focusing on performance pay for teachers is looking at only one part of a far wider picture?

KL: The thing that really seems to me to be an important part of that overall conversation is actually related to career structures. The added complexity of the paid performance issue with teaching is that it is a flat profession. Unless you want to become an administrator, most people who are teachers go along a path with little discrimination in the kinds of responsibilities they have. If we wanted to energise the profession and attract and keep more people in it, I like the idea of kind of differentiating staffing. You just see it being nibbled at now in the Government's new announcement about young teachers having part of their time used for induction by a mentor. What strikes me as being valuable about that is that the senior teacher now has something else to do — that is, share their expertise.

So there is a little job differentiation introduced in the idea of an induction system. I would want more differentiation than that. I would like to see people have opportunities to formally provide team leadership and curriculum leadership. There should be a wide array of things that are actually not just made up for the occasion but are quasi-formal. So there are different roles where you always have one foot in the classroom but in addition to that you have some outside responsibility that increases in terms of its complexity and in the skill required.

NEXT ISSUE
Leithwood on improving student learning, school cultures and standards

NOTES on contributors

JOHN BANGS IS Assistant Secretary (Education and Equal Opportunities) at the National Union of Teachers. This essay draws on an article in the 100th edition of *Education Journal*.

NIC BARNARD IS communications officer for the Australian Education Union Victorian Branch, and editor of *Professional Voice*. Formerly with the *Times Educational Supplement* in the UK, he has been an education journalist for 12 years.

TREVOR COBBOLD IS a consultant on public policy issues, specialising in the economics and finance of education, general education policy and microeconomic policy analysis. He is the author of many papers and submissions on various aspects of education policy and funding. He was a member of the executive of the ACT Council of P&C Associations from 1987 to 2005 and was honorary secretary of the council from 1988 to 2000. He worked as an economist for the Productivity Commission and its predecessors for over 30 years and has wide-ranging experience in economic research and policy analysis relating to industry, trade, public enterprises, productivity growth, commonwealth-state financial relations and social issues. This essay is an edited version of the overview of a paper of the same name prepared for the AEU.

LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND IS Charles E Ducommun Professor of Education at Stanford University, where she has launched the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute and the School Redesign Network. She was the founding executive director of the National Commission for Teaching and America's Future, the blue-ribbon panel whose 1996 report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, catalysed

major policy changes across the US to improve teacher education and teaching. Her research, teaching, and policy work focus on issues of teaching quality, school reform and educational equity. Among her more than 200 publications are *The Right to Learn* and *Teaching as the Learning Profession* (co-edited with Gary Sykes).

GLYN DAVIS IS vice-chancellor of the University of Melbourne. He has written widely on policy and governance. His most recent publications are a third edition of *The Australian Policy Handbook* (with Peter Bridgman, 2004), *The Future of Australian Governance: Policy Choices* (ed., with Michael Keating, 2000) and *Are You Being Served? State, Citizens and Governance* (ed., with Patrick Weller, 2001). He was foundation chair of the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG). He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and a Companion in the Order of Australia.

JENNI DEVEREAUX IS the AEU's federal research officer, with a particular focus on funding and resourcing issues, and editor of *The Australian TAFE Teacher*. She was previously research officer with the AEU South Australian branch for 16 years. She has also worked on a national AEU project concerned with human rights and education for asylum seekers and refugees. Jenni is a former secondary school teacher and researcher at the University of Adelaide where she worked on a thesis linking feminism, the labour movement and the anti-war movement in late 19th and early 20th Century Australia. She is actively involved in Australians Against Racism.

JOHN GRAHAM IS a research officer at the AEU Victorian branch, with responsibility for researching curriculum and professional developments in education and training. He has written extensively about curriculum change, teachers and teaching as a profession, developments in education at an institutional, state and federal level, and on a range of other matters from funding to organisational review. John has been a Victorian government secondary school teacher, a researcher and writer for a national equity program, and a policy developer for the Department of Education.

KEN LEITHWOOD IS Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. His research and writing concern school leadership, educational policy and organisational change. Professor Leithwood has authored or edited more than 30 books, most recently *Leadership With Teachers' Emotions In Mind* (in press), *Making Schools Smarter* (3rd edition, 2006) and *Teaching for Deep Understanding* (2006). His work has had a significant impact on public policy on education across Canada and internationally.

WARWICK MANSELL IS a senior journalist with the *Times Educational Supplement* in the UK, where he specialises in curriculum and assessment issues. He is the author of *Education by Numbers: The tyranny of testing*, published by Politico's (www.politicos.co.uk), from which this article is adapted.

SUE WILLIS IS dean of the Faculty of Education at Monash University and President of the Australian Council of Deans of Education. She began her career in Western Australia as a secondary teacher of mathematics before moving into university education and curriculum development. She has a range of professional interests all of which are framed by a commitment to social justice in and through education, and has had extensive experience at state and national levels in curriculum work focused particularly on mathematics and numeracy. She is currently on the boards of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences.

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