WHAT COUNTS AS
QUALITY IN EDUCATION?

AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATORS NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2014

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Adelaide 11–12 September 2014

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College of
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Welcome

The Australian College of Educators (ACE) is proud to present 'What counts as quality in education?' at our 2014 National Conference.

The term 'quality' has been central to many debates in education going back three decades or more to some influential Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports. But what do we mean by quality? At various times there has been a focus on the quality of schooling, the quality of teachers, the quality of teaching, the quality of the curriculum and the quality of educational outcomes. An equally significant aspect of quality is that of inequality and how it influences quality overall.

There has been concern with a general downward trend in Australia's performance on international measures of student achievement, but there is equal concern over the achievement gap and whether some of the current initiatives playing out in education, such as deregulation and privatisation, might impact upon achievement and that achievement gap. It appears that Australia is becoming a more unequal society and inequality is ultimately bad for everyone.

It is timely to consider the issue of quality from a variety of perspectives, including a fundamental re-evaluation of the purposes and intended outcomes of schooling. Are our current conceptions of teaching, learning and schooling adequate for the 21st century?

In this conference our speakers will engage with issues such as: The parental perspective of quality; what counts as quality in vocational education and training; the role that standards can play in the overall quality of education; what counts as quality in early childhood education and care programs; what counts as quality in primary education and finally how the current education policy developments in Australia are influencing all of the above.

In Australia we are, however, at a crucial point in time with so many powerful and deep-seated global developments impacting upon education and it is vital we critique these from a strong evidence-based perspective, particularly as so many of these developments appear to be driven by ideology and economics. Whether by accident or design, decades of research are being ignored or discarded and educators are being either silenced or silent in these debates over future priorities and directions in education.

ACE is pleased to bring together so many key speakers and key educators to consider some of these pressing issues. The College aims to encourage and foster open and collaborative discussion and debate about ongoing matters of importance in education, as well as focusing on the 'hot topics' of the day.

All of us have a responsibility to consider these highly significant questions and issues and to make the voice of all educators heard. ACE is pleased to facilitate and act as a medium for this with a view to influencing a positive sense of developments in Australian education.

As part of this conference we will also be honouring some of our members for their outstanding commitment and contribution to education, including the awarding of College Fellowships and the College medal. This too is an important aspect of the overall quality of Australian education of which we have much to be proud of despite the criticisms of educators and education.

Welcome to the ACE 2014 National Conference and our thanks for your ongoing commitment to education which is demonstrated by your attendance. We welcome your input and experience during these important debates over the next two days.

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

'Quality' as an enrichment course in literature for high school students

DR MARK COLLINS, MACE
TIC COLLEGIAN
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Biography

Mark Collins, educated at the University of Melbourne and the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, US, is an experienced English and literature teacher at Scotch College, Melbourne. He co-authored, with Adrian Collins, The Wide World of English 4 (2001), and Go Grammar! (1st, 2nd and 3rd editions 2012) designed for the Australian Curriculum.

Mark has conducted many seminars and workshops across Australia and overseas in specialist areas of English, ranging from Shakespeare to film and creative writing. He enjoys talking about the role of ideas, beliefs and cultural influences in literature.

Abstract

In this workshop on teaching question-based, conversational learning with a high-level of intellectual challenge for young high school students, participants will be invited to reflect on their own experiences and evaluative frameworks of possibilities.

The first part of the workshop will follow Mark's evolving and structured experience in three stages: Planning school approval questions; curriculum design questions; and questions for conversations between students and teachers. A structured progression of questioning, referring to 'the whole child' (John Quay), 'praxis' (Paulo Freire) and 'feedback' (John Hattie) will be eminently practical and lively with take-away samples of the evolving course over a two-year period.

The second part of the workshop will outline and discuss questioning strategies, from a six- week pilot module in 2013 to a period per cycle for a school year in 2014, that enhances student engagement in 'big ideas', rich metaphors, and complexity or ambiguity, all things that contribute to the hallmark of quality education.

Introduction

Let's see the wood for the trees

I'm a long-time admirer of Walden; or, *Life in the Woods* (1854), that 'wake-up' work by Henry David Thoreau, the non-conformist advocate for both freedom and a spiritual sense of renewal. From his seminal experience of going into the woods, he made two comments that I recall again and again. One is a succinct criticism of our lives at work and perhaps our relationships too: 'The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation'. If this is true, however sombre and wry, we have to look for wellsprings of wonder and joy in both our work and play and discover forms of consolation and resilience. The second is a practical reminder for high-minded teachers who require some method in their madness: 'Simplify, simplify, simplify'. These two observations suggest poles of dialogue in which, I believe, we can see through the forest of 'quality education' speak (it can sound daunting, at times, like entering Dante's dark wood) and also see apart the trees of various orthodoxies or 'solutions'. Teachers need not be afraid of seeing and pursuing the big picture of critical and creative intelligence—'think big'—with our professional obligation of translating complex ideas into accessible, contagious points of understanding—'simplify'. Depth, discernment and complexity are essential elements of highly-valued learning, emancipatory curriculum content, student evaluation and choosing what is better for the common good and the individual; and this point of orientation needs to be made clear to the Australian public, beginning teachers and our high schools.

So what does underline my approach to teaching question-based, conversational learning? My key premise is well put by John Quay: 'Young people (in fact all human beings) are intent on the questions of who they are, and they wish to explore this question concretely, within a social context' ('Educating the whole child: The dilemma of educational purpose', *Professional Educator,* 2013, p. 5). I appeal directly to a young person's sense of identity, 'who they are', in a particular literary context of what are the important values and feelings and priorities in a crucial decision, choice or predicament. We teachers, a colleague remarked, attempt to move young students from the dark to the light through conversation and challenge. In a virtual remake of Plato's 'Allegory of the cave', we teach knowing our own perception is limited and it's a complex pursuit to discern 'the beautiful and just and good in their truth' and, no less, their shadows. This orientation to depth and complexity is narrative based and brief, based on an excerpt from a play, poem, novel or criticism. Quay's active inquiry mode, 'explore this question', resonates well with Thoreau's awakening sense of the world and self which is a continuing dialogue through and with life. In other words, 'who they are' is actually about 'who they are becoming'.

Paulo Freire's emphasis on dialogue has struck a chord with those concerned with a broader 'becoming', popular and informal education (see online summary and reading links-http://infed.org/mobi/paulo-freire-dialogue-praxis-and-education/). Given that education is dialogical or conversational, Freire reminds us that dialogue involves respect. It should not involve one person acting on another, but rather people working with each other. Dialogue is

not only about deepening understanding, but also making a difference in the world that is guided and renewed by reflective action (a more compelling substitute for 'praxis'). Learning is a critical process.

This active process requires constructive feedback 'in motion'. John Hattie reminds us, in *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximising Impact on Learning* (2012), that students see a mark on their essay and their mates' essays as the 'end' of their learning. Consonant with Thoreau's call to simplify and learn from experience, Hattie's message is keep feedback 'as simple as possible', 'reduce uncertainty between performance and goals' and establish 'the necessity for the climate of the learning to encourage 'errors' and entice students to acknowledge misunderstanding – and particularly the power of peers in this process' (pp.135-6). This learning space for messy talk, or questions that challenge and change views, is central to conversational learning. It takes time to listen to students and peers in a respectful, 'open' domain of intellectual exchange. Flexibly grouping students to work alone, together, or as a whole class is a high priority of effective learning. It is not quite clear yet, and I welcome the input of participants here, and how we teachers can effectively differentiate instruction in a classroom – 'those', Hattie adds, 'those who gain more may need different instruction than those who gain less' (p. 98).

This workshop attempts to address flexible grouping that was trialled for a school cohort of Year 8 students, initially 12 students selected from six English classes as an extension of our Challenge Programme, with a focus on evolving feedback by outlining and testing stages and levels of questions which engage students, address 'Where to next?' and meet their desire for challenge.

Quality education, then, pivots on the key word 'enrich': To improve or enhance the quality, or value of a student's intellectual; social; aesthetic; spiritual; and moral understanding. Quality education, reflecting on my recent experience, is for:

- Greater exposure to experiences that stretch students' thinking and imagination (an early stage of trial innovation that can be expanded and, hopefully, universalised)

- conversational learning

- exploratory, question-based, open-ended inquiry

- 'hands on', or 'on your feet' moments

- thinking in-depth and through association: 'Only connect'

- personal, individual, quirky responses free-form the restrictive demands of formal assessment practices

- constructive comments and building teamwork.

Part 1

A three phase questioning structure for school approval

In small groups, select and discuss which phase and numbered questions below are most helpful for your planning or classroom programme.

Phase 1: School approval questions

1. How long? How often should a cycle occur?
2. For whom? How many students?
3. Selectors and selection criteria?
4. How to invite students?
5. Which genres of learning by which teachers?
6. Which digital technologies?
7. What kind of low-key assessment?
8. What kind of student and school feedback?

Phase 2: Curriculum design questions

1. Which 'big' ideas or 'great' thinkers or texts or leaders?
2. Which texts or central questions introduce complexity, rich metaphors and ambiguity?
3. What are the learning 'hooks' from popular culture or recent change?
4. Which 'big' ideas really engage me (the teacher) that could engage students?

Phase 3: Questions for classroom conversations between students and teacher

1. What kind of spatial or seating arrangement?
2. How can I start this conversation with a 'bang' or differently?
3. Clockwise or optional or teacher-prompted student responses?
4. Who's quiet or actively involved and who's linking comments?
5. Which fundamental questions work well, or don't, and why?
6. Which sessions or texts or approach do the students like the most?
7. Is student interest increasing over time or what did they like or remember from a previous session?
8. Which questions for an online student survey will give my school and me the most informed and constructive 'feedback'?

Part 2

A case study of an evolving Year 8 enrichment course in literature

It started as a six-week pilot module at lunchtime in 2013. It was then restructured with new content fed in for a period per cycle for two Year 8 select classes over an entire school year in 2014.

Discuss Handout Section A in small groups (handout distributed to participants). Apply questions to one of three excerpts: Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar,* and William Blake, 'The Schoolboy', and Dawe, 'Life Cycle'. Please note these questions are teacher-driven. We will apply Sandra Kaplan's icons for depth and complexity to try out structured but 'open' student-driven questions in Section B to the same excerpt and compare findings in the second half of the workshop.

Conclusion

Educating the whole person really means including practical reminders by Quay, Freire and Hattie to pursue depth, discernment and complexity with a holistic sense of interpersonal development in the classroom. This involves a range of feedback questions in motion (that invite participants to answer how teachers gauge these signs and symptoms):

• How are they going emotionally?
• Do they look and sound engaged?
• Is each student communicating well with another?
• Are they gaining confidence in talking about new ideas?

What are effective ways of improving student speak about narrative excerpts?

• What's my point?
• Pause-think-link
• Think-pair-share
• Claim-support-question
• I see-I know-I care about-I wonder about.

Which intellectual foci assist interpersonal development?

• Utopianism, altruism and idealism
• A strong sense of social justice and empathy
• A poetic sense of love, nature, melancholy, difference, rebellion and disillusion.

What is a teacher compass for questioning and sorting out student thinking?

• North for need to know
• South for suggestions
• East for exciting
• West for worrisome.

Let's be bold with ideas, welcome the days of conversational exchange, and try the do-reflect-renew cycle.

Primary schooling in Australia: Pseudo-science plus extras times growing inequality equals decline

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Biography

Stephen Dinham OAM is Chair of Teacher Education and Director of Learning and Teaching at the University of Melbourne.

He is a former secondary teacher and since, entering universities, has conducted a wide range of research projects in the areas of educational leadership and change, effective pedagogy/quality teaching, student achievement, postgraduate supervision, professional teaching standards, teachers' professional development, middle-level leaders in schools, and teacher satisfaction, motivation and health. He has a publication record (more than 300 publications) of books, book chapters, refereed journal articles, and articles in professional journals.

Stephen is a frequent presenter at international, national and state conferences (over 470 presentations) and has conducted consultancies with a wide range of educational bodies nationally and internationally.

He is the current national president of the Australian College of Educators and a member of the Council of the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Some of his awards include: Fellow of the Australian College of Educators (1999); Fellow of the Australian Council for Educational Administration (2000); Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management (2002); Sir Harold Wyndham Medal (ACE NSW 2005); Sir James Darling Medal (ACE Victoria 2010); the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) 'For service to educational research, and to professional associations' (2011) and the Richard von Weizsäcker Fellowship, Robert Bosch Foundation, Germany (2014).

Abstract

Australian primary students are out-performed by their secondary peers in relative terms on international measures of student achievement. This paper explores some explanations for this discrepancy including the role of content knowledge in primary curricula, a general lack of an evidence base for teaching and learning in primary education with a propensity to adopt fads and fashions and the increasingly unrealistic and untenable expectations placed on primary teachers and schools.

A solid research evidence base for teacher pre-service and in-service teacher education is essential and there is a need to question from this basis of evidence current practices and untested assumptions underpinning primary teaching and schooling.

If such transformation can't be achieved, coupled with a rethinking of the expectations held for primary schools and primary teachers, then further decline in relative and absolute terms seems inevitable.

Introduction

There was concern when Australia's latest results for the international testing programs TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) were released (Thompson, et al., 2012). In Year 4 TIMSS Australia came 18th out of 50 countries in mathematics and 25th out of 50 in science. However in Year 8 TIMSS, Australia did better in relative terms, placing 12th out of 42 participating nations in both maths and science.

In Year 4 PIRLS a similar pattern was evident with Australia placed 27th out of 45 nations for reading. However, for the most recently available PISA data (2012, for 15 year olds), Australia was placed equal 13th out of 53 for reading literacy (Thompson, et al., 2013).

Caution needs to be exercised when inferring from such rankings—differences between nations are sometimes small and the metrics are different—but the overall trends should be of concern. Why does Australia do relatively more poorly on these international measures of achievement in the primary years? For example, Australia outperforms both the US and England on every measure of PISA, yet is clearly outperformed by these nations on Year 4 TIMSS and PIRLS. Why does Australia appear to make up ground against other countries between the middle primary and middle secondary years (although there is also a general decline for Australia's scores on PISA both absolutely and relatively against other nations) (OECD, 2011; Thompson, et al., 2012, 2013)?

Is this the result of 'poorer' teaching in the primary years and/or 'better' teaching in the secondary years, or are there other factors that might account for these differences?

Some possible explanations

There are a variety of possible explanations for the primary-secondary performance discrepancy, but the following are offered for consideration as factors influencing the performance of primary age students in Australia.

Content knowledge is seen by some as problematic

Until the mid-1960s to 1970s, curricula in Australia tended to be centrally-devised (at state or territory level) and content or knowledge centred, with frequent use of formal testing. Teachers knew what they had to teach and when to teach it, regardless of the background of their students, their school or its location. There was little recognition of individual differences in either students or school contexts and the notion of the development of values—let alone alternative values—was largely absent.

However from the 1970s new curriculum documents tended to de-emphasise knowledge and content and were based upon the principle of 'school based curriculum development' within broader frameworks, rather than centrally devised and assessed prescriptive content. Curriculum development moved from the 'centre' to schools and to teachers, a paradigm shift many educators were in favour of but few appeared adequately prepared for (Brady, 1987: 3-20).

The 1960s had been a time of social questioning, activism and change and this was reflected in school curricula which became more 'issues' based. The environment, multinational corporations, multiculturalism, rights of various types, to name only some issues, became part of the curriculum. New curricula recognised and privileged skills and values acquisition, diversity, experiential learning, cross-curricular thematic approaches, cooperative learning and 'group work', problem solving, critical thinking and more personalised learning. In literacy, the 'whole language' approach superseded 'phonics'—not for the first time—and the formal teaching of grammar receded (Scott, 2009: 81; McGuinness, 1997).

There had been of course a long history of 'progressivist', 'child-centred', 'constructivist', inquiry type approaches to teaching and schooling going back to the late 19th century but in schooling, things tend to go in and out of fashion before being 'rediscovered' (see Scott, 2009; Christodoulou, 2014: 11-14).

Unfortunately in education, there is a tendency to formulate and advocate false dichotomies and the result in this instance was that content knowledge was seen by many as counter to the learning process. In primary education especially, this resulted in many cases in a largely 'content free' curriculum, particularly in the humanities where teachers had wide choice and little guidance. Learning processes, issues and activities tended to be privileged over knowledge and formal testing declined.

An example of this paradigm was observed by the writer in an upper primary class a few years ago. Students in groups had been asked to research an aspect of Australian history and present this by means of an animation created using a digital camera. One group had chosen the First Fleet entering Sydney Harbour in January 1788. The small fleet of ships was being heroically led by Captain James Cook. Unfortunately for both the students and Captain Cook, he had been killed in 1779. Was this error seen as significant? No, because 'the most important thing' was that the students had been 'engaged in the process'. In this way, means and ends have been confused, with activity and 'engagement' seen as more important than actual learning outcomes achieved:

> Subject content knowledge has been portrayed by some as rote learning and recitation of facts, names, dates and places, and is seen as less worthy than critical thinking and the acknowledgement of multiple social realities. Learning to learn is seen as preferable to learning. Teacher-directed learning is seen as old-fashioned, even harmful, while student activity and choice is championed, regardless of what that activity or choice might entail (Dinham, 2008a: 95-96).

Yet as Willingham (2009: 47) commented:

> Data from the last thirty years lead to a conclusion that is not scientifically challengeable: thinking well requires knowing facts ... The very processes that teachers care about most – critical thinking processes such as reasoning and problem solving – are intimately intertwined with factual knowledge that is stored in long-term memory (not just found in the environment).

This has taken a further twist with the widespread use of the internet. It is argued by some that the teacher as

expert—the 'sage on the stage'—is no longer needed but rather teachers should be facilitators of learning—the 'guide by the side'. And in any case why should students need to learn anything when virtually all of human knowledge is only a mouse click away? However because of this context, the need for effective, knowledgeable teachers is greater than ever in order to assist students to navigate the mass of material 'out there'. Further, it is not a matter of a teacher being an expert in either content or pedagogy. As Shulman (1986) pointed out long ago, teachers need to be masters of both, through what he termed pedagogic content knowledge.

Knowledge/content versus activity/process is not the only false dichotomy of course. Student centred rather than teacher directed learning, as noted above, is another position many ascribe to but as research shows, the two do not have to be mutually exclusive (Christodoulou , 2014: 27-42; Ayres, Dinham & Sawyer, 2004; Dinham, 2008a: 95).

The lack of an evidence base for teaching and learning: Fads, myths, legends, ideology and wishful thinking

It is given that teachers want their students to learn. Anything that promises to aid in the achievement of this is therefore attractive. Unfortunately education is subject to the same sorts of fads and fashions as the rest of society but in the case of teaching, real harm can come from adopting an untested strategy. There are well developed protocols prior to the introduction of any new drug or treatment in medicine yet educators readily experiment upon students—a situation where lives are also at stake—with unproven (or even disproved) methods. This is compounded by the fact that a scientific approach is rarely taken. Rather than changing one variable and measuring its impact, the tendency is to change a range of things simultaneously and hope for the best.

One such approach is 'discovery learning' and its allied concept, 'constructivism'. It has become an ideology or article of faith for some that it is 'better' if students can discover and construct their own learning. Writing in the *American Psychologist*, Mayer (2004: 18) reviewed the research evidence and concluded:

> The debate about discovery has been replayed many times in education, but each time, the research evidence has favoured a guided approach to learning. … Today's proponents of discovery methods, who claim to draw their support from constructivist philosophy, are making inroads into educational practice. Yet a dispassionate review of the relevant research literatures shows that discovery-based practice is not as effective as guided discovery. An important role for psychologists is to show how educational practice can be guided by evidence and research-based theory rather than ever-shifting philosophical ideology.

However unguided discovery learning, problem-based learning, inquiry and constructivism are popular with many teachers and are common strategies in primary classrooms, with students receiving little or no guidance. A variation is social constructivism where students work in small groups trying to discover what they need to know. Hattie found from extensive meta-analyses that problem based learning has an effect size of only 0.16 whereas direct instruction, where the teacher is clear of his or her learning

and teaching intentions and orchestrates the learning of the students accordingly, has an effect size of 0.59 (Hattie, 2009: 297, 300). Mayer concluded from his analysis that 'the formula constructivism = hands-on activity is a formula for educational disaster' (2004: 17).

This is not the full extent of the fads and fashions, however. There is a raft of other approaches for which a research evidence base is either lacking or non-supportive. These include learning styles, neuro-linguistic programming, multiple intelligences, 'thinking hats', brain exercise, emotional intelligence, the 'Mozart effect', so-called 21st century curriculum and associated skills and 'digital natives' (see Bennett, 2013; Scott, 2014).

The belief in and use of learning styles has been particularly pervasive. Stahl (1999: 1) has commented:

> I work with a lot of different schools and listen to a lot of teachers talk. Nowhere have I seen a greater conflict between 'craft knowledge' or what teachers know (or at least think they know) and 'academic knowledge' or what researchers know (or at least think they know) than in the area of learning styles. … The whole notion seems fairly intuitive. People are different. Certainly different people might learn differently from each other. It makes sense.

However, there is a distinct lack of empirical support for the existence of learning styles:

> The reason researchers roll their eyes at learning styles is the utter failure to find that assessing children's learning styles and matching to instructional methods has any effect on their learning (Stahl, 1999: 1).

An extensive review of the research evidence for learning styles concluded (Pashler, et al., 2008: 105):

> Although the literature on learning styles is enormous, very few studies have even used an experimental methodology capable of testing the validity of learning styles applied to education. Moreover, of those that did use an appropriate method, several found results that flatly contradict the popular meshing hypothesis.

> We conclude therefore, that at present, there is no adequate evidence base to justify incorporating learning styles assessments into general educational practice.

Yet as Scott has noted (2010: 8):

> Failure to find evidence for the utility of tailoring instruction to individuals' learning styles has not prevented this term from being a perennial inclusion in discussions about and recommendations on pedagogy. It also continues to influence what teachers do in their day-to-day work. Practitioners from preschool to university level attempt to apply the theory in classrooms, administering the unreliable tests, criticised by so many, to their students, using the results as a guide to classroom practice and encouraging or requiring students to apply the results to understanding, controlling and explaining their own learning.

Bennett (2013) exposed both the lack of evidence for these fads and the harm they can do. Unfortunately,

these approaches are popular, particularly in primary schools, and are often thrown together in what Howard Gardner of multiple intelligences (MI) fame terms 'dazzling promiscuity'. In fairness to Gardner, he is highly-critical of how his work has been reified and misused in education (cited in Demos, 2004: 15):

> I learned that an entire state in Australia had adapted an education programme based in part on MI theory. The more I learned about this programme, the less comfortable I was. … much of it was a mishmash of practices, with neither scientific foundation nor clinical warrant. Left-brain and right-brain contrasts, sensory learning styles, 'neuro-linguistic programming', and MI approaches commingled with dazzling promiscuity.

Dekker and colleagues tested some of the 'neuromyths' held by teachers, which they define as beliefs 'loosely based on scientific facts', and the possible effects of these on teachers and their teaching (2012: 1):

> A large observational survey design was used to assess general knowledge of the brain and neuromyths. The sample comprised 242 primary and secondary school teachers who were interested in the neuroscience of learning. … Participants completed an online survey containing 32 statements about the brain and its influence on learning, of which 15 were neuromyths. … Results showed that on average, teachers believed 49per cent of the neuromyths, particularly myths related to commercialized educational programs. [emphasis added] …

> These findings suggest that teachers who are enthusiastic about the possible application of neuroscience findings in the classroom find it difficult to distinguish pseudoscience from scientific facts. Possessing greater general knowledge about the brain does not appear to protect teachers from believing in neuromyths. This demonstrates the need for enhanced interdisciplinary communication to reduce such misunderstandings in the future and establish a successful collaboration between neuroscience and education.

As Stahl noted above (1999), these approaches are intrinsically appealing, but the fact is that learning is not so simple. Aside from wasting teachers' and students' time and schools' money, the real cost of dabbling with such unsupported strategies is that students are not being taught what they need to know, coupled with the harm caused to them by arbitrary, invalid labelling and categorisation. Through such practices students can come to see their abilities as fixed or limited, something Dweck (2000) has termed 'entity thinking'. This can powerfully constrain future learning. Those convinced that they have a natural, innate talent for something will be disappointed when they come to expect success without effort, whilst those who believe they don't have a talent for something may be put off from even trying.

Hattie (2009: 297) found that not labelling students has a large effect size of 0.61 for student learning yet categorisation is something approaches such as learning styles, thinking hats, multiple intelligences, personality types (see Paul, 2004) and so forth are predicated on. A key point to consider: have students been asked what they think of all this, especially the use of categorisation? Their answers will be instructive.

Christodoulou (2014) has critiqued and refuted seven powerful myths about education that capture much of the above discussion:

1. Facts prevent understanding

2. Teacher-led instruction is passive

3. The 21st century fundamentally changes everything

4. You can always just look it up

5. We should teach transferable skills

6. Projects and activities are the best way to learn

7. Teaching knowledge is indoctrination.

Expectations on primary teachers are unrealistic and untenable

Primary schooling has suffered more than secondary when it comes to the overcrowded curriculum. Every time there is a problem in society there is someone advocating that it should be addressed within the primary curriculum, which in turn must be addressed in pre-service teacher education courses. Rarely is anything taken away to balance what is imposed. The results are an overcrowded and at times unbalanced curriculum, both in schools and in pre-service teacher education courses, putting pressure on teachers, time and resources.

Some of the 'extras' that society seems unable or unwilling to deal with include sex and sexuality, drugs, healthy food, homophobia, racism, environmental concerns, body image, bullying, bicycle safety, bomb education, weed identification, boys' education, driver education, dog education, career education, manners, crime detection, stranger danger, child abuse, depression and forced marriage, to cite but a fraction of those advocated over the past decade.

It could be argued that each of these issues is significant but the cumulative effects are deleterious. As the primary school curriculum has become increasingly crowded with social 'extras', there has also been pressure imposed by greater external testing and reporting on the 'basics'. It has thus become more difficult to train, professionally develop and support primary teachers. As the breadth of teaching increases, inevitably, depth and effectiveness decreases.

If it is deemed important that these issues are to be addressed during the school day, primary teachers and schools need the input and support of trained professionals to provide the specialised knowledge needed to fulfil these 'social welfare' expectations. The usual response is that there needs to be greater integration of these issues into the academic curriculum but something has to give; compromises and 'watering down' are inevitable. As it stands, the 'academic' and 'social welfare' workloads of the generalist primary teacher have made the role increasingly untenable, particularly in the context of greater external testing.

There is a further layer impacting on teachers' workloads and these concerns the increasing mandatory reporting and administrative burdens placed on teachers and schools (see Alexander, 2010: 444-445; Scott, Stone & Dinham, 2001).

A degree of specialisation is needed in primary teaching

A point has been reached where if effective teaching and learning are to occur in the primary years, a degree of teacher specialisation needs to be introduced. This is increasingly common in the non-government sector but less so in government schools. Whenever this is mooted, a common reaction is dismay that primary schools could adopt the perceived worst aspects of high schools – multiple teachers, teaching subjects rather than students and the tyranny of the bells. After all, one of the principles of middle schooling is to ease the primary-secondary transition through making the middle years more like primary schooling (Dinham & Rowe, 2008). However there may be advantages in making the (upper) primary years more like secondary education. This could also make the primary-secondary transition less problematic, if in fact it is a problem.

High schools today are generally more orderly—academically speaking—than primary schools, although secondary teachers also suffer the effects of loss of teaching time through additional activities, issues and mandatory 'perspectives'. The primary school day is fragmented with numerous disruptions and changes of activity and these are more intrusive than in the typical high school where to some degree timetables and subject allocations afford protection against loss of time and focus. In primary schooling it is difficult to finish anything and being generalists; primary teachers struggle to master and cover all aspects of the curriculum (Dinham, 2007).

Science is particularly problematic, as many reviews have demonstrated (see *Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003*). Many primary teachers report they lack the knowledge and expertise to teach science effectively, resorting to 'cookbook' activities (see Goodrum, et al., 2001) and thus science receives less attention and effective treatment in the typical school day than is intended or desirable (*Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003*).

Maths or numeracy has also been highlighted as being problematic, with some primary teachers lacking a Year 12 qualification in mathematics as well as confidence and competence in teaching the subject. Time devoted to preparation in maths and science content and pedagogy in primary pre-service teacher education is limited because of the necessity to cover all aspects of the primary curriculum, something compounded by the trend from four year undergraduate pre-service programs to two year graduate programs (http://remstep.org.au/).

It is time the introduction of specialist maths and science primary teachers in government schools was seriously considered, especially given the shortages of secondary maths and science teachers (Productivity Commission, 2012, 64-65). As maths and science specialist teachers enter primary teaching this will enable other generalist teachers to specialise more through being released from some of their present, subject-based responsibilities. Generalist teachers could also be supported through team-teaching with these subject specialists. Primary students may well welcome the variety and challenge resulting from greater teacher specialisation. Under such an arrangement, primary school students (and teachers) would have the benefit of working with someone with a greater depth of knowledge, both content and pedagogic, and hopefully passion for their specialisation, which would provide a firmer foundation for student success in the primary years of schooling and in later secondary education.

It has been demonstrated how important primary students' attitudes towards maths and science are in predicting later achievement in these subjects (Hattie, 2009: 50-51). Problems such as low secondary engagement and achievement in maths and science, reluctance of senior secondary students to take the higher and more difficult courses in maths and science, the decline in participation in undergraduate maths and science subjects and courses (Chinnapan, et al., 2007) and the shortages of applicants to maths and science teaching, have their origins in the teaching primary students receive in these subjects. It is a cycle that needs to be broken (http://remstep.org.au/).

Self-esteem boosting and a lack of constructive, developmental feedback

Research shows that student self-esteem or self-concept can have moderate or greater effects on student-learning (Hattie, 2009: 46-47). Some teachers have been convinced therefore that if self-esteem can be boosted to higher levels this will result in enhanced learning, a classic case of 'putting the cart before the horse' or confusing cause and effect. Conversely it is thought that any form of criticism, correction or failure will harm self-esteem and thus learning and should therefore be avoided. The downside of this is that students can gain an inflated view of their capacities which can lead to entity thinking mentioned previously (Dweck, 2000). The author has observed primary classrooms where no one receives a 'bad' or failing mark, red pens are not used to correct work because 'red is an angry colour' and 'merit' certificates are thrown around like confetti for meeting normal expectations. In short, rampant 'positive reinforcement' abounds.

However, the best way to legitimately boost self-esteem is for students to receive regular constructive, developmental feedback, something known to have one of the most powerful effects on learning (Dinham, 2008b; Hattie, 2009: 173-178). If students can see and feel themselves achieving, even in small increments, this can then lead to an increase in self-concept which sets up a cycle for further improvement. However empty, inauthentic, unwarranted praise ultimately hampers both learning and self-esteem (Scott & Dinham, 2005; Dinham & Scott, 2007).

Authentic achievement, no matter how small, is thus the best way to engender self-concept and self-esteem. This can then serve as a foundation for further achievement. When students have their self-esteem boosted artificially in inauthentic ways, on the other hand, the air quickly comes out of the balloon when they hit the wide world and meet real-life challenges (Dinham, 2010). Thus unwarranted self-esteem boosting works against building perseverance and resilience in primary age children, qualities necessary to meet later challenges in schooling and life (see Stewart, et al., 2004).

Discussion – where rethinking and action are necessary

This paper should not be construed as an intended criticism of either primary teachers or teachers in general. There has been too much of blaming teachers for things outside their control, coupled with simplistic measures

purported to improve the quality of teachers and the quality of teaching through rewarding, testing, judging, 'fixing' or removing 'underperforming' teachers (Dinham, 2013a).

Whilst teachers might be the biggest in-school influence on student achievement (Hattie, 2009), they are not the only one, yet this finding has been misused to imply that it is the teacher's fault when students fail to learn. The words 'in school' have been mislaid, by accident or design, and it is common to hear of the teacher being 'the biggest influence on student achievement'. Instead of a collegial opening up of classrooms and professional practice, what follows is a view that because of their importance, we need greater control over and surveillance of teachers.

This raises questions about how primary teaching is conceptualised and enacted in schools given the increasing expectations held for both schools and teachers. There is a need for strong, evidence-based teacher pre-service education and on-going professional development. There is a need to question from a basis of firm evidence the foundations for what teachers do in schools and to test empirically what are presently regarded as 'facts' (see Sahlberg, 2014). There is a need to question from a basis of evidence and drive out the folklore, dogma, ritual and untested assumptions underpinning primary teaching and schooling. There is a need to reject the pseudo-science and the shiny products people want to sell educators.

There is a need to equip teachers with knowledge and tools for effective teaching and learning and for teachers to adopt a clinical, diagnostic approach to individual student assessment and learning (Mclean Davies, et al., 2013; NCATE, 2010). There is a need for teachers with high intellectual capacity and strong content and pedagogic content knowledge. It is not sufficient to just like young people and to want to be a teacher. There is also a need for school leaders with strong instructional leadership capability who can lead teaching and learning (Dinham, 2013b).

There is a need to rethink and reinstate the philosophical bases and moral purposes of primary education, key considerations that appear to have been lost and are now largely absent from primary curriculum documents and statements. There is a need to focus on agreed outcomes, not only academic but also personal and social (see MCEETYA, 2008) and not just activities in the hope these will 'engage' students. Too great a focus on external test results alone can be counter-productive (see Berliner, Glass & Associates, 2014: 12-17).

There is a need to use intelligently the vast amount of extant educational research rather than grasping at 'quick fixes' promoted by economists, policy advisers and the corporate sector to deliver enhanced learning. Complex problems require complex solutions. There is a need to break the cycle of teachers teaching the way they were taught. 'Forget everything you've learned at uni' and 'don't expect too much and you won't be disappointed' are not the ways to move teaching and learning forward, yet for beginning teachers this is frequently their introduction to teaching.

It is important to recognise the inequalities that exist in Australian society. Many young people enter primary education with disadvantages associated with health, poverty, family background, geographic location and the lack of any form of pre-school education. Primary teachers are in the front line of dealing with the effects of such disadvantage as they attempt to meet the needs of their students and the expectations society has for them. Many primary schools serving such students are also disadvantaged and financially impoverished.

The primary years of schooling are vital in setting up young people for successful lives. There are wonderful practitioners in primary education and many pockets of excellence but as a whole we can do better. It is debatable whether primary education today is more effective overall than it was 50 years ago, in part because of the issues raised above. Competing dichotomous ideologies—the 'literacy wars' fought over 'whole language' versus 'phonics' for example—and the widespread unquestioned acceptance of educational fads, coupled with the overcrowding of the primary curriculum through the unreasonable shifting of expanding social responsibilities to schools has created an untenable situation. Teachers and young people deserve better.

Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) have demonstrated that inequality in society is worse for everyone, or in other words, as they put it in their book title, 'more equal societies almost always do better' - and their data indicate that Australia is becoming a less rather than more equitable society. This puts further pressure on schools and thus there is a need to ensure that primary schools are resourced as well and as equitably as possible according to need and that spending is targeted to those things that are known to add most value (see the 'Gonski Report', Australian Government, 2011; Gonski, 2014).

Ken Boston, a member of the Gonski review committee, is blunt in his assessment (2013: 16):

> [T]he decline in the performance of our schools in reading, mathematics and science across the past decade or more … [is a situation that] is entirely self-inflicted. …
>
> Independent international studies of Australian school performance show that we are in trouble and have been so for at least two generations of schooling. Our business model for school funding – based on the funding of sectors rather than the funding of schools according to the job to be done – has comprehensively failed in the long term.
>
> It has failed for two reasons. First, it has led to Australia having one of the most socially segregated education systems in the OECD. Across the world, there is a positive correlation between socioeconomic advantage and educational performance: in Australia, socioeconomic disadvantage has a greater adverse effect on educational achievement than in any other comparable OECD country. …
>
> Second, there is no real competition between sectors. The sector-based business model has failed to create an even playing field on which government, Catholic and independent schools can compete to drive up school performance.

Conclusion

The biggest equity issue in Australian education is a quality teacher in every classroom (Dinham, 2011: 38). There is a need to ensure that those entering teaching are of the highest quality and that teachers are well trained and supported over their careers to be the best they can be. There is a need to 'enable teachers to develop a critical attitude toward the information they receive and examine scientific evidence before including … findings into their teaching practice' (Dekker et al., 2012: 6).

Effective evidence-based pre-service and in-service professional learning is the key, coupled with developmental teacher feedback and appraisal processes to ensure that all teachers continue to improve their effectiveness and are recognised and rewarded appropriately for this (Dinham, Ingvarson & Kleinhenz, 2008).

If such transformation can't be achieved, coupled with a rethinking of the expectations held for primary schools and primary teachers, then further decline in relative and absolute terms seems inevitable.

Finally, this paper is not an argument or call for some form of 'back to basics' movement but more, as the late Garth Boomer noted, it highlights the need to 'go forward to fundamentals' (cited by Brock, 2005).

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Effective implementation of pedagogical reform through quality teaching rounds

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Biography

Jenny Gore has just completed six years as Dean of Education and Head of School at the University of Newcastle. She is currently Director of the Teachers and Teaching Research Program and sits on the Editorial Boards of Teaching and Teacher Education, the Australian Journal of Education, and Sport, Education and Society. She has won more than $3.4 million in external research funding since 1992, and is widely published and cited.

Jenny's research on Quality Teaching and Professional Learning has had significant impact and has led to substantial consultancy across government and the catholic and independent school systems especially in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

Abstract

Improving the quality of school teaching through the professional development of teachers is a global concern echoed with growing urgency in a vast array of political and educational circles. In this paper, the University of Newcastle's research on Quality Teaching and Quality Teaching Rounds is outlined with emphasis on the importance of a strong pedagogical framework and adherence to principles of effective professional development in systematically avoiding the weaknesses associated with many approaches to pedagogical improvement.

In the research, the power of combining evidence about professional learning communities, instructional rounds and the quality teaching approach to teacher professional development, known as 'Quality Teaching Rounds', will be demonstrated using evidence from New South Wales (NSW) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT) schools. This research data indicates significant impact on the quality of teaching being produced, the level of productive collaboration among teachers, and in student outcomes (using NAPLAN data).

Interviews with teachers and principals corroborate these positive impacts with many describing Quality Teaching Rounds as the most powerful professional development in which they have participated. With systematic observation and feedback on teaching on national and international agendas, these encouraging results demonstrate how we can better support teachers to produce high quality teaching for all of their students.

Introduction

Quality in education is a global concern, high on national and international agendas and yet consistently delivering high quality education remains a 'wicked problem'. The term wicked problem was originally used in social planning to describe a problem that defies solution because of its complexity and complex connection with other problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Recognising the value of the concept for any domain involving stakeholders with different perspectives and requiring creative rather than standard solutions, Conklin (2005) generalized the concept beyond policy and planning. Wicked problems, in Conklin's characterisation, have no clear or prescribed way forward, and no 'right' or 'optimal' solution, while possible solutions depend on how the problem is framed, every attempted solution counts (there is no opportunity to learn by trial and error), and the problem is never solved definitively.

Although teaching quality is widely-recognised as 'the most significant in-school factor affecting student outcomes ' (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2012, p. 2), current trends in educational reform in Australia and elsewhere have tended to frame the problem of quality education by focusing on improving teacher quality. Recent changes to the entry requirements of initial teacher education programs (NSW Government, 2013, 2014), for example, highlight the belief that raising the standard of those entering the profession will also improve the quality of teaching and learning that happens in schools (Dinham, 2013). Similarly, recruiting high performing graduates from other disciplines, such as happens in the Teach for Australia program (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014) and its precedents in the US (Teach for America, 2012), puts faith in teacher quality as the solution to what many see as the education quality 'problem'.

While there is some merit to the argument that high-achieving final-year school students are likely to make high-performing graduates, numerical entry scores alone are an insufficient predictor of how well a teacher will teach (Craven, 2013). In Sweden, for instance, higher university entry scores by aspiring teachers are not associated with better student performance across standardized tests (Grönqvist & Vlachos, 2008). Likewise, high-achieving non-education undergraduate students may achieve good academic results in postgraduate teacher education programs, but there is limited evidence of a relationship between such academic backgrounds and outstanding teaching careers. After all, teaching—indeed, good teaching—can be learned; teacher education programs exist for this very reason.

Recognising that a focus on pre-service teachers is insufficient, the other major framing of the education quality 'problem' focuses on the existing teacher workforce. Solutions have included the development of professional standards for teachers (AITSL, 2011) across the full range of teaching careers and investment in professional development to assist teachers in carrying out their work.

Whether pre-service or in-service, the quality of teaching is a wicked problem in that, as a profession, we have been unable to agree upon a clear way forward. There is no 'right' or 'optimal' solution, although, only better solutions. All possible solutions will depend on how the

problem is framed or understood. Moreover, as Conklin (2005) highlights, every attempted solution counts: in the preparation of teachers; in the professional development of teachers; and, for the students with whom these teachers work. In the field of education, we might learn by trial and error, but all attempts have consequences.

Pedagogical reform as a possible solution

In my own framing of the problem of quality, it is a focus on teaching rather than teachers where I believe we stand to make the greatest gains. Moreover, if teachers are to teach well, they need a clear conception of what constitutes quality in teaching. Without such specification, high quality teaching will remain elusive. Old debates about whether teachers are born or made or whether teaching is an art or science serve to mystify teaching and thwart attempts to achieve the kind of clarity about practice that is fundamental to other professions.

Multiple frameworks outlining good teaching currently exist. But not all frameworks are alike, and the choice of framework matters. While some frameworks adopt a pedagogical approach to enhancing quality, designed as they are to support teacher learning, others are more evaluative in both form and process. Frameworks for teaching differ in their level of specificity, the degree to which the observational focus is set or negotiated, and whether judgements are to be carried out by an external assessor, by a peer or peers, or by the individual teacher as part of a self-reflective process. They also vary in the extent to which they focus on all domains of teachers' work or, more narrowly, on their classroom practice, and whether they purport to be about learning, teaching or both. Understanding the effects (both discursive and material) of any specification of good teaching is necessary in understanding the way in which the imposition or adoption of a particular framework counts—for those teachers, for their students, for that system.

The Quality Teaching model

The Quality Teaching model for pedagogy has been implemented in government, Catholic and independent schools throughout NSW since 2003 (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003, 2005) and subsequently in the ACT. Quality Teaching frames teaching in terms of three dimensions: intellectual quality, a quality learning environment, and significance. Quality Teaching is not preoccupied with what makes a 'good' teacher; rather, it is underpinned by the principle that all teachers are capable of producing high-quality teaching. As such, this framework emphasises teacher development rather than teacher assessment and focuses specifically on classroom practice rather than other aspects of teachers' work.

The Quality Teaching model is applicable across year levels and subject areas. It is comprehensive, in addressing a broad range of classroom qualities rather than narrowly focusing only on for example the quality of thinking or student engagement or relevance of lessons to students' lives. It is concerned with both teaching and learning, premised on their interrelationship rather than engaging in trivial debates about which should be the focus. And, given that the applicability and manifestation of elements of the model are deeply related to the context in which teachers are working, Quality Teaching is an open rather than a closed framework which respects the local knowledge

that teachers bring to the hundreds of decisions and judgements they make in a single lesson.

Unlike some frameworks which rely on assessment of teachers' performance as a path to increased quality—which can produce fear (of not delivering certain techniques, for example) or defensiveness (when teachers fail to meet set or arbitrary criteria)—the Quality Teaching model, particularly when implemented using Quality Teaching Rounds, provides teachers with a mechanism for analysing and enhancing their individual and collective teaching practice. This approach can help to build greater hope and confidence among teachers about their skills as professionals with the capacity to make appropriate decisions in their teaching. It also signals trust in teachers' ability to deliver the quality learning experiences that all children deserve.

Three research studies have been conducted since 2004 in NSW and the ACT, the results of which validate the implementation of Quality Teaching as a model of pedagogy and Quality Teaching Rounds as a viable approach to teacher development, for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Our findings demonstrate how Quality Teaching Rounds can make a significant impact on the level of productive collaboration among teachers, the quality of teaching produced and, using data from the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), outcomes in student achievement.

Systemic implications of pedagogy and achievement in NSW public schools (SIPA), 2004-2007

The first study, conducted by Gore, Ladwig, Griffiths and Amosa, was jointly funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the NSW Department of Education and Training, and involved 1,942 teacher surveys, 665 classroom observations, and the coding of 21,458 items of individual student work produced in response to 521 assessment tasks over the course of four years. Teachers and principals from primary and secondary schools participated in this research, yielding data that were broadly representative of NSW public schools.

To map the quality of teaching that was taking place at the time, lessons and assessment tasks were coded using the Quality Teaching Classroom Practice Guide, with its scale from one to five across the six elements that appear within each of the three dimensions. These elements are: (1) for Intellectual Quality - deep knowledge, deep understanding, problematic knowledge, higher-order thinking, metalanguage, and substantive communication; (2) for Quality Learning Environment - explicit quality criteria, engagement, high expectations, social support, student self-regulation, and student direction; and (3) for Significance - background knowledge, cultural knowledge, knowledge integration, inclusivity, connectedness, and narrative. Coding of the lesson or assessment task was undertaken by at least one trained observer who made judgements regarding the degree to which the element observed was consistent with its descriptor on the coding scale. Student work was coded using a modified form of Newmann and Associates' Authentic Achievement Scales (1996).

The data obtained from this study illustrated what a typical lesson in NSW public schools looked like, and overall, indicated that there was substantial room for improvement

(Ladwig, Smith, Gore, Amosa & Griffiths, 2007). On average, the quality of pedagogy observed was below the theoretical mid-point for each dimension of the model and for many of the elements. For instance, only general statements were typically made during lessons regarding the desired quality of work; explicit quality criteria (Quality Learning Environment) was thus rated a two. Importantly, despite the average quality of pedagogy across the whole sample, we found that some teachers, including beginning teachers, were delivering pedagogy that scored highly on the Quality Teaching measures.

In this study, we also investigated the quality of teaching for different cohorts of students and found that the more Aboriginal students and students from low-socio-economic (SES) backgrounds in a class the poorer the quality of pedagogy. This was also the case for those with lower prior attainment, who often overlapped with students in these equity target groups (Amosa, Ladwig, Griffiths & Gore, 2007). Most importantly, when students received better quality pedagogy (in this case, in the form of assessment tasks that rated highly on Quality Teaching), we observed better student performance overall and narrowing of gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and between students from low-SES and high-SES backgrounds (quintiles).

Effective implementation of pedagogical reform (EIPR), 2009-2012

Encouraged by our findings which demonstrated the viability of Quality Teaching both in enhancing teaching practice and narrowing equity gaps, our next major study (conducted by Gore, Amosa, Bowe) was aimed at developing a way of working with the model that would support teachers to produce quality teaching more often. Our focus on teacher professional development was driven in part by evidence of its limited impact on teaching practice and student outcomes (Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2008).

Drawing on literature highlighting the potential for instructional rounds (an adaptation of medical rounds) to facilitate capacity building within schools (Elmore, 2007) and for professional learning communities (PLCs) to provide a mechanism by which teacher learning can be enhanced through local, social and cultural support (Bolam et al., 2005), Quality Teaching Rounds was designed to add to such processes the substantive Quality Teaching lens. Our concern with PLCs and instructional rounds was that processes often took precedence over substance (what teachers should focus on), a problem in professional development which is further magnified by the limited knowledge base and lack of shared language among participants (Little & Curry, 2009). Using Quality Teaching, a strong pedagogical framework that had been validated in the SIPA study, Quality Teaching Rounds was implemented in an attempt to address these issues.

Quality Teaching Rounds are structured to provide teachers with a professional learning community that is highly focused on the quality of teaching and critically supportive. The process is comprised of three sessions: (1) professional reading, which encourages teachers to develop a shared knowledge base and learn more about each other's beliefs and values; (2) classroom observation, in which each member teaches a lesson that is observed by other members of the PLC; and (3) coding and discussion of

the lesson by all members using the conceptual framework of Quality Teaching to inform their insights and judgements about their experiences and observations. It is important to note that teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice and how the lesson observed characterises their teaching overall.

The efficacy of Quality Teaching Rounds as an approach to support teacher learning was examined in a four-year longitudinal study, funded by the ARC and the Catholic Education Office in Parramatta, NSW. Two groups of schools were involved: four schools (3 primary/1 secondary) participated in Quality Teaching Rounds, which involved roughly 63 hours of professional learning time over eight or nine full-day rounds in each year of the study; 12 schools (9 primary/3 secondary) did not participate in rounds but provided comparative survey, interview and student performance data. School data on NAPLAN tests were noted for the duration of the study and for the year prior to its commencement.

We found that participation in Quality Teaching Rounds was associated with a positive impact on NAPLAN scores at the school level, noting that these four schools also had relatively low Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) scores. These results were statistically significant and consistent with earlier findings, confirming that Quality Teaching, when implemented using Quality Teaching Rounds, can support improvements in student performance and narrow equity gaps in student achievement for low-SES groups.

We also observed statistically significant differences between teachers who did and did not participate in Quality Teaching Rounds across a number of survey scales including: their reception and perceptions of the importance of Quality Teaching as a model of pedagogy; the effectiveness and coherence of their professional learning activities; their perceived level of support for professional learning within their school; and, the degree to which they felt responsible for their students' learning (Bowe & Gore, 2012).

Most importantly, we found significantly higher quality teaching being produced in this intervention study than was found in the descriptive SIPA study (effect sizes over 1.0). These results are compelling in demonstrating that pedagogical reform can be effectively implemented when a framework such as Quality Teaching is used to guide professional development, actively and collaboratively involving teachers in the process and providing them with a shared language with which to engage in professional conversations about teaching practice.

Investigating Quality Teaching Rounds to support teachers' professional learning (ACT QTR), 2012

Despite the encouraging results from both the SIPA and EIPR studies, we recognised that implementing Quality Teaching Rounds while effective and feasible, was resource-intensive in terms of the commitment of time and funding associated with teacher release from their classrooms. With the ACT Education and Training Department we therefore conducted 'design experiments' (Gore, Bowe, Mockler, Smith, Ellis & Lyell, 2013) across 18 schools with 156 teachers to determine whether it was possible to modify Quality Teaching Rounds and still produce positive outcomes on teaching practice using the Quality Teaching model.

Participants included teachers at all career stages as well as executive staff. The number of professional learning communities, members per PLC, and lessons observed per teacher differed between schools. Schools also varied the length of time spent in Quality Teaching Rounds, with some opting to continue the full-day model tested in EIPR, others opting for a half day investment per round, and yet others, finding creative ways to utilise some meeting time and further reduce teachers' absence from class. Some aspects of Quality Teaching Rounds that were held constant were: time for discussion of professional reading; observation of every lesson by all PLC members; teaching of at least one lesson by each PLC member; adequate time for individual coding, soon after the lesson observation; and, time for detailed analysis of the lesson, using the Classroom Practice Guide, in order to reach agreement and ensure professional learning.

The agreed Quality Teaching scores from each observed lesson, together with pre- and post-intervention survey and interview data, were gathered. All teachers reported that they valued Quality Teaching Rounds however it was structured at their school, with all enacted variations to the design seen by participants as sufficient for producing a high quality collaborative professional learning experience. More frequent participation in Quality Teaching Rounds, such as weekly, did not produce better Quality Teaching scores, on average. Indeed scores were slightly higher in groups that met every three weeks or monthly for Quality Teaching Rounds. All participating teachers reported that they had learnt from their participation in Quality Teaching Rounds, highlighting the value of bringing teachers together with diverse teaching backgrounds and experiences, including teachers from different faculties and year levels within and between schools. Many teachers discussed that while observation of and feedback on each other's teaching had not typically been regular components of their work, their experiences within Quality Teaching Rounds demonstrated the value of these activities. Participants also reported a high degree of comfort with the processes of observation and peer feedback, with many commenting that their willingness to participate was related to: (1) an agreed understanding of the purpose of the work within Quality Teaching Rounds, shaped by the Quality Teaching model; and (2) benefitting from outcomes of Quality Teaching Rounds that applied directly to their own teaching.

Over the six-month period of the study, teachers' perceptions of the alignment of their teaching with the principles of the Quality Teaching model improved, with statistically significant increases in the survey scales of Teaching for Intellectual Quality, Teaching for a Quality Learning Environment, and Teaching for Significance. There was also a statistically significant increase in teachers' favourable reception of the Quality Teaching model over the period of the study.

When comparing the quality of teaching produced by participants in this study with the quality of teaching produced in SIPA and EIPR, the most important finding from the ACT study was that high quality teaching, as measured by the Quality Teaching model was produced by participating teachers, even with as few as three Quality Teaching Rounds. Collectively, the evidence from

these three studies has formed the basis of a randomised controlled trial, testing the efficacy of Quality Teaching Rounds for enhancing the quality of teaching delivered by teachers in primary, secondary and central schools in NSW, currently underway and due for completion in 2015.

Conclusion

Despite the evidence produced by these studies in a program of research conducted over the past decade, the 'solutions' we have offered to the problem of quality in education are far from agreed upon as a clear way forward. Each solution, like Quality Teaching or Quality Teaching Rounds, yields additional challenges and is deeply complicated by the histories, cultures, and institutions in which it is integrated and by the people who respond, whether embracing, resisting, or indifferent to these ideas. Like all such attempts, there are limits to the power of data collected in social enterprises like teaching and working in professional learning communities. Moreover, relations of power are inescapable in the process of other jurisdictions and other researchers considering the applicability of this work across contexts. Such is the nature of work in this field. Hence quality education remains a wicked problem.

Nonetheless, framed as a problem of teaching and not teachers, and recognising that all solutions count, our experience to date has been that when teachers are supported in conducting Quality Teaching Rounds, the quality of their teaching is enhanced, outcomes for students improve, and teachers at all career stages report feeling supported in their quest to deliver high quality teaching for all of their students.

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What works for developing Asia-relevant capabilities in Australian schools?

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Biography

Eeqbal Hassim is a Senior Manager, Research and Curriculum, at the Asia Education Foundation (AEF). He heads research at AEF, which he initiated and developed since joining the organisation in 2012.

Eeqbal works closely with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) as member of the General Capabilities Advisory Group and member of the 'Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia' cross-curriculum priority Advisory Group. His major resource development and professional learning projects include Learning from One Another, which has the official patronage of the Australian Commission for UNESCO, and Difference Differently, an Australian Government funded resource on intercultural understanding produced by Together for Humanity. A well-published author, Eeqbal's influential work in intercultural education has been profiled in the media both nationally and internationally.

Abstract

The world is changing into one in which Asia's prominence and dominance is rising. Deep and meaningful engagement with the region is essential to the creation of sustainable and shared futures within the Asia and beyond. The fostering of Asia-relevant capabilities is, therefore, an important goal for Australian schooling, which contributes to the broader development of individuals with the knowledge, skills, understandings, behaviours and dispositions to live as active global citizens.

The Asia Education Foundation (AEF) has developed a research series, called What Works, that explores quality curriculum, pedagogy, leadership and whole school approaches to developing Asia-relevant capabilities in Australian schools. Using key findings, illustrations and theoretical frameworks from the series, this workshop will familiarise teachers with 'what works' and 'what next' in developing students' Asia-relevant capabilities that are both sustainable and transformative.

Introduction

Asia's prominence and dominance in the world today is significant and continues to rise. It is within this context that governments and businesses are scrambling to unlock Asia's potential for Australia. But is this the narrative we want educators and students in Australia to use as the basis of their moral purpose to engage with Asia? Research involving 471 teachers and 481 principals from across Australia indicates that school educators do not see economic rationalisations as primary reasons for engaging with Asia. In fact the overwhelming majority see engagement with Asia as a means to building students' intercultural understanding, to create 'a more tolerant and successful Australia' and their competence as 'globally smart citizens with the capacities to function effectively and successfully in a global world' (Halse et al., 2013, p. 3).

Hence, developing Asia-relevant capabilities in Australian schools must sit within a transformative paradigm, one that differs fundamentally from an instrumentalist and opportunistic view of Asia. While Asia is no longer just exotic—a throwback to Orientalist notions of the region— instrumentalist ideas about Asia engagement do little to address lingering assumptions, misconceptions and prejudices that stand in the way of developing a mature and sustainable approach to building relationships with our Asian neighbours. Australia needs to shift from transactional engagement to transformational engagement with its regional neighbours.

Transformational engagement must precede transactional engagement if Australia is to develop a socially sustainable way of relating to its Asian neighbours. Social sustainability is important because it is both a proactive and reactive defence mechanism to peaks and troughs in economic and intergovernmental relationships. Deep and meaningful engagement with Asia is essential to the creation of sustainable and shared futures within the region and beyond. The fostering of Asia-relevant capabilities is, therefore, an important goal for Australian schooling, which contributes to the broader development of individuals with the knowledge, skills, understandings, behaviours and dispositions to live as global citizens.

Intercultural understanding in education provides an ideal and robust overarching framework for developing students' Asia-relevant capabilities. It sits conceptually within the transformative paradigm, which sees realities as being constructed and shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, and ethno-racial values, whereby power and privilege largely determine favoured social realities (Mertens, 2007). In referring to the transformative paradigm, I argue that there is inequity in how cultural diversity and culturally diverse content are being addressed in both education and broader society in Australia.

Yet, the globalised and interconnected nature of the world and Australia's regional and global context necessitates transformation in how schools are addressing cultural diversity and interculturality. (Even in remote communities, diversity is closer than one might think with the power of information and communication technologies (ICT)). 'Interculturality' in the context of the world's super-diversity and super-mobility is a key word, signifying a multi-faceted exchange within and across cultural groups that is characterised by mutual reciprocity. This is what distinguishes multiculturalism from interculturality.

… education systems need to take into account the multicultural character of society, and aim at actively contributing to peaceful coexistence and positive interaction between different cultural groups. There have traditionally been two approaches: multicultural education and intercultural education. Multicultural education uses learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance, or at least tolerance, of these cultures. Intercultural education aims to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of understanding of, respect for and dialogue between the different cultural groups. (UNESCO, 2006, p. 18)

The development of Asia-relevant capabilities is 'not simply about learning externalised cultures and languages but interpreting and negotiating the possibilities of intercultural relations' (Rizvi, 2012, p. 77). School educators must endeavour to avoid the view 'that cultures can be defined in terms of a set of closed cultural boundaries expressed in language, arts and cultural tradition' (p. 76), which tends to be reinforced by largely content-based studies of the Asia region.

Viewed holistically, intercultural understanding in education is much more than learning about cultures, embracing, as an ideal, social justice, equity and transformation in education. It is at once an educational concept, reform movement, and process. It aims to establish schools wherein all students—regardless of their gender, social class, and ethno-racial, linguistic or cultural characteristics—have an equal opportunity to learn (Hassim, 2013, citing Banks, 2004). Hence, the development of Asia-relevant capabilities in Australian schools is as much about the Asia within Australia as it is about the Asia beyond Australia, especially in the context of diverse cultural groups learning from and with one another.

From a global perspective, the UN has invested in promoting the importance of intercultural understanding in education, publishing in 2013 an 'Intercultural competences: Conceptual and Operational Framework'. This publication defines 'intercultural competences' as 'abilities to adeptly navigate complex environments marked by a growing diversity of peoples, cultures and lifestyles' (UNESCO, 2013, p. 5). Additionally, the UN Global Education First initiative lists global citizenship as one of three educational priorities for schools the world over, with intercultural competence being core to the idea of global citizenship.

In Australia, the Australian Curriculum, supported by the Melbourne Declaration (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA], 2008), specifies 'Intercultural understanding' as one of seven general capabilities that all students should develop by the time they finish schooling and 'Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia' as one of three cross-curriculum priorities.

With these two dimensions of the Australian Curriculum, schools educators have a powerful mechanism to promote transformational thinking about, and engagement with, Asia. The cross-curriculum priority deals with content knowledge, whilst the general capability deals with critical reflection of culture and intercultural relations, as well as empathy building and social action (see Hassim, 2013).

For the Australian Curriculum, I argue that the intercultural understanding general capability should provide teachers with the conceptual basis or framework for implementing the 'Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia' cross-curriculum priority.

Asia Education Foundation's 'What Works' series

The above conceptualisation of how Asia-relevant capabilities should be addressed in Australian schools is fundamental to any operationalisation of Asia literacy at a school level. The lens ultimately determines the outcome.

AEF's What Works research series was developed to advance this conceptualisation and operationalisation, a major step forward from simply meeting the needs of culturally diverse students, which tends to lead to piecemeal cultural literacy, and content-based studies of Asian cultures, which leads to similar effects in addition to curriculum pigeonholing. In essence, the following sentences encapsulate the driving force behind What Works, one which I have presented on numerous occasions to school educators.

- Education aims to transform individuals and societies

- Knowledge on its own does not necessarily transform thinking

- So, what is the transformative power of knowledge about Asia?

- What transformations are we aiming to achieve?

- Why do we need them?

- How do we enable them?

AEF produces What Works under its core funding agreement with the Australian Government Department of Education and has published the following titles (available via www.asiaeducation.edu.au/whatworks) since June 2012:

- What Works 1 - Building demand for Asia literacy: What works (June 2012)

- What Works 2 - Leading school change to support the development of Asia-relevant capabilities (March 2013)

- What Works 3 - Achieving intercultural understanding through the teaching of Asia perspectives in the Australian Curriculum: English and History (June 2013)

- What Works 4 - Using ICT in schools to support the development of Asia-relevant capabilities (August 2013)

- What Works 5 - Schools becoming Asia literate: What works? (November 2013).

- What Works 6 - Australia-Asia School Partnerships (March 2014)

- What Works 7 - Study programmes to Asia (July 2014)

Aimed primarily at teachers and school leaders, the What Works series is based on evidence-informed practice, combining up-to-date research with illustrations of practice that demonstrate 'what works' and 'what is possible' to support the development of Asia-relevant capabilities in Australian schools. However, its use has extended to education agencies, authorities, departments and associations, as well as academics, teacher educators and higher degree research students.

Key findings and frameworks from What Works

Asia literacy has been traditionally difficult to pin down and define, lacking a robust research and evidence-based platform. By placing it within an intercultural education framework, What Works has been able to provide a solid foundation for how schools can develop students' Asia-relevant capabilities. Using quantitative and qualitative methods coupled with case studies, school educators now have frameworks to:

- Build school demand for Asia engagement

- lead school change to develop students' Asia-relevant capabilities

- develop students' intercultural understanding through studies of Asia

- use ICT to support development of Asia-relevant capabilities

- initiate and support curriculum, pedagogic and whole-school reforms towards realising Asia capable schools

- build and sustain international school partnerships

- develop personal and professional capacity to engage with Asia through study programme participation and build students' Asia-relevant capabilities.

Over the coming 12 months, further What Works research is expected to yield frameworks relating to parental engagement, quality Asian languages teaching, and building school leader capacity (based on AEF's Leading 21st Century Schools: Engage with Asia professional learning programme).

This paper will now summarise the key findings and frameworks from What Works 1 through to What Works 7.

What Works 1

The research identified the following enablers to build demand for studies of Asia:

- A persuasive personal encounter

- a clear course of action

- collegial influence and support.

For Asian languages, the following motives and enablers were identified:

- The prospect of making new friends

- satisfying natural or awakened curiosity about other countries and their inhabitants

- the prospect of travel

- as students get older, instrumental reasons related to life and work futures

- quality nature of classroom experience and attention to the range and variety of student needs and interests

- effective motivational strategies including promoting learner autonomy, goal-oriented learners', and familiarising learners with the target culture.

What Works 2

Utilising an analytical framework adapted from Fullan, Cuttress and Kilcher (2005), the following factors were deemed essential for leading school change to develop students' Asia-relevant capabilities:

- Moral purpose for building Asia literacy effects deep and sustainable change in schools

- leaders who provide inspirational motivation are able to enact deep and sustainable change

- research and evidence - informed practice allows leaders to select the most effective curriculum and pedagogic approaches

- teacher/leaders can effect change through a distributed leadership model and a professional culture that prioritises student learning

- sustainable leadership builds Asia literacy from what has happened in the past and connects this to a vision of the future.

What Works 3

Using established concepts and frameworks from intercultural education, this research proposed the following 'Intercultural education framework for Asia capability'. This framework focuses on a continuum of curriculum reform.

Contributions	Additive	Transformation	Social Action
Teachers incorporate relevant content from different cultures into their teaching, eg. by selecting books and activities that celebrate holidays, heroes, and special events from various cultures. Culturally diverse books and issues are not generally a feature of the curriculum. Students' cultural literacy depends largely on their teachers' interests in intercultural understanding.	Teachers use resources by and about people from diverse cultures to add multicultural content, concepts, themes and perspectives to the curriculum. But because the basic structure of the curriculum has not been altered to promote critical and creative thinking about cultural differences, this approach, though knowledge building, does not necessarily transform thinking.	The structure of the curriculum is designed to encourage students to view common concepts, issues, themes and problems from diverse cultural perspectives. This type of instruction involves critical thinking and the acknowledgement of diversity as a basic premise. It allows students to appreciate multiple ways of seeing and understanding, develop empathy for various points of view, and learn how to manage difference in the process.	This approach combines the transformation approach with learning activities that advocate social change. Teachers help students not only to understand and question social issues, but also to do something important to address them. For example, after studying a unit about immigration, students could write opinion pieces to newspaper editors, letters to government officials etc.

Catalytic (first-steps)   Transformative   Action-oriented

Figure 1: Intercultural education framework for Asia capability

What Works 4

In researching the use of ICT as it relates to developing students' Asia-relevant capabilities, AEF examined practice from several schools across Australia against the backdrop of a comprehensive analytical framework called the 'ICT pedagogic framework for Asia capability'. This framework was adapted from the UNESCO ICT-Competency Framework for Teachers (UNESCO, 2011) and incorporates a classification system that describes a four-step continuum of ICT use in classrooms (UNESCO, 2004)

Teachers learning about ICT (Emerging)	Teaching with ICT (Applying)	Facilitating student learning with and/or through ICT (Infusing)	Enabling and managing deeper learning through ICT (Transforming)
Daily life in the classroom, teaching and management is enhanced through ICT use. Teachers require an understanding of the ICT productivity tools available, e.g. information searching, Web 2.0 tools, and online teaching and learning resources	Teachers integrate ICT in lesson planning and use multimedia tools. Using ICT-based generic pedagogical skills, they present/guide/search for information, create content, and facilitate learning. Teachers are able to use authoring and multimedia tools based on quality pedagogy in their teaching.	Teachers design ICT-enabled lesson plans and digital materials, creating pedagogically proper learning environments. Using ICT-based subject-specific pedagogical skills, they conceptualise learning, organise ideas, and facilitate online collaboration. Teachers are able to use Web 2.0, subject-specific learning tools, Mind Mapping, WebQuest etc. to facilitate student learning.	Teachers enable and utilise a blended learning environment (seamless integration of ICT-based and face-to-face teaching). This requires teachers to possess autonomous professional learning skills focusing on quality pedagogy using ICT (both subject specific and generic). Teachers use, for example, synchronous, (web conferencing) and asynchronous (for example, learning management system [LMS]) tools, as well as interactive activities to value-add to what students might otherwise already learn via more conventional means.

Catalytic (first-steps)

Figure 2: ICT pedagogic framework for Asia capability

What Works 5

This research highlighted the following meta-strategies for change that should be considered when working towards developing Asia-capable schools.

Trial of innovative practice in language learning, with a view to expansion across the school

Engagement with research to develop evidence-informed practice

Building teacher capacity

Emphasis on coaching other staff, within and beyond the school

Appointment of a team of teacher-leaders responsible for change

Provision of opportunities for ongoing professional learning

Figure 3: Building teacher capacity - meta-strategies for change

Identification of the timeliness of curriculum innovation to be better reflect the cross-curriculum priorities of the Australian Curriculum

Development of teacher-leaders who drive and support curriculum innovation

Power of achieving whole-school commitment

Creation of a shared, collective focus on curriculum planning and implementation

Development of a shared understanding of the significance and value of the curriculum change throughout the school community

Figure 4: Power of achieving whole-school commitment - meta-strategies for change

Building strategic collaborations, with a view to developing students' 21st century capabilities

Creation of a culture of collective endeavour, mutual respect and shared professional goals

Building relationships and partnerships (communities of practice)

Establishment of sustainable partnerships within and between schools

Modelling professional collaborations from which others can learn

Figure 5: Building relationships and partnerships (communities of practice) - meta-strategies for change

Innovation of curriculum and/or pedagogy to better reflect students' learning needs and to ensure engagement and challenge

Engagement with professional and academic networks to help inform change and implementation

Investing in new pedagogies and curriculum design

Implementation of a trial study to evaluate impacts of curriculum and pedagogic innovation on student learning

Figure 6: Investing in new pedagogies and curriculum design - meta-strategies for change

What Works 6

This BRIDGE-focused research enabled the development of an analytical tool, which provides for schools a continuum for developing sustainable structures and models of intercultural engagement and interaction. BRIDGE is AEF's Australia-Asia School Partnerships project.

The continuum that was developed combined the following three interconnected factors (Figure 7):

1 Intensity of engagement (from occasional communication to extensive joint–project collaboration)

2 Nature of pedagogical/curricular support structures (including preparation, feedback and reflexion periods)

3 The involvement of, and structural transformation processes within, the school community.
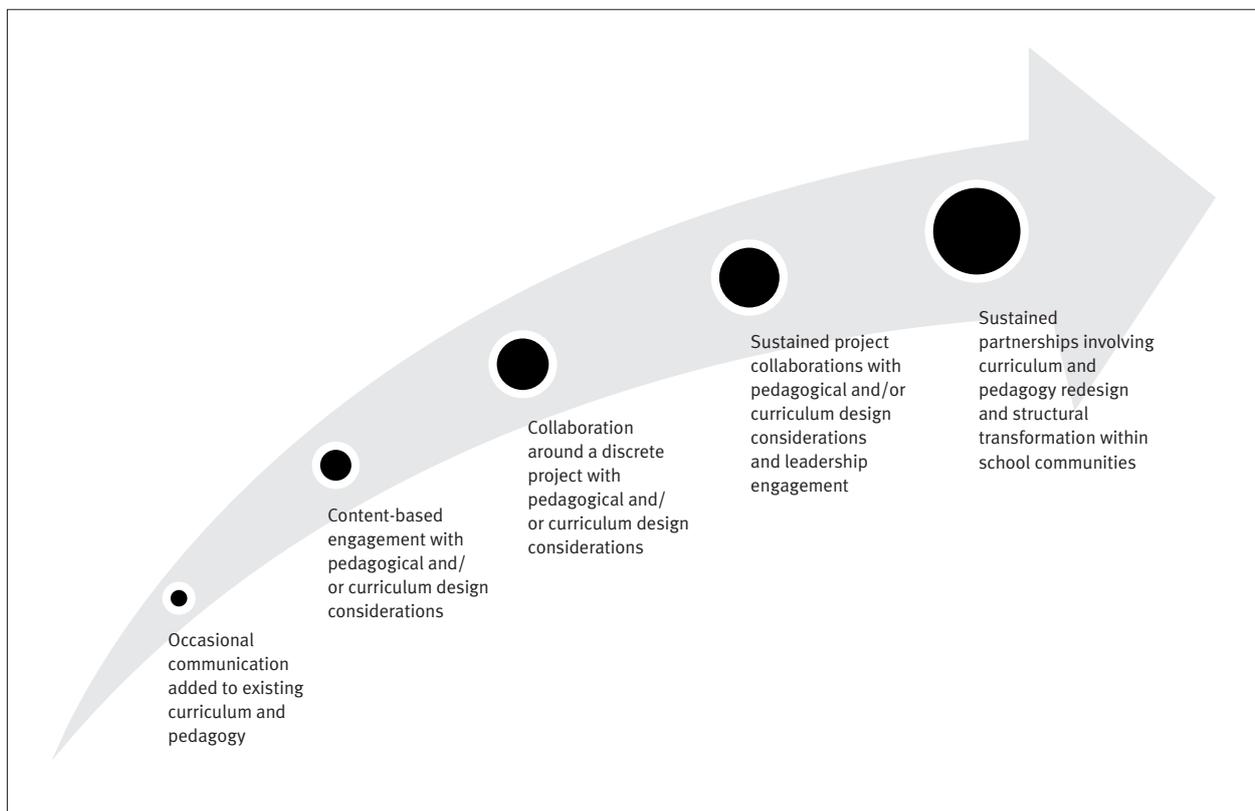
Figure 7: Towards sustainable structures and models of intercultural engagement and interaction for schools

Using this analytical tool, the research identified four key features of the BRIDGE model that lead to successful and transformative international school partnerships, namely:

- BRIDGE as a multi-dimensional teacher capacity building tool

- BRIDGE as a tool/source of authentic learning

- BRIDGE as a facilitator of cross-cultural relationships

- BRIDGE as a facilitator of sustainable school partnerships
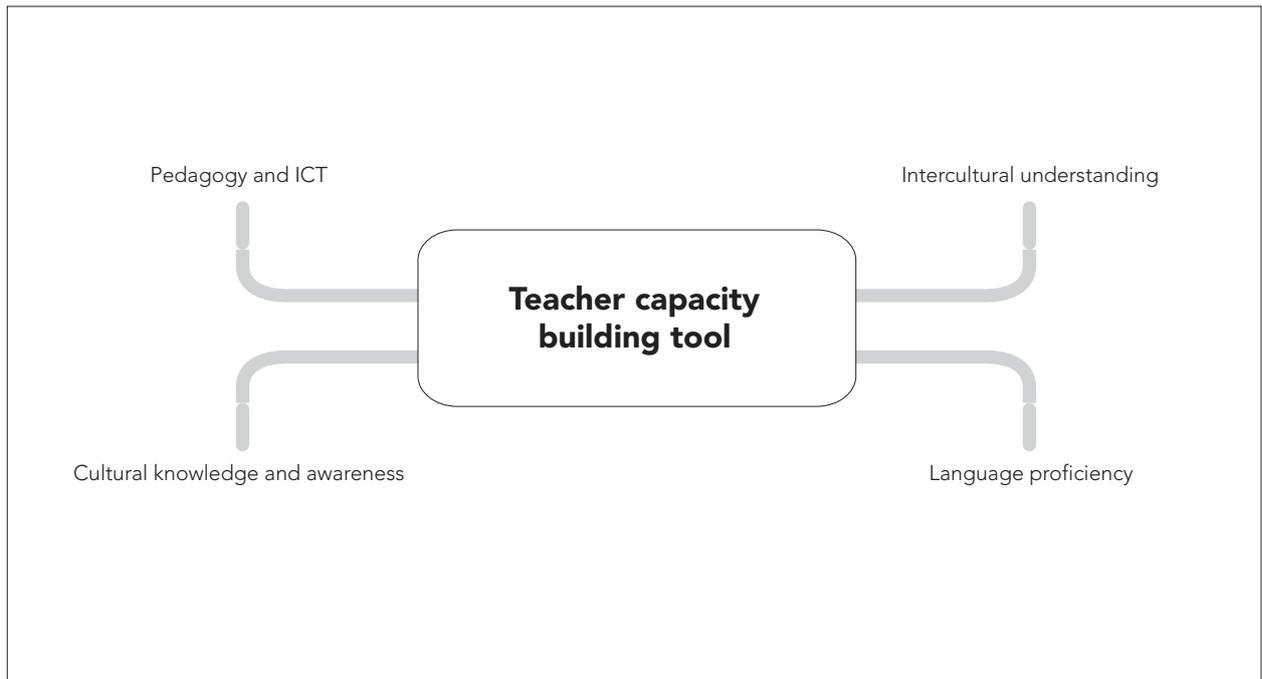
Figure 8: BRIDGE as a multi-dimensional teacher capacity building tool

Ninety-seven per cent of all BRIDGE teachers in Australia (n=99) stated that their intercultural understanding has developed as a result of their involvement in BRIDGE, and 95 per cent of them reported that their knowledge and awareness of the partner country has expanded. More than eight in ten Australian BRIDGE teachers also agreed or strongly agreed that BRIDGE has enabled them to improve their second language proficiency (83 per cent) and to develop or enhance their ICT skills (81 per cent).

Meaningful use of ICT

Communication with native speakers

Tool / source of authentic learning

Authentic resources for intercultural learning

Cross-culture interaction
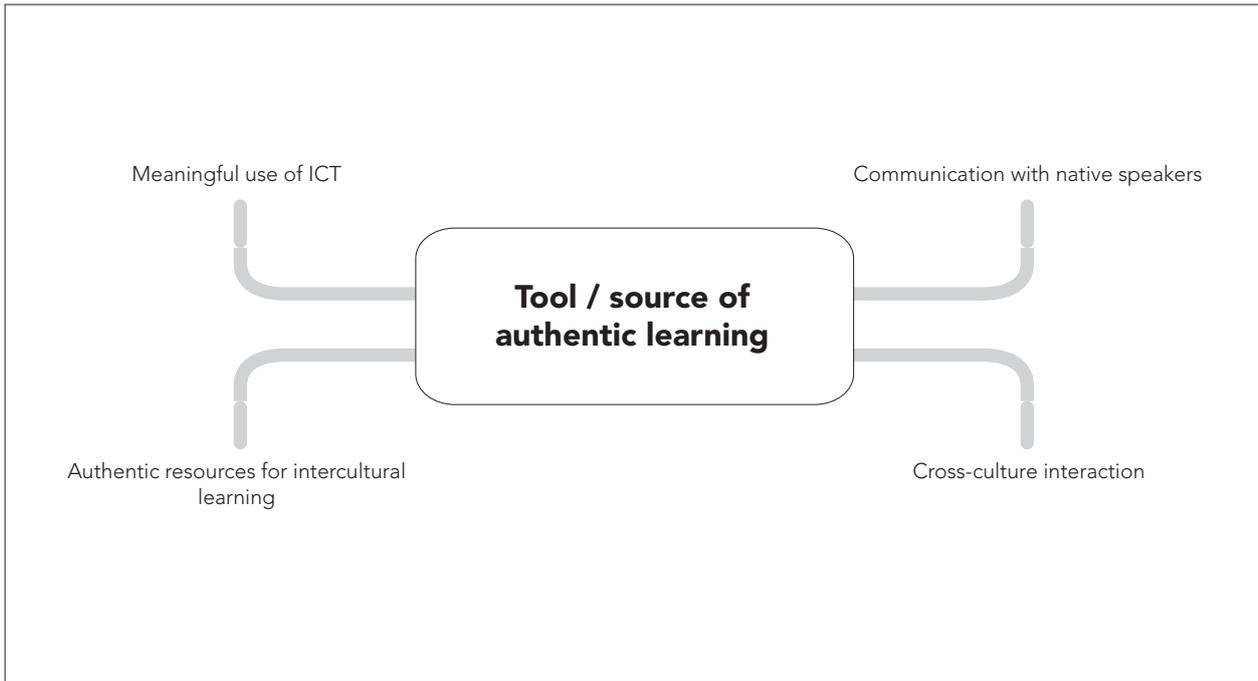
Figure 9: BRIDGE as a tool/source of authentic learning

Ninety-two per cent of Australian BRIDGE teachers reported that BRIDGE has enabled their students to expand their knowledge and awareness of the partner country, and 90 per cent of them agreed or strongly agreed that students have further developed their intercultural understanding as a result of BRIDGE.

Personal visits and exchanges

Facilitator of cross-cultural relationships

Synchronous classroom contacts

Private communication
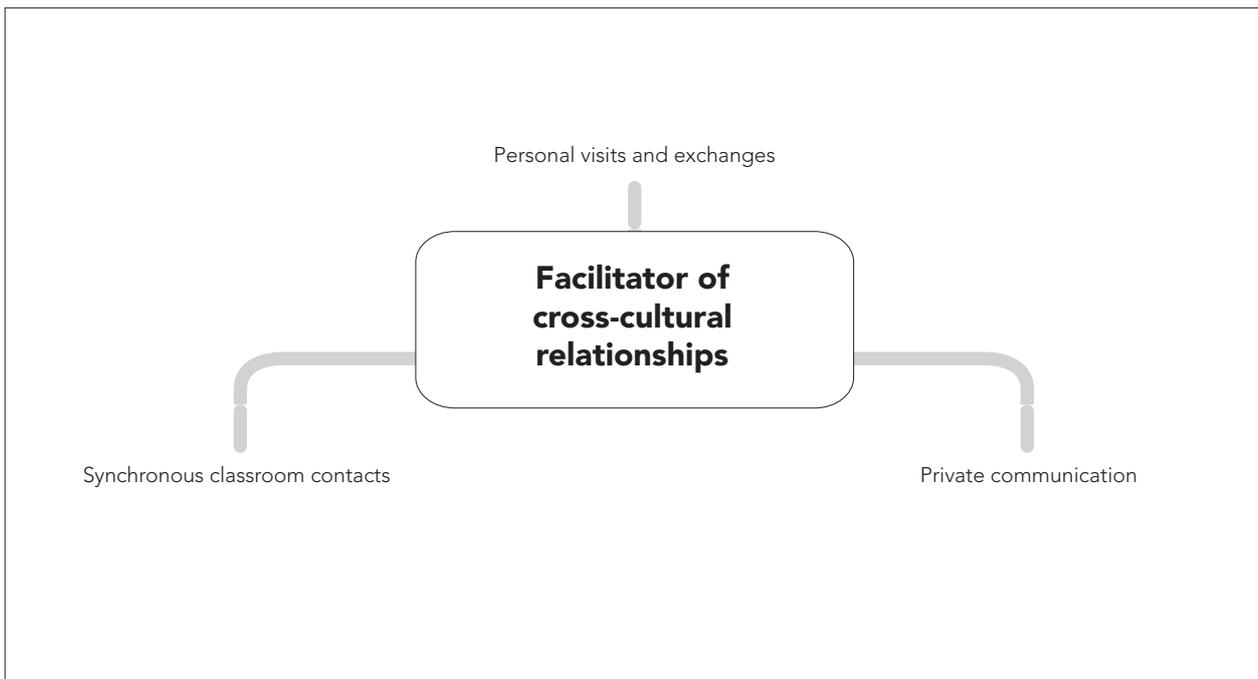
Figure 10: BRIDGE as a facilitator of cross-cultural relationships

All Australian BRIDGE schools have been in contact with their partner school in Asia. Eighty per cent of them maintain contact with their partner school, and 79 per cent indicated that their staff had a chance to visit their partner school and make personal connections with their counterparts. Such personal relationships are an effective platform for the reduction of cultural stereotypes, the fostering of intercultural understanding and global mindedness, and building the strength of a school partnership.

In some BRIDGE schools students have developed cross-cultural relationships with their peers via social media and/or during overseas visits, with 22 per cent of Australian BRIDGE schools having organised such visits for students. Overall, 72 per cent of Australian BRIDGE teachers reported that BRIDGE has enabled their school to establish a sustainable school partnership to support cross-cultural engagement.
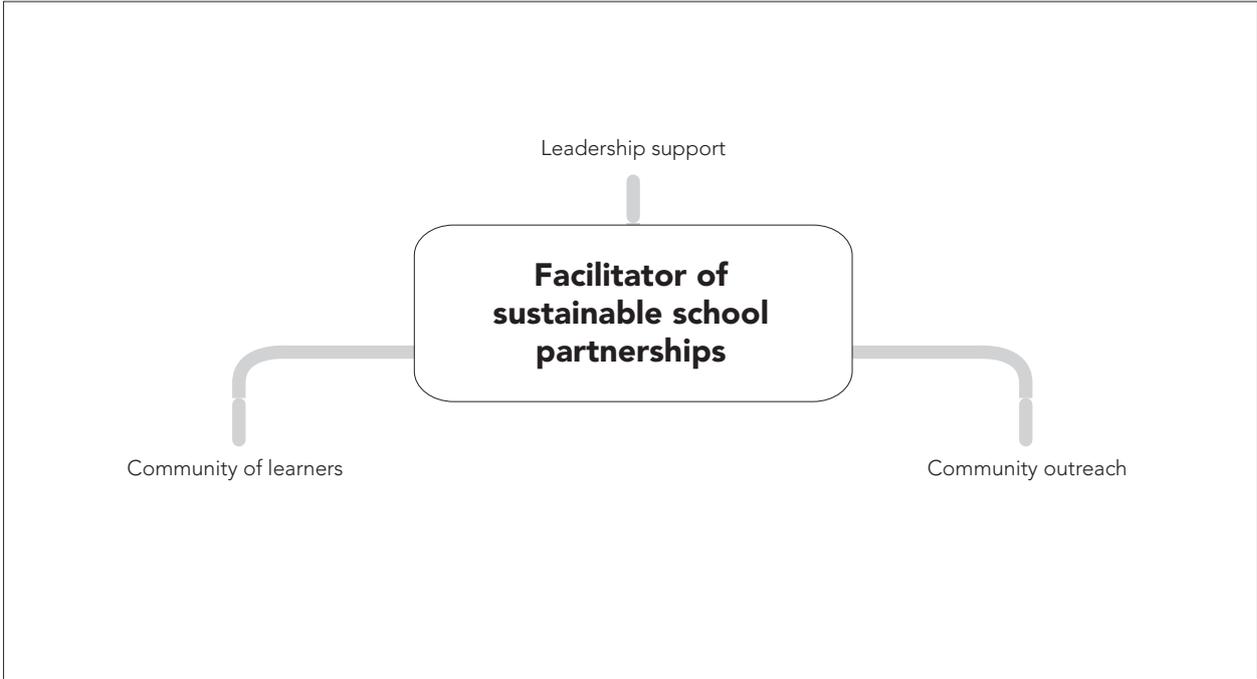
Figure 11: BRIDGE as a facilitator of sustainable school partnerships

Sixty-two per cent of all Australian BRIDGE teachers indicated that steps have been taken to plan for the sustainability of the partnership. As previous research on international school partnerships has highlighted, school leadership support, cross-school collaboration, and the development of communities of learners are key success factors for sustainable school partnerships.

The majority of BRIDGE partnerships meet these conditions: 77 per cent of all Australian BRIDGE teachers stated that their partnerships are actively supported by their school leaders and 57 per cent of them indicated that BRIDGE has enabled the establishment of communities of learners. Moreover, around half of all Australian BRIDGE schools collaborate with their partner schools to plan a schedule of activities (47 per cent) and to carry out joint learning activities (53 per cent).

What Works 7

This research has found that study programmes to Asia—when designed with transformational and experiential learning in mind—enabled the following personal and/or professional transformations to occur for school educators:

- Heightened (inter)cultural awareness and knowledge (that leads to curriculum and pedagogic changes at the school level)

- Sustained personal and professional interest in Asia and a moral imperative to develop students' Asia-relevant capabilities

- The often 'unintended' positive effects of sustained engagement with people overseas and building communities of learners.

Particular aspects of AEF study programmes have brought about these transformations, most notably:

- Sound combination of formal (information-based) learning and intensive cultural immersion activities (including homestays)

- School visits

- Professional networking and reflection.

Conclusion

Through increased and continued research on Asia literacy conducted within a transformative intercultural education framework, school educators will be further equipped with robust frameworks, both conceptual and operational, to develop students' Asia-relevant capabilities. The What Works series has provided a solid platform for this to occur, helping to clarify the fuzziness of the once blurred notion of 'Asia literacy'.

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Quality learning with technologies: Strategies for school leaders to address challenges and dilemmas

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Biography

Kathryn Moyle (PhD) is a Principal Research Fellow at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). She has published widely on education policy issues including school leadership, school improvement, professional standards and issues relating to the use of technologies in schools. Kathryn is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and an Adjunct Professor at both the University of Canberra and Charles Darwin University. She is also an Adjunct Research Fellow at the University of South Australia. Prior to working at ACER, Kathryn was the Executive Director of the Centre for School Leadership at Charles Darwin University.

Abstract

The integration of technologies into schools is often promoted as a way to improve the quality of students' learning, and an approach that enables teachers to be more 'learner focused'.

Virtual learning environments, such as learning management systems, mobile technologies, online games, simulations and virtual worlds, are seen to offer teachers the ability to personalise learning for students, and as a way to enable students to be in control of the pace of their own learning. Technologies are also seen to assist in the collection and analysis of data about students' achievements. Integrating technologies into school programs however, is not without its challenges.

This paper draws on research, policies and current practices to explore some of the challenges and dilemmas school leaders experience when fostering quality learning with technologies, and proposes some strategies to address these issues.

Introduction

Little Australian research has been conducted into the links between school leadership, teaching and learning with technologies, and the quality of Australian students' outcomes at school. Australian school principals are responsible for implementing national and state or territory-agreed policies within their schools. Through monitoring the performance of students on national tests on a school by school basis, principals can be held accountable for the implementation of these policies. Professor Bob Lingard has consistently argued that this approach to policy development and implementation in Australian school education over the past few decades can be called 'steering at a distance' (Lingard, 2014). Originally developed to explain the operations of the Dutch higher education sector (Kickert, 1995), this approach to policy development and implementation occurs with the consent of the federal, state and territory politicians responsible for school education in Australia, with national policies endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) of which, the respective Ministers of Education are members. In this political environment, principals are central to the implementation of Australian school education policies.

Through an exploration of some of the policy contexts, concerning the use of technologies in teaching and learning within Australia and Australia's near neighbour, Singapore, this paper considers some of the challenges and dilemmas school leaders experience when fostering quality learning with technologies, in order to suggest some strategies to address these issues.

Policy context

Australia has been wrestling with what counts as quality education, which includes technologies in teaching and learning, for over 30 years. Policies and reports since the release in 1977 of the paper by the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Schools Authority, *Computers and … or … for … education*, have been concerned with the appropriate roles for computers and other technologies in teaching and learning. In the early 1980s the Commonwealth Schools Commission established the National Advisory Committee on Computers in Schools, to consider policy issues concerning the use of computers in schools.
Both major political parties at the time made pre-election promises to support the Commonwealth Schools Commission recommendations (Anderson, 1984) outlined in the report Teaching, Learning and Computers (Australian Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1983).

In 1983, a report was presented to the then Victorian Minister of Education which surveyed the commitment to the use of computers in school education by the respective Australian states and territories, as well as several other countries. Countries overseas were categorized in the report as either:

1. Under-developed and uncertain about the inclusion of computers into teaching and learning. These countries included China, Thailand, and Yugoslavia.

2. Developed but reluctant about the inclusion of computers into teaching and learning. These countries included Japan, Germany, and Sweden.

3. Developed and committed to the inclusion of computers into teaching and learning. These countries included Norway, France, the UK (including England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland), the US, and Canada (Shears, Dale & Victoria Co-ordinator General of Education, 1983).

The report also provided a summary of the status of computers in schools for each of the states and territories as well as at the national level (Shears, Dale & Victoria Co-ordinator General of Education, 1983). It carried through an emphasis on using computers for educational purposes within school classrooms. Indeed, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, various state departments of education released computers in schools policies (see for example South Australia Education Department, 1985; Education Queensland, 1999). Concerns about how classroom pedagogies could be improved with the use of technologies have been carried into the 21st century. In March 2000, the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) endorsed *Learning in an Online World: the school education action plan for the information economy* (Education Network Australia, 2000). This action plan directly addressed the role of technologies in teaching and learning. The overarching goals of the action plan included that all schools would seek to integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) into their operations, to improve student learning, to offer flexible learning opportunities, and to improve the efficiency of their 'business practices'.

Until 2013, a series of national committees continued to meet periodically to discuss issues concerning the deployment and use of technologies in schools. At the beginning of the 21st century, the MCEETYA ICT in Schools Taskforce developed a series of 'Learning in an Online World' papers. This series includes the paper 'Contemporary Learning: Learning 3' in an online world (Curriculum Corporation 2005) which specifically addresses approaches to teaching and learning with technologies. It states:

> *21st century education integrates technologies, engaging students in ways not previously possible, creating new learning and teaching possibilities, enhancing achievement and extending interactions with local and global communities. (Curriculum Corporation 2005, p2).*

Most recently at a peak level, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008) has continued the policy emphasis on the use of technologies in teaching and learning, which was also outlined in the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA, 1999). The wording of the two declarations built upon each other; each containing similar sentiments in relation to ICT in school education, as Table one demonstrates.

These respective policies have consistently and in a sustained way, promoted the use of technologies as one way to improve the quality of teaching and learning practised in schools. The emphasis on the use of technologies in teaching and learning is reflected in both the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Australian Curriculum. The Australian Professional Standard for Principals places more emphasis on the use of digital data by principals, than on their role supporting students and teachers to meaningfully include technologies into classroom practices. Nonetheless, many factors influence students' performance, with school leaders' capabilities being among the most influential (Schleicher 2014).

Technologies policies and the quality of teaching and learning

While the use of technologies in Australian schools now has a history of about 30 years or so, there is still much room for research, development and evaluation in this field. This work has to include the role of teachers in classrooms and the role of school principals in supporting teaching and learning with technologies, cognisant of current policies and practices. To provide decision-makers with a conceptual framework to evaluate the impact of technologies at a global level, and to benchmark the ICT readiness and usage of ICT in national economies, the World Economic Forum uses the Networked Readiness Index (NRI), to make judgements about economies 'networked readiness'.

The NRI uses four 'subindexes' and 10 'pillars' as the criteria for the development of the rankings in the NRI. (Bilbao-Osorio, Dutta & Lanvin, 2014). Given the policy context within which principles work, these criteria can provide insights into the types of measurements being exercised at an international level, which is trickling through to schools.

Countries that perform well on international tests such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) also seem to perform well on World Economic Forum measures such as the NRI. In 2012 for example, Singapore along with the other 64 member and partner countries and economies of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD),

participated in PISA 2012. Singapore's 15- year-old students performed in the top three countries, in science, maths and literacy (OECD, 2013). In the same year, on its overall assessment of its NRI, Singapore was rated as the second-highest country of the 142 national economies that participated in 2012 (Dutta & Bilbao-Osorio, 2012).

As part of the NRI assessment, Singapore was rated second-highest on the criterion judging the quality of the educational system, and sixth on having Internet in schools (Dutta & Bilbao-Osorio, 2012). Singapore's performances on the measures used by the World Economic Forum to assess countries' networked readiness continue to be in the top band of countries in all the measures used (Bilbao-Osorio, Dutta & Lanvin, 2014).

Singapore has been implementing technology in its education system since 1997. Masterplan One (1997-2002) (Teo, 1997) had the goal of allowing students to have computer usage for 30 percent of their curriculum time in fully networked schools with a computer to pupil ratio of 1:2. Masterplan Two (Tharman, 2002) was aimed at motivating teachers to use ICT effectively in teaching and learning. Masterplan Three (2009-2014) (Ng, 2008) is built on the first two Masterplans and aims to be more 'transformative', by equipping teachers and students with the competencies and practices required to succeed in a knowledge economy. In summary, the four broad strategies outlined in the third Singaporean Masterplan for ICT in Education (2009-2014) are:

- To strengthen integration of ICT into curriculum, pedagogy and assessment to enhance learning and develop competencies for the 21st century

- to provide differentiated professional development that is more practice-based and models how ICT can be effectively used to help students learn better

- to improve the sharing of best practices and successful innovations

- to enhance ICT provisions in schools to support the implementation of mp3 (Ministry of Education, SIngapore, 2008, p1).

To support the implementation of the three respective Masterplans, schools in Singapore have campus-wide wireless Internet connectivity and classroom computers with projection equipment. Bring your own devices (BYOD) occurs in many schools, with teachers and students

Adelaide declaration on national goals for schooling in the 21st century	Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians
When students leave school they should be confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society (MCEETYA, 1999, Goal 1.6).	Successful learners: have the essential skills in literacy and numeracy and are creative and productive users of technology, especially ICT, as a foundation for success in all learning areas (MCEETYA, 2008, p8).

Figure 1: Wording about ICT in school education from the Adelaide and Melbourne Declarations about the goals of schooling in Australia

bringing their own laptops and other mobile ICT devices to schools. While technologies in and of themselves, do not make a difference to the quality of students' learning outcomes per se, they do provide the vehicle for encouraging teachers to discuss and reflect on their practices. Together the dual policy emphases of improving the quality of teaching and learning, and that of including technologies into classroom practices, raises challenges and dilemmas for school principals in Australia and elsewhere, about the type of leadership, management and professional learning approaches they should adopt to implement these policies.

Personalising learning

Running alongside the Australian policy emphasis promoting technologies as a fundamental component of quality teaching and learning, has been the philosophy of student-focused or learner-focused learning. Linked to learner-focused or student-focused learning, are the concepts of 'differentiated classrooms' and 'personalised learning'. These two concepts are often used inter-changeably and linked to the use of technologies in teaching and learning. A distinction that can be made though is that 'personalised learning' is tailored specifically to each individual student's learning demands. 'Differentiated learning' can refer to the use of varying teaching approaches for small groups of students within the same class, depending on their respective developmental stages and interests. Both personalised learning approaches and differentiated classroom practices have been informed by student or learner-focused philosophies of education.

In countries such as the US, the UK and Australia, the notion of learner-focused classroom practices has tended to be informed by a variety of theories of learning including constructivism which argues that children are not empty vessels waiting to be filled, and that knowledge and meaning emerge from interactions between people's lived experiences and their ideas (see for example Bruner 1966; Piaget 1967).

With the emerging use of computers in schools, Papert developed the theory of constructionism, which adapted constructivism in light of using technologies in teaching and learning. Papert argued that children learn well by doing things, such as designing and making computer programs and online games (see for example Kafai & Resnick 1996; Papert & Harel 1991; Papert 1999). More recently, Resnick (2013) has argued that along with reading and writing, children should learn how to write computer codes and test them out with other children, using the Internet. Constructivism and constructionism can both be manifest when carefully selected online programs are used as ways to enable students to be in control of the pace of their own learning.

Other interpretations of student or learner focused pedagogies encourage personalised learning strategies that place an emphasis on supporting students to analyse their own learning and to be self-directed. Online materials can also be used to reinforce content and/or processes of learning. Students can expand their knowledge by researching about a topic online or problem-solving an issue which requires applying knowledge. A student struggling with a concept can use an online resource to help them practice that concept.

Trust is placed in the learner to make thoughtful and meaningful choices with guidance from the teacher, about what they learn and how they will learn it (McCombs, 2012).

Personalising learning then, requires teachers and principals to recognise that students in the one class and across a school have differing abilities, knowledge, experiences and world views.

Focused on how children learn, Vygotsky (1930/1978) theorised that learning is maximised when children are provided with challenges just beyond their comfort zone, in what he called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The design of online games potentially offers teachers insights into how the theory of ZPD can be applied. Often progress within the game from one level to another provides the gamer with challenges just outside of his or her present capacity. The challenge the game provides is sufficiently stimulating though, that it motivates the gamer to repeatedly try to succeed. The gamer accepts repeated failure and ultimately success, and moves onto the next challenge.

Interpreting Australia's PISA results (see Thomson, De Bortoli & Buckley, 2013), Professor Geoff Masters indicates that in any given year of school, the most advanced ten per cent of students (for example, in reading or mathematics) are about five to six years ahead of the least advanced ten per cent of students (Masters, 2014). Teaching an age or year level-based curriculum without differentiation or personalisation means that the more able students are not extended and the least able students can miss out on learning foundational concepts and fail.

To address this issue means that Australian schools require strategies to address such variations in students' levels of development. High-performing education systems have strategies for minimising such curriculum gaps.

Several countries whose students perform well on international tests such as PISA also have policies that are 'learner-focused'. Each of these countries, however, interprets the notion of 'learner-focused', slightly differently. According to Barber and Mourshed (2007) in Singapore, teachers typically remain in school for several hours after formal lessons have ended, to provide additional teaching to those students who need it most. In Finland, schools employ additional teachers to provide individualised or small-group support to students who are beginning to fall behind. In the Shanghai province of China, teachers are trained to be action researchers of their classroom practices. Teachers are supported to develop the ability to work out ways of ensuring that any student beginning to fall behind is helped (OECD, 2011). In Korea, students can use text messaging from their mobile phone or tablet to access advice from a pool of expert teachers, outside of school hours.

Although there have been variations of 'learner-centred' schooling, this general philosophy has been espoused consistently over the past century since the publication of Education and Democracy by John Dewey (Dewey 1916). Perhaps a more generalized '21st century' view is that teachers require many theories and approaches in their 'kit bag' of professional skills and knowledge, depending on the students they are teaching; what they are teaching; and what the students have to achieve. One critical piece of 'teaching knowledge' is to know why, when and how to use certain theories and approaches, over others. These

decisions have to be informed by different personal and organisational assessment and evaluation approaches. This level of sophistication in the selection of pedagogies when coupled with technologies requires teachers and their school leaders alike, to understand what teaching and learning with technologies 'looks like', and what is required to enable such practices to flourish.

Building the profession: Challenges and dilemmas for school leaders

School principals are central to developing the ongoing quality of teaching and learning in schools. They have to identify the alignments and intersections within and across policies, and to synthesise the policy priorities into a cohesive narrative, in order to make the requirements of policy implementation achievable (Mulford, 2008). They have to understand and be able to lead staff consistently and in a sustained manner towards commonly shared goals about students' achievements and the teaching and learning approaches used to achieve those goals. The purpose of school improvement is to improve outcomes for students. The way to improve outcomes is to improve the practices that lead to improved outcomes (Masters, 2014).

A challenge for school principals is to know what current and emerging technologies and associated practices support learning by children and adults, respectively. Since 2002, the New Media Consortium's (NMC) K-12 Horizon Reports have annually identified and described the emerging technologies likely to have an impact over the forthcoming five years in school education. The most recent 'NMC 2014 K-12 Horizon Report' (Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada & Freeman, 2014), notes that teachers in many countries are now expected to be capable at using both technology and non-technology-based approaches for the understanding of knowledge, learner tutoring and support, and assessment. In 2014 the NMC reported that teachers do collaborate with other teachers inside and outside their schools and routinely use digital strategies in their work with students (Johnson et al, 2014). Teachers organise their own work and comply with administrative documentation and reporting requirements, also using technologies. Much of teachers' self-directed engagement in their own continuing professional development involves social media and online tools and resources (Johnson et al, 2014).

Students and their families use technologies to socialise, organise and informally learn on a daily basis. Some educational leaders are considering ways in which schools can support students to continue to engage in learning activities, formal and informal, beyond the traditional school day, which in turn, is leading to the rethinking of the primary responsibilities of teachers. An increasing number of teachers are using more hybrid and experiential learning approaches, experimenting with social media and other ways of building learning communities (Johnson et al, 2014).

These approaches are consistent with the aforementioned learner-centred philosophies of constructivism and constructionism. It is against this backdrop that school principals have to be great educational leaders and at the same time, be exemplary administrators. That is, they have to understand how technologies can improve learning experiences personally, as well as for both students and teachers; how to act as guides and mentors to promote student-centered learning; and how to use technologies for administrative and management purposes. They require clarity of purpose in each of these fields. Badly used, technologies can be a hindrance rather than a help. Understanding how to lead staff to understand data and then to interpret its' meaning into classroom practices, can be a challenge for school leaders.

These processes take time and require scaffolded professional learning. A robust, online administration and data management system that places a strong focus on addressing individual learning needs by supporting teachers to access up-to-date, real-time data in their classrooms is essential. School leaders have to both model practices expected of teachers; and implement approaches that support teachers to break down into small steps the processes required to implement personalised or student-focused learning. They then have to be persistent in monitoring and evaluating in collegial ways, the agreed, school improvement processes across the school.

High-performing education systems encourage their school leaders to support teachers to explore the most effective ways of supporting each student's learning with technologies. They support teachers to assist students to make links between their informal experiences gained outside of school, with the formalised requirements of teaching and learning that occurs within schools. This work recognises that information now and increasingly, is only available digitally, and that there is a lot of it. Rather than judging and grading students solely on how well they meet expectations for their age or year level, high expectations have to be set for every student's progress in full knowledge of their starting points. Learning success or failure can then be judged in terms of the progress each student makes towards his or her personal learning goals (Masters, 2014).

One of the roles of teachers within any given discipline is to develop students' abilities to sift and sort information based on explicit criteria such as accuracy, fit for purpose, useability, moral stance, and so on, depending on the use to which the information is to be put. And to ensure these skills are transferable by the students to different contexts. In the globalised context of education, teachers can facilitate student discussion using online forums and lead students in creating actual usable knowledge. Such learning activities require teachers to have a high level of facilitative and synthesizing skills both in face-to-face and online environments, and at times concurrently within classrooms. In such contexts, contact hours between teachers and students become more valuable, and instead of using them for information transmission, face-to-face discussions can then focus on the development of higher order thinking and learning.

Sir Ken Robinson (2010) talks about teachers having to make a paradigm shift to personalised learning which involves the process of shaping learning to individuals' requirements, recognising that each student inherently has different strengths and weaknesses, interests and ways of learning. A challenge for school leaders is to know how to support teachers in such processes, so that each student can achieve to their full potential. The aim for teachers is to set realistic but challenging stretch goals for every learner, and to do this in collaboration with the students themselves (Masters, 2014). Similarly it is the same challenge for school principals with developing teachers:

how to establish realistic but challenging stretch goals for every teacher.

Masters (2014) suggests the following steps to achieve such outcomes. Firstly, establish and understand where individuals are in their learning and practice. Such diagnoses can be achieved through the use of formative assessments using online, paper-based tools, observations or a combination of all three. Secondly, once information is available about where individuals are in their learning, this information can be used both to evaluate past learning progress (assessment of the learning that has occurred since some previous assessment); and establish starting points for future teaching and learning (Masters 2014). The second step is to design learning opportunities targeted to the achievement levels and learning needs of individual learners (or groups of learners at similar points in their learning). The third step is to monitor the progress that individuals make in their learning, and to provide feedback to guide further learning.

Differentiating classrooms requires school leaders in collaboration with their teachers to interpret the data they collect and use it to determine and agree upon a range of issues such as how and when to combine homogenous and heterogeneous groups of students; to know when are the right times to use tutoring or conduct whole group instructions; and to know how computers can be used to assist students and teachers achieve improved knowledge and practices. These challenges are 'whole school' challenges that require whole school planning and strategies to be implemented in sustained ways. The choice of technology in any given circumstance can only occur when there is sufficient background information and subsequent thought given to the most efficient and effective ways of incorporating technologies into the teaching and learning.

Conclusion

What counts as quality learning with technologies has a multiplicity of answers, which depend upon the purposes to which technologies are to be meaningfully placed. Australian schools have implemented policies aimed at making a difference to the quality of students learning through the use of technologies, for over 30 years. There is much yet to be learnt however, about the role of school leaders in supporting teachers to include technologies into teaching and learning in ways that make a difference to students' learning and achievements. To support teaching and learning with technologies, school leaders require separate but aligned and coordinated plans for the technology infrastructure of the school; the social media and communication strategies; school administration; student data; and curriculum and library requirements.

School principals have to be sophisticated in the use of organisational approaches that includes the professional and administrative uses of technologies in ways that support teachers to meet the expectations placed upon them. Principals require clarity about the various ways in which technologies can be used both in classroom practices and to inform the personalisation of learning for every student. There are many ramifications that emerge from making the decision to personalise learning for every

student in a school. The first step though, is to decide that this is the policy approach that will be followed, and then all other actions and budget considerations will flow from that.

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Quality education and religion: Preparing us for the next world

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Biography

John Quay is a Senior Lecturer in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. He is also a member of the ACE Victoria Committee. John's research interests revolve around understanding the deeper purposes of education, as informed by various philosophical discourses. These interests emerged from his own experiences with teaching (as well as being a student) which were mainly in the areas of outdoor education and physical education. He has recently published (with Routledge) Education, Experience and Existence: Engaging Dewey, Peirce and Heidegger; and (with Sense) John Dewey and Education Outdoors, co-authored with Jayson Seaman.

Abstract

This paper will argue that the basic premise underpinning much academically orientated education can be perceived as akin to the basic premise of many religions: preparation for the next world, the afterlife—which in education means life after school or university. This paper explores this notion of preparation and what it means for our quest for quality in education (how best to acquire knowledge as the measure of a good preparation) and offers an alternative to this vision that puts more faith in our present lives and how living these well is a better way to connect to the future. This alternative is a legitimate religious perspective that I translate into a version of educational practice which asks us to comprehend life (and school) a little differently.

Introduction

At the heart of all endeavours that deal with betterment of the human condition sits an existential question of time: How do we best approach the future from the present? Acknowledging that some approaches may be better than others raises the issue of quality. This question and the quality of the response are of immense importance for religion and education because both claim to offer ways to understand and contend with the future, in the present. Both are premised on a certain view of the future that informs what should be done in the present, how one should act, as preparation for this future.

For many religions this future is post-life, the afterlife; for compulsory education this future is post-school. Yet considering the future in this way—as something which is perceived by many to be years down the track—suggests a prioritising of distant future over present living. In this paper I wish to question the precedence placed on this remote and often obscure future, especially as this influences educational practice, drawing analogies with religion in helping me make this argument.

In approaching this issue let me foreground that I don't intend to provide a sweeping commentary on the way different religions deal with the notion of an afterlife. I shall instead build on my own lived experience of Christianity, having been raised a Catholic (although I rarely get to mass these days), to illuminate connections between religion and education that emphasize this question of future and present.

Christianity in its various guises offers a range of ways of conceiving what happens when/after we die. Human beings have striven for millennia to find some form of answer to the question of what happens to us at death, and continue to do so. We are, generally, not content to live with death as an open question and instead want the certainty and security of an answer. Amongst the answers offered by Christianity is the notion that the good will go to heaven and be with God, while the evil will suffer in hell with the devil, with purgatory in between for those given a bit of a second chance. This cannot be proven beyond reasonable doubt, of course, and so its acceptance relies on faith; faith in the word of God, or at least in those who convey it.

Such a conception of the future, one that has elements beyond the realms of proof and relies on acceptance of the word of others, is not dissimilar to that which characterizes school education. In making this comparison with education I am not speaking of adult perceptions of school, but those of the young people for whom school is a living reality. It is the future that they see from their living present that is most important here, rather than the future which we adults see for them.

For adults, the future to which education is addressed can be claimed with some certainty, as we adults have lived to see it. As adults we have a solid sense of what occurred to us after school. With this in mind we look back and, thinking about the wellbeing of young people, organise schooling as a preparation for this future. Again with this in mind we often find ourselves, whether as teachers or parents, cajoling young people in an effort to have them realise this future by adhering to the means we have designed to achieve it. This is not dissimilar to the way religious practices, divinely ordained, are organised to prepare us in some way for the after-life, enabling us to achieve the best outcome: a place in heaven with God. In both cases a remote future is prioritised and then the present life of others is harnessed to that future – all with their best interests at heart, of course. Such harnessing is institutionalised so that it can be implemented at scale.

Now the quandaries raised by such an arrangement of future and present become plainer. Getting to heaven would seem to be such a significant and momentous achievement, at least if one is a Christian that securing this outcome should perhaps override every other goal of life. All Christians should be striving to achieve sainthood. And yet this is not always the case. Why?

A parallel conundrum is to be found in education. Getting into a tertiary education course that leads to a respected and well-paying career would seem to be of such significance to future happiness, security and wellbeing that young people would be bending over backwards through junior, middle and senior school years to achieve it. And yet this is not always the case. Why?

It is my contention that the problem in both situations lays in the remoteness of the future that is used to characterise the present, in effect the disconnection of the future from the present. However, this disconnect is not visible if we consider life as if unfolding along a timeline. When seen in this way, from a distance, it seems as if life is able to be objectively mapped out as a series of events, positioning a young person's existence as a matter of pathways – educational, vocational, and religious and so forth.

In contrast, for this disconnect to become evident, we must embrace a different understanding of life, one which accepts that the perceptions of the future of any young person cannot be separated from their present life. It is the present we are working with. Temporally-speaking, the present is not just this immediate millisecond, but rather the ongoing present moment that has a specific future orientation as well as being beholden to a particular past. Good teachers know that it is this ongoing moment that they are crafting with everything they say and do.

There are numerous exemplars in popular culture which highlight this disconnect between future and present. One is the famous song 'Father and Son' by Cat Stevens (1970), which conveys the differences between the perceptions of adult and young person in relation to the future and what it means. The living present of the father, the adult, reveals the young person, the son, as someone with much ahead, someone who could benefit from the knowledge or wisdom that the father possesses: 'there's so much you have to know. 'In contrast, from the living present of the young person the adult is someone attempting to dictate the future: 'from the moment I could talk I was ordered to listen'.

In this disconnect the father looks from his own present and sees elements of his past in a possible version of his son's future; while the son sees the future from his own present which he well understands is not that of his father: 'it's them they know not me' (Stevens, 1970). Here, then, we have two different lived presents giving two different conceptions of the future of the young person. The problem is that the adult view, while caring, does not seriously take into consideration the lived present of the young person.

From this adult view it then seems logical to map out this future and to attempt to program the life of the young person in achieving it.

This temporal difference is the heart of the disconnect, and it is why we struggle when we try to educate young people in the belief that we are preparing them for the adult future we hope they will eventually attain. Philosopher John Dewey, speaking about this way of conceiving education as preparation, described it as a 'treacherous idea '(1938, p. 47). Now treacherous is a strong word to use when describing any endeavour. To use it in describing education must flag significant concerns. In making this claim Dewey acknowledged that, 'in a certain sense every experience should do something to prepare a person for later experiences of a deeper and more expansive quality'. 'But', he went on, 'it is a mistake to suppose that the mere acquisition of a certain amount of arithmetic, geography, history, etc., which is taught and studied because it may be useful at some time in the future, has this effect.' (Dewey 1938, p.47)

And yet this treacherous idea of preparation for an adult future is well entrenched in our understanding of education. Cat Stevens captured it in a father's words: 'there's so much you have to know. ' The adult view reduces the pathways from young person's present to adult future into bodies of knowledge arranged neatly as stepping stones, as levels of curriculum to be attained. But this then relegates the present to something less than it should be. The present only exists to serve the adult future. For many young people this is untenable. For Dewey it was treacherous.

The significance of the existential question of time for education is now, perhaps, a little clearer. How do we best approach the future from the present? This question deals with the betterment of the human condition. Yet we rarely discuss this question directly in educational discourse, leading to a lack of awareness of the quality of our practices in this regard. However, it is possible to gauge the quality of our practices in connection with this question. In suggesting how to do this I draw on two notable examples in Christian teaching, the difference between which may help to illuminate this qualitative variance.

The first example is that of the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament, handed down to Moses as a list of directives: 'You shall not steal.' The way in which these commandments were presented (as a list inscribed on two stone tablets, couched mainly in negative or 'not' terms) and delivered (by God to Moses on a mountaintop) shows that they were meant to be committed to memory and obeyed, like a set of directives from father to son, or from teacher to student. They convey an authoritarian relationship; lack of compliance will result in individual punishment – no heaven for you! A climate of fear can surround such mandates.

The other example from Christian teaching is very different. It is the single commandment that Jesus gave verbally, detailed in the gospel of John (15:12): 'This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you'. This one commandment is simple, holistic, directed socially, and couched in terms that address actions in the present first and foremost, which by their nature will secure a positive future. While expressed as a commandment, it is not presented or delivered in the same

way as the Ten Commandments. This one commandment is empowering rather than disciplinary in nature.

So how do we consider these two very different examples from Christian teaching in more general educational terms? Importantly, both approaches are positive in their intent, just as schooling aspires to be constructive and supportive; to be a good in the life of a young person. However these positive intentions work with very different conceptions of the connection between present and future, very different understandings of the human condition. As such I am arguing that their educational quality differs.

From a temporal perspective the most critical difference is in the experience of fulfilment, of success – which is what we all want in our present and our future. But the Old Testament example places the ultimate success a long way away, in an after-life. We must live in adherence to the Ten Commandments in order to achieve this success. As such, this living has a disciplinary tone to it. The primary objective is to conform by not stepping out of line. In a more constructive sense, one is also expected to learn scripture and sacraments, as detailed in the Bible and in versions of a catechism. This learning may be tested in various ways to determine one's knowledge of texts and practices deemed sacred. Compliance is one such test. Admittedly, a form of success can be experienced in these ways, but this is not the success of achieving heaven, rather it is jumping from one stepping stone to the next along a pre-ordained pathway.

The New Testament example, on the other hand, enables one to experience present success that is similar to the ultimate success. Loving one another is a practical rendering of heaven itself. It does not focus directly on knowledge acquisition but translates into ways of acting which are at the same time everyday ways of being a person. Experiencing success in these ways of being a person enables one to move forward towards the ultimate goal - not by jumping across stepping stones which may eventual lead there, but by living heaven in the present.

Quality education, especially that occurring around the middle school years, is of this form. It enables young people to experience success through taking on ways of being a person that are significant to them in an everyday sense. These ways of being a person are simple, holistic, socially directed and couched in terms that address actions in the present first and foremost.

Of critical importance is the awareness that teaching always works at this existential level of being a person; teaching cannot be divorced from the human condition. Old Testament-style teaching does create ways of being, but these are usually directed at knowledge acquisition and disciplinary compliance. And because the future they are directed towards is so remote, they seem disconnected from present living for many young people.

New Testament-style teaching is much richer. It takes the present and makes it akin to the future. But at the same time it remains faithful to present living. For we know that the present for a fourteen year old is not the same as the present for a forty year old. Cat Stevens highlighted how differently a son and a father may see the world, and this applies just as much to a student and a teacher.

To take the present and make it akin to the future requires translation of meaning. This is the creative task that the quality teacher understands, as Jesus understood. Knowledge cannot be taught as if its meaning in use has no relevance, as if academic testing is comparable to the future we strive for. We must situate important knowledge in ways of being where it is relevant to achievement of present success for the young people involved. But again, this success cannot be Old Testament-style success — a stepping stone along the way to some remote future — it must instead be success in the present that is akin to future success in life. For this is how we grow.

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Quality educational leadership recognised through Australian Principal Certification

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Biography

Louisa Rennie is the Director of the Australian Principal Certification program at Principals Australia Institute (PAI). Prior to joining PAI, she was Manager of the School Leadership team at the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) where she promoted the uptake of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals and led the design and development of the 360 Reflection Tool, aligned with the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

Louisa is a current board member of the South Australian Institute for Educational Leadership Advisory Board (SAIEL) and past Chair of the Deputy Principals and School Leaders Association, Catholic Education South Australia (DEPSLA). She has 18 years' experience in Catholic Education South Australia as a teacher, education consultant, deputy principal and acting principal. She worked in a cross sectoral capacity with local and national education systems / sectors during the time.

Louisa has also worked internationally as teacher and education adviser in South America, Japan and the United Arab Emirates. She is particularly interested in leadership development, learning cultures and intercultural understanding and the use of data and coaching to improve leadership capacity.

Abstract

As the national body representing Australian school principals, Principals Australia Institute (PAI) is leading an extensive consultation process with principals, school and system leaders across Australia, to inform the design and development of the Australian Principal Certification Program.

PAI promotes exemplary school leadership for student success. Participants in this session will learn about the consultation process undertaken to forge a benchmark of excellence that recognises the value of quality school leadership in Australian schools, lifts the profile of the profession and informs the development of an exemplary Australian Principal Certification Program.

This workshop will provide participants with background information about the research underpinning the work PAI is doing to develop the Australian Principal Certification Program, including discussion of the unique contexts within which certification occurs, the vision and purpose of various international certification programs and some of the lessons learnt in developing and implementing a successful certification program.

Our ability to recognise and value quality professional work depends on our ability to evaluate it. (Ingvarson, L 2014) Realising the potential of principal evaluation as a strategy for strengthening leadership and improving schools requires systemic change. (NAESP, NASSP, 2013). Principals must be at the centre of this process.

Participants will discuss what it means to be a member of the principal profession and understand how they can contribute to shaping the future of the profession through their engagement with the development of the Australian Principal Certification Program.

Introduction

There is widespread agreement that our society needs to place greater value on the important and complex work of teachers and principals (Productivity Commission 2012). Whether that happens will depend in large part on our capacity to develop standards for successful practice and rigorous methods for identifying those who meet them. Our ability to recognise and value quality professional work depends on our ability to evaluate it.

Principals Australia Institute (PAI)

The Australian Principal Certificate is to be awarded by PAI as the not-for-profit independent professional body that works with principals in Australian schools.

PAI, in consultation with Australian principals and key stakeholders, is designing the Australian Principal Certification Program to promote widespread implementation of effective professional practice consistent with the latest research.

What is Australian Principal Certification?

Australian Principal Certification is recognition of a principal's demonstration of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals (the Standard). Prepared by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) on behalf of Australian Ministers for Education, the Standard sets out what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work. It is presented as an integrated model that recognises three leadership requirements that a principal draws upon within five areas of professional practice.

Australian Principal Certification is recognition of the Australian Principal Standard in action.

PAI's extensive consultation process during 2013, and the early part of 2014, has confirmed that the Australian Principal Certification Program will:

- provide the professional and public recognition of principals who demonstrate the Standard

- be based on a principal's presentation of evidence of the three leadership requirements within the five areas of professional practice defined in the Standard

- use rigorous and quality-assured methods to assess evidence aligned with the Standard

- affirm the significance of principals taking professional responsibility and accountability for the Standard

- provide a significant reference point for principals in their professional learning and ongoing development.

Why is Australian Principal Certification important?

Educational research for over 25 years has demonstrated the strong positive correlation between quality school leadership and improved student outcomes. The improvement of educational outcomes depends not only on the development of standards for successful practice, but even more importantly on the use of rigorous methods for identifying those who meet the standard.

Australian Principal Certification is an endorsement, based on the provision and evaluation of evidence, that a member of the principal profession has attained accomplished practice in accordance with the Standard.

Certification is the way most professions drive continual improvement in their members' practice; in their own and in the public interest. The development of a publicly credible certification system is a defining credential of a profession.

Australian Principal Certification affirms the importance of quality education leadership and strengthens the unique role of principals to improve the quality of learning and teaching in schools. It is recognition of the Standard in action.

What is distinctive about Australian Principal Certification?

Principal Certification is distinct from principal performance management. Performance management is appropriately part of an employing authority's system for managing the performance of its employees. Principal Certification instead focuses on the profession's recognition of a member who demonstrates its professional Standard.

Principal Certification is distinct from an eligibility requirement for appointment as a principal. The definition of requirements for appointment as a principal is the separate and appropriate responsibility of employing authorities. Principal Certification instead focuses on the profession's own recognition of a principal's demonstration of the Standard.

Principal Certification is distinct from a qualification that is awarded by an organisation or institution on completion of a course or a defined set of study requirements. Studies and qualifications, such as a university diploma or degree, are valuable in their own right and contribute to a principal's professional learning. Principal Certification focuses directly on the Standard for the profession as its reference point.

Principal Certification is managed not by others, but by the profession itself. It is managed by the profession, for the profession and for the ultimate benefit of the community.

Research on principal evaluation

Research consistently indicates the importance of school principals in establishing the conditions and cultures that lead to better teaching and learning (Leithwood et al. 2004; Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe 2008; Robinson 2010; Wahlstrom et al. 2010; Louis et al. 2010).

Despite years of research on principal evaluation, it has not been easy to establish valid and reliable methods for distinguishing principals who have attained high performance standards from those who, as yet, have not. International evidence suggests that it is difficult to implement high quality assessment processes solely within the context of managerial accountability (OECD 2013).

The work of principals is complex and methods for capturing relevant evidence of effective leadership and assessing and evaluating it need to reflect that complexity. However, this is rarely possible in the context of traditional models of performance management and appraisal of principals (Clifford & Ross 2011; Davis et al. 2011). Therefore, it is appropriate that Australia examines the development of an independent, stable and professionally credible system for recognising principals who can implement what research shows to be successful leadership practices.

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What counts as quality in Vocational Education and Training?

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Biography

Virginia Simmons AO established Virsis Consulting in 2010, specialising in tertiary education policy and strategy and working for peak bodies, institutes, universities, interstate VET systems and internationally.

Previously she held senior positions in the Victorian TAFE system: CEO of Kangan Institute of TAFE (11 1/2 years), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (TAFE) at Swinburne University of Technology (3 1/2 years) and, most recently, CEO of Chisholm Institute (9 years). Throughout her career she played an active role in contributing to VET policy. Virginia has received several awards for her work in education and was recently appointed to the Board of TAFE South Australia.

Abstract

The question about 'What counts as quality in education?' will be responded to from a learner-centred perspective - the quality of the individual learning experience. This raises such issues as teacher quality, alignment of teaching practice to current and emerging technologies, learning content, relevance to the world of work, learner support, facilities and equipment and the like. It typically leads to a discussion about continuous improvement initiatives on a wide range of fronts.

Not so in Vocational Education and Training (VET).

This presentation will argue that the concept of quality in VET has been debased. A national bi-partisan fixation on markets, competition and cost-cutting has been brought to bear on VET in a way that sets it apart from all other educational sectors - primary, secondary and higher education. This fixation has replaced the quality agenda and neutralised its applicability in VET systems.

Introduction

For the purposes of this paper, the question 'What counts as quality in education?' has been reframed to read 'What counts as quality in Vocational Education and Training?'

At the outset, it should be pointed out that the paper distinguishes between Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) as the major public component of VET. The paper is influenced by the writer's background in TAFE and in Victoria.

By way of setting the scene, the answer to the question 'What counts as quality in Vocational Education and Training?' can be couched in a number of ways.

Quality: Plain English

In common phrasing 'quality' is seen as meeting high standards of performance and operating within a culture of continuous improvement. As will become clear, such a definition cannot be taken for granted in VET.

Total Quality Management (TQM)

The post-war quality movement, of which the likes of W Edwards Deming and Joseph Juran were regarded as leading lights, had a profound effect on both manufacturing and services. Often captured under the titled of Total Quality Management (TQM), its influence remained strong right up until the end of the last century and into the current century. It spawned the series of over 19,500 international standards for quality administered under the International Organisation for Standardization, known as ISO. A number of these standards relate to education and training.

As part of the many aspects of TQM, quality includes the following definitions:

- Quality is judged by fitness for purpose: A quality process or product is fit for its purpose

- Quality is judged by conformance to requirements: A quality process or product conforms to specified requirements

- Quality is judged by cost: A quality product costs more to produce.

- Quality is judged by price: Quality is the price consumers are willing to pay for a product or service

- Quality is judged by standards: Quality is compliance to best known standards, processes and specifications

- Quality is judged by value: Quality is value for price

- Quality is judged by the experience: Quality is a satisfying experience

These definitions emphasise different aspects. They could be sorted on a spectrum with standards and experience on one end and conformance, cost and price on the other. Putting it another way, the student focus is on one end of the spectrum and the market focus on the other.

W Edwards Deming emphasised that quality is about people and not products, because quality is defined by the satisfaction of the customers.

Joseph Juran, in maintaining that quality is 'fitness for purpose', emphasised that fitness is defined by the customer.

As a result of the pervasiveness of TQM, quality in education has been strongly influenced by the way quality is perceived from a management, quality assurance, product, marketing, manufacturing and economic point of view. This is particularly the case in VET.

Quality in VET

Specifically in VET, quality means compliance with the VET Quality Framework of the Australian Skills Training Authority (ASQA).

The VET Quality Framework comprises:

- The Standards for National VET Regulator (NVR) Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

- the Fit and Proper Person Requirements

- the Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements

- the Data Provision Requirements, and

- the Australian Qualifications Framework.

This comprehensive framework is clearly influenced by the broader quality movement and contains rigorous standards. But to some extent they serve as trappings of quality rather than genuine standards.

Who is the customer?

In the tradition of Deming and Juran, if quality is about people and not products and fitness for purpose is defined by the customer; the question arises 'Who is the customer in VET?'

- Is the customer the learner – the beneficiary of the education and training?

- Is the customer industry – through enterprises that employ graduates?

- Is the customer government – which purchases the training from the RTOs?

It is argued that in the VET system, the approach to quality is that the customer is government with the learner achieving a poor third place, and that the VET system is driven by other priorities that have taken precedence over quality.

The training market

In 1990 the Commonwealth and all states and territories signed up to national competitive neutrality principles, through the Competition Principles Agreement or (CPA), which has since been updated and re-affirmed.

The CPA states that the objective of competitive neutrality policy is: 'the elimination of resource allocation distortions arising out of public ownership of entities engaged in significant business activities'. (Competition Principles Agreement – 11 April 1995 (as amended to 13 April 2007), p 3)

Here, 'business' is the operative word.

But it also goes on to state that the competitive neutrality principles:

> … only apply to business activities of publicly-owned entities, not to the non-business, non-profit activities of these entities. (Competition Principles Agreement – 11 April 1995 (as amended to 13 April 2007), p 3)

Governments have chosen to regard TAFE as a business enterprise within the CPA despite this definition. Since the 1990s they have been progressively applying competitive neutrality principles to TAFE – increasingly treating TAFE solely as a business rather than, for example, also a service (imparting education/training/skills). It marks the advent of the 'training market' and the application of market principles to both public and private sector VET.

This has occurred in a way that bears no comparison with other educational sectors (schools, universities), although the extent of application varies between States/Territories. Even though it does not appear anywhere on the lists of public trading enterprises under the CPA, it is being treated in the same way as Qantas, the Commonwealth Bank or Telstra were treated.

TAFE is the only education sector to have been singled out in this way but it is clear that the Competition Principles Agreement does not require that it be so treated.

There are now over 4,600 RTOs in VET compared with less than 200 private Higher Education Providers and the cost and effort of trying to regulate all these RTOs for quality— so often unsuccessfully—is not seriously-regarded as an issue.

Only two or three years ago there were nearly 5,000 RTOs and they were allowed to come into existence well before proper regulatory processes for quality had been put in place. Rorting by unscrupulous providers ruined the VET system's reputation in the international market. It is only just now beginning to recover.

More recently the rorting has been at the domestic level, albeit in a different form. We see the provision of training being manipulated by the market for purely income generation motives. There was much publicity in the media about the massive oversupply of people qualified as personal trainers and security guards in Victoria in 2012. This was stamped out but only to be replaced by other fields of study where opportunistic providers could see a market.

Here are some of the more stark examples from the Victorian Training Market Report for 2013.

• There were 18,800 enrolments in Aged or Disable Carers in 2013. This is equivalent to around half the total number of workers in the entire industry and nine times the average annual requirement for new employees in the field.

• there were 15,000 enrolments for store persons in 2013 – equivalent to about 40 per cent of the total number of workers in this field and ten times the average annual requirement for new employees.

• there were 13,600 enrolments for Engineering Production Systems Workers. This is a staggering two and a half times the total number of workers in the field and 34 times the average annual requirement for new workers.

These figures represent a scandalous waste of government money, in the order of $200 million, at the same time as the government is making radical cuts to the TAFE system in the name of 'the market'.

As a result of this use of the training market for profit-making purposes, we also see a shift in emphasis by providers. TAFE is being increasingly pushed into the high-cost, resource-intensive areas such as professional, scientific and technical services, where it has 93 per cent of the market, electricity, gas and water (85 per cent), information, media and and telecommunications (81 per cent), mining (73 per cent) and construction (69 per cent).

By contrast the private RTOs dominate in the low-cost areas such as financial and insurance Services, where it has 88 per cent of the market, wholesale trade (87 per cent), transport, postal and warehousing (78 per cent), retail trade (74 per cent) and administrative and support services (72 per cent). These are all areas vulnerable to 'tick and flick' approaches to assessment.

As stated above, the Victorian TAFE system has been leading the competitive neutrality agenda. A recommendation in a recent Victorian report that is being vigorously pursued stated:

> *Consistent with the Victorian Government's competitive neutrality principles and the expectation that TAFE institutes operate as sustainable businesses, the commercial objective for the TAFE institutes should require them to maintain the Government's investment by fully recovering costs, including depreciation, and earning a return on fixed assets that is equal to the TAFE institute's weighted average cost of capital.*

Pursuant to this recommendation, the Victorian Government has reduced funding to TAFE in a range of areas and has removed funding for Community Service Obligations (CSOs).

Most typically, TAFE institutes regard community service obligations as ensuring that the maximum numbers of people have access to vocational education and training and that a range of services are provided to remove impediments to access. They include library services, career, employment and counselling services as well as bridging support. In removing this funding, the government has stripped the TAFE institutes of their capacity to provide a rich learning experience.

The common definition of a CSO used by government is:

> *a response to market failure which cannot be addressed sufficiently by regular market mechanisms and where there is clear government directive to address this failure … Market failure in the VET system can be isolated to specific regions or specific student groups.*

This is an entirely economic/market definition, not related to social need or the quality of the educational experience.

The Victorian Government has also issued strategic planning guidelines that TAFEs must adhere to. In this 19-page document (www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/strategicplanningtafe), the following words do not appear at all:

- student

- earner/learning

- pathways

- industry

- employer/employment

- access/participation/attainment

- regions/communities

- disadvantaged

The word 'quality' appears only once in the context of setting financial objectives for TAFE where it states that the purpose of these objectives is to: Ensure that TAFE institutes operate efficiently, that is, at minimum cost for a given scale and quality of outputs (page 3).

By comparison, we see the same government putting out strategic planning guidelines for schools that emphasise:

- Student learning

- student engagement and well-being

- student pathways and transitions.

Why do these goals have no relevance for TAFE students, some of whose access to education beyond compulsory schooling is only though TAFE?

It is instructive to consider the words that appear in the TAFE strategic planning guidelines with the most frequency. They are headed by financial (50 times), performance (22 times), corporate intent (14 times), and asset (14 times) and monitoring (11 times).

These are the matters that count for government in VET.

It is not suggested that these terms are not important, just that the balance between VET as a service and VET as a business has been completely skewed. As a corollary of this, the terms quality and cost have likewise been skewed.

Nor is it suggested that there are not many reputable and high quality RTOs, because there clearly are. Their reputation is equally damaged by those that rort the system and by the fact that they continue to find ways to do so.

The future of TAFE

Against this background, there is considerable despondency among TAFE professionals nationally about the direction the sector is heading and its future. There is a deep fear that TAFE:

- is headed for full privatisation

- is regarded as making no distinctive contribution to quality education and training

- is given low priority as a service to the community.

And that many young and older people who have benefited in the past from the broad-based, industry and community-focussed and supportive environment that TAFE offers will no longer have access to it; initially financially but ultimately as a system as well the die is cast and it is too late to undo the damage that has been done.

In case the above comments are seen as cynical or alarmist, attention is drawn to the following recommendations from the recent Senate Inquiry into TAFE:

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that the resources and funding for the Australian Skills Quality Authority be proportionally increased relative to the number of private providers entering the training market.

This is an implicit recognition that the regulatory body, now in existence for three years, is not adequately resourced to undertake its role and that quality is slipping through the cracks.

Recommendation 4.22

The Committee recommends the development of improved government standards for registration of training organisations, as the current regulatory environment provides no guarantee of quality for students.

Likewise, this recommendation supports the view that the current standards are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure quality.

Recommendation 4.51

The Committee recommends full and immediate reinstatement of TAFE funding cuts by State governments.

This recommendation acknowledges that the funding cuts to TAFE have damaged its capacity to provide a quality service.

It should also be noted that although the committee's report contains a dissenting view from Coalition Senators they did not dissent from the recommendations cited above.

In her recent Swinburne University 2014 Chancellor's Lecture, Jennifer Westacott, Chief Executive of the Business Council of Australia, focussed on the importance of VET in her speech 'Redefining Vocational Learning in the Global Economy'. She noted in her comments that 'Quality is still patchy' in the VET system.

Conclusion

In the current environment, there is a danger that TAFE's role is perceived as very narrow; as simply:

- a servicer of thin markets

- a destination for low socio-economic and other target groups

- a fall-back instrument of government policy

- a stop-gap against market failure.

Just as importantly, there is a danger that TAFE's funding will be reduced to the point where it cannot even deliver on this highly circumscribed role, let alone maintain a reputation for quality.

With its vast footprint of campuses across the country, TAFE has the capacity to provide:

- a guaranteed network of VET public provision providing career and study pathways for all Australians

- a genuine quality tertiary option

- a cost-effective solution for government for implementing training and labour market policy.

Following from the findings of the Kemp/Norton (Kemp, D & Norton A (2013). Report of the Review of the Demand Driven System. Commonwealth of Australia) Review of the demand driven funding system in Higher Education, the Commonwealth Government budget (released on May 13) proposed a number of changes to Higher Education funding that impacted on VET and TAFE and highlighted the need for a quality system. They included:

- extension of demand driven Commonwealth funding to non-university higher education providers – a number of TAFE institutes are registered as Higher Education Providers

- extension of the demand driven Commonwealth funding to sub degree higher education qualifications: Associate Degrees and HE Diplomas – only a few non-university providers have had access to this funding in the past.

Minister Pyne has made it very clear that implementation of these policies will be tightly controlled to ensure quality is maintained but there is clearly an intention for a broadening of access to Commonwealth funding. State-based cuts to TAFE's ability to offer a quality product to students run counter to this intention.

A valuable asset to the Australian community is at risk. Much damage has already been done to TAFE.

It is time to restore the balance between TAFE as a quality service and TAFE as a business in a flawed training market.

Quality education: A matter of relevance

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Biography

Greg Whitby is widely-acknowledged as an innovative educator who is passionate about ensuring that schooling meets the needs of today's learners. For the past 14 years, he has led a system of Catholic schools in both the Dioceses of Wollongong and now Parramatta.

Over the past two decades, Greg has been instrumental in the development of new school and learning space designs to accommodate contemporary learning and teaching. And in recent years, he has worked with school and system leaders to build teacher capacity in order to improve the learning outcomes of every student.

Greg has developed a strong national and international profile and regularly presents on educational change and leadership, school innovation and technology. He was nominated to deliver the prestigious AW Jones Oration in 2011. In the same year, he was appointed to the Federal Government's Digital Education Advisory Group. He is also founding Chairman of CEnet (Catholic Education Network) – a not for profit company linking 745 schools across Australia on a robust virtual private network.

In addition, Greg is a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators, the Australian Council for Educational Leaders and the Australian Institute of Management for his outstanding contribution to the advancement of education. And he has also received a Papal Knighthood in the Order of St Gregory the Great for his contribution to Catholic education.

Abstract

Since the 19th century, the role of the teacher has remained largely unchanged. While pedagogical and curriculum approaches may have developed and teachers' salaries and conditions improved, the role of the teacher within a 'content and control' model of schooling has prevailed.

Globalisation and the knowledge age have provided new opportunities to improve the way organisations work but teachers are still being asked to improve a model of schooling that is 'far beyond its use by date'.

Will there be a time when the work of teachers is not defined by the number of hours they teach or a fragmented curriculum?

Relevancy is a challenge facing school systems around the world - it calls us to respond creatively by re-imagining the role of teachers in today's world.

Introduction

In 1996, Nicholas Negroponte wrote his seminal book, *Being Digital* (Negroponte, N, 1996). In it, Negroponte outlined the paradigmatic shift from the industrial to the digital age. One of the most important predictions Negroponte made was that anything caught in the middle of this massive shift would have a short shelf life. The rapid demise of the manufacturing and automotive industries and many others in the US and Australia confirm Negroponte's earlier prediction. If schools lay somewhere in Negroponte's middle, then the challenge of making schooling relevant in today's world is self-evident.

Nonetheless, two decades on from *Being Digital*, the schooling sector is I believe, yet to fully understand the imperative of transforming schooling. Instead, we seem to respond to this challenge by being stuck in an endless and futile cycle of school improvement, which distracts us from taking the action desperately required.

A 2008 Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) report (http://www.oced.org/edu/ceri/innovatingtolearlearningtoinnovate.htm, 2008) asks: 'How can learning within and outside schools be reconfigured in environments that foster the deeper knowledge and skills so crucial in our new century?' It's a question that deserves some serious attention. Too often the answers we find are what Michael Fullan (Paper No. 204, 2011) calls the wrong drivers. Finding answers in drivers such as international comparisons, increasing the education spend; adopting more technologies, and so on, do nothing to change the root problem. We need to change the model. Too often the drivers are external to the very complex work of learning and teaching. At best they marginalise, at worst ignore the very people who know how to do the work. In fact, they stifle the innovation and creativity needed to re-imagine schooling.

What are the right drivers? The evidence tells us that the most important driver is quality teachers. What is critical, and often overlooked, is the role teachers' play in building a contemporary model of schooling. The profession needs to be at the very heart of this transformation. Innovative and creative teachers collaborating and sharing practice will demonstrate how transformation can take place. As Richard Elmore ('Teaching is Not Rocket Science', *Age*, 27 August, 2007) states, 'a knowledge-based economy requires a knowledge-based teaching profession'. What does this mean for the work of teachers and as we move towards becoming a knowledge-based teaching profession?

In this paper I want to talk about how we can provide an engaging, inspiring and positive learning experience for both learners and teachers. Schools should be fun, exciting and challenging places. A seamless part of the world in which teachers and learners live, work and learn. Rather than worshipping the fearful god of the school improvement agenda, let's focus on a re-imagining of the schooling experience. This is not only the road less travelled; it takes us far into uncharted territories. So it is understandable, then, that change is hard to imagine.

Let me start by saying I am immensely positive about the future of schooling. I know a reimagining of schooling can be achieved. We know the learning theory, the teaching theory, the practice and the evidence to signal the possibilities. I see day-to-day the changes taking place in schools in my own backyard and all over the world. We need to clear away the distractors and focus on the enablers. And the two most powerful enablers are teachers and innovative practice.

The role of the teacher

Teaching today, has been largely influenced by an understanding of schooling that is grounded in an industrial model. The old paradigm in which the teacher is expert and student passive receptor of a prescribed curriculum still prevails in the 21st century. The success of the industrial model of schooling lies in the fact that it has been easy to replicate and has ensured efficiency and predictability. The idea that knowledge can still be contained or controlled (how many schools ban mobile technologies?) does not reflect the realities of life in an online and, as Thomas Friedman refers to as a now 'hyper-connected' world.

Learners today live in a very different world from the one we experienced as children. Textbooks have been replaced by apps and landline calls by SMS. The opportunities for people no matter their race, religion or age to connect, to share ideas and to create knowledge have never existed before in history. We live as Will Richardson (http://willrichardson.com) says, 'at a moment of ubiquitous learning, one few of our ancestors could have imagined'.

The task of re-imagining schooling in today's world is one we continue to struggle with. I'm sure many of you have visited 'schools of the future' and 'classrooms of tomorrow' and they look incredibly like schools of yesterday. We have wasted precious time and resources discussing, as Yong Zhao ('Building the Educational Spaceship, Stop Fixing the Horse Wagon', 2014) says, how we get to our educational Mars with a horse wagon. We need a spaceship to get us there or, as Professor Stephen Heppell ('21st Century Learning', 2008) argues, to create 'never seen before' schools to address the 'never seen before challenges' that today's learners will inevitably confront.

This is the greatest challenge we face today as a profession and we cannot do this without understanding of what it means to be learner and a teacher in today's world. We cannot even attempt to create 'never seen before' schools or carry forward sound educational policy without a shared coherent narrative. One that speaks of what it means to learn and teach in a new age. It requires new mindsets on how learning and teaching can be most effective in today's world.

It demands that as a profession we engage in a continuous reflective dialogue about learning. Who are today's learners? What do they need to learn? What is the role of the teacher? How do we teach most effectively? What is the role of technology and how can it be used to deepen the learning for all students?

More than knowledge workers

Remember Alvin Toffler's warning that the 21st century illiterates that are those that 'cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn'. The knowledge economy requires knowledge workers. The offshoring of jobs in banking, aircraft maintenance, textiles and the demise of manufacturing and automotive industries in Australia and the US, means that schools must prepare all students, not just some, for success in a knowledge-based society.

According to Zhao (2014) schools must not only develop in learners 21st century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, communication and problem-solving that lead to deep knowledge, but also cultivate 'non-cognitive' skills such as perseverance, open mindedness and emotional intelligence. How do we nurture these skills in every single student? How do we create the conditions, as Sir Ken Robinson says, for each student to flourish? By knowing the learner as an individual, creating personalised learning experiences and by recognising the powerful opportunities available to deepen learning using today's tools.

Not only has the world been flattened by globalisation and connectivity, it has individualised it. Think of 'I' in Apple's iPhone or ABC's iView. We can now connect to people in ways that extend beyond language, time and borders. The growth of massive online open communities (MOOCs) and the Khan Academy have changed the way people learn and how we access knowledge. Learning is no longer 9am to 3pm. We have to move away from over 100 years of practice and put the responsibility of learning into the hands of learners. Learning is not something a system can do for or to learners; it has to be done by the learners themselves.

Science teachers, Rosei and Clare from Parramatta Marist High in Sydney are working opposite hours of the day to meet the needs of learners participating in a global project based learning experience. Rosei, who started life as a Scientist before becoming a teacher, and Clare, an experienced teacher, have spent the past two years learning from each other, learning from their students, and reflecting on and changing their practice to meet the needs of their students through a project based learning approach.

In letting go of the reins and allowing their students to lead their own learning, Rosei and Clare, confess they would not have been able to conceive the types of inventive learning experiences their students designed had they planned the students' projects. It's demanding work to keep up with the enthusiasm of their students as they push the boundaries of their own learning. It requires teachers to change their mindset and reconceive their part in the learning process. It requires responsiveness to individual needs and interests, while ensuring the quality and depth of learning experiences. Ultimately, it can't be done alone. It requires collaboration.

Technology allows us as Richardson (http://willrichardson.com) claims to 'create our own learning networks in which we pull in content and mentors and collaborators to participate with us. If we know what we're doing, we can create our own classrooms, our own curriculum'. And if we don't know what we are doing, we cannot learn deeply, which is why teachers have never been more important in the learning process. As Hattie (*Visible Learning for Teachers*, 2012) states, teachers are among the most powerful influences in learning. And the best App is the teacher.

The assertion that computers will replace teachers in the school of the future is misguided. Schooling is by its very nature a relational process between the student and the teacher. The change in the nature of learning in the knowledge age has changed the nature of the relationship. In the old paradigm, the teacher delivered the curriculum and the learner had little opportunity to 'understand, construct or even claim knowledge as their own' (Kim, 2011). In today's world, the learner has access to knowledge from a variety of sources (including the teacher). They have greater control over their learning. Thus, the work of the teacher is not to deliver, but to facilitate, curate and individualise learning. To identify learning opportunities from a variety of sources, using a multitude of tools to engage learners and deepen knowledge. Hattie talks about learning being visible when students become their own teachers and teachers become learners of their own teaching.

Innovative practice

There is a professional responsibility to innovate and share expertise. Professions need to continually innovate or become obsolete. What can we learn from organisations such as Google and Amazon and from the experience of those in business? For innovation to flourish we have to look beyond perfecting the current model and identify new territories. We are told that we are moving into a new era in which it is not whether future employees or leaders have the right skills but whether they have the 'potential to learn new ones'. This poses new challenges for us in education not only in how we develop potential and drive innovation.

The 2011 Innovation in Teaching and Learning Research (http://www.itlresearch.com/research-a-reports/10-reports/40-2011-itl-research-findings-and-implications) conducted by SRI International across seven countries including Australia, found innovative practice is more likely to flourish when:

- Teacher collaboration focuses on peer support and the sharing of pedagogical approaches

- professional learning involves the active engagement of teachers, particularly in practicing and researching new teaching methods

- the school culture offers a common vision of innovation and consistently encourages new types of teaching.

New models of teacher training, professional learning and mentoring need to be identified to support innovative practice. In high performing nations, teacher training and education is a serious investment. Darling-Hammond reports that in Singapore, teacher education programs are now focused on increasing pedagogical content knowledge and skills (*The Flat World and Education*, 2010). Efforts have been made to 'engage [teaching] candidates in the kind of inquiry and reflection in which they are expected to engage their students in the schools, so that they can teach for independent learning, integrated project work, and innovation'.

One of the ways to drive innovative practice is to form partnerships beyond the school. Through working with other educational partners, business and community organisations, schools have the opportunity to provide robust, real-world learning experiences for their learners and really drive innovation.

In Sydney's west, Delany College, Granville is commencing a project in partnership with Telstra and Cisco called the Delany Connective. Combined with connective technologies and learning space design provided by Telstra, Delany is using a pedagogical approach focused on 'deep thinking' skills essential for 21st century life and work including collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity. The curriculum is integrated and focused on real-world outcomes and the process of learning, not just what the student learns.

The partnership shows the power of ideas when a learning community works with a communications giant to leverage the capacity of the technology underpinned by sound learning theory.

A mature profession

The rhetoric of life-long learning and 21st century skills must become the reality not only for students but also the profession. It is time to stop working in isolation and with competing agendas. New models of schooling require a new professional maturity that is reflected in new mindsets and new understandings about the world, today's learners and the work of teachers.

If we are to become a knowledge-based profession, then we need to rethink the highly regulated practice of teaching such as dictated hours for face to face teaching time, the number of students or remuneration based on steps on a ladder. No industrial instrument can define the work of a teacher. These industrial mindsets become irrelevant when learning is happening outside 9am to 3pm; when teachers are engaged in professional learning with colleagues overseas; when students are working on global projects; and when experts from wherever in the world are available to 'teach'. Could we conceive a time when a teacher doesn't have to step inside a classroom to teach? It's already here!

In restating our narrative in terms relevant to the knowledge age, we can challenge the existing narrative which sees schooling in a strictly utilitarian dimension, as an instrument of government or a race to separate the winners from the losers or whose primary purpose is to serve the agenda of the most vocal group. Schooling cannot be reduced to targets and learning outcomes that must be reached, measured and compared. Schools should not be rewarded or punished based on their response to externally-set agendas but recognised as Dewey says to teach them how to 'live pragmatically and immediately in their current environment' (*Experience and education*, 1938).

We are fortunate to have voices within and outside of education that speak loudly and passionately for a new kind of schooling. One that cultivates every child's capacity to think critically, express themselves creatively, learn independently and work collaboratively. Sir Ken Robinson talks about an agrarian model in which teachers have the autonomy to create the right conditions for individual talent to flourish. Yong Zhao[6] says we need schools to become global enterprises where students become creative and entrepreneurial global citizens.

The task of re-imagining schooling is not the responsibility of governments or agencies. It is the responsibility of a mature and bold teaching profession. Parliament House is a long way from the classrooms of Adelaide or Mt Druitt or Alice Springs and far removed from the complexities of schooling in today's world. Short-sighted policies and quick fix approaches have all but shackled schools to an industrial model and stifled widespread teacher innovation and creativity. The imposition by governments not only here but in other parts of the world of narrow assessments, the linking of funding to student achievement and/or teacher performance, and debates over a national curriculum, have not seen the kind of radical and sustainable change needed in education today.

This new maturity demands that we adopt a rigorous, intellectual and collaborative approach to our work. There is no room for anti-intellectuals, within or outside the profession, wedded to old platitudes and promoting simplistic solutions that continue to resist the solid evidence that emerges from effective classroom practice.

Our continual engagement in reflective dialogue will give rise to new pedagogies, new ways of working and new models of schooling. When we learn to do the work, reflect on our work and share our work to improve the work, we move away from an industrial mindset of 'I know' to 'We learn.'

Conclusion

It is time for a new kind of schooling and for the profession to be bold. Reimagining schooling is going to take time and must ensure that we do all we can not to waist that opportunity.

I know there are innovative schools in South Australia just as there are in other parts of Australia and around the world. These become a lighthouse and act as a guide to what is possible. Their success did not happen in a term or a school year; for some the journey has taken two decades. The point is that these roads lead to quality learning and teaching.

We can take heart that others are ploughing the paddock so that our ideas can fall on fertile ground. They try to do their best and what is right, sometimes it fails but they always learn by their mistakes. We have a sound theory and practice base on which to draw. We just need to be bold enough to let go and trust that our profession can do this.

We need a 21st century narrative and it is emerging. At its heart is collaboration, connectedness, reflection and good practice. It is about evidence and innovation and creativity. We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to create schooling that honours the best and presents new opportunities to create personalised learning experiences for all students regardless of race, learning needs or background.

I do not contend to have the answers but I do know this. The future of schooling is in the hands of passionate, committed and effective teachers and leaders, led and supported by systems, advocated fearlessly for by professional bodies and trusted by governments. Only then can we transform our schools into something re-imagined and relevant.

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Understanding the quality debate in education

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Biography

Joseph Zajda, BA (Hons), MA, MEd, Ph.D, FACE, is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the Australian Catholic University, Melbourne. He specialises in globalisation and education policy reforms, social justice, history education, and values education. He has written and edited 28 books and over 100 book chapters and articles in the areas of globalisation and education policy, higher education, and curriculum reforms. He is also the editor of the twelve-volume book series Globalisation and Comparative Education (Springer, 2009 & 2010), World Studies in Education, Curriculum and Teaching, and Education and Society for James Nicholas Publishers. Joseph also received two book contracts from Springer for the International Handbook on Globalisation, Education and Policy Research, and a 12-volume book series contract Globalisation, Comparative Education and Policy Research (2014-2016).

Joseph is recipient of many awards including the 2012 Peter Sheehan Excellence in Research Award, the Australian Awards for University Teaching— 2011 and the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching (April, 2004), Australian Catholic University. He was awarded an ARC Discovery Grant (with Anthony Taylor (Monash University) for 2011-2013 for 'Globalising studies of the politics of history education: a comparative analysis of history national curriculum implementation in Russia and Australia' and became a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators (June 2013).

Abstract

This paper discusses some dominant paradigms used to define and explain quality in education. These include policy statements on quality education by UNESCO, UNICEF and the OECD. One of UNESCO's first position statements on quality in education appeared in 'Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow', followed by 'Learning: The Treasure Within', the UNESCO Report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (Delors, 1996). The quality in education debates are characterised by two broad approaches to academic performance: Those that emphasise the technical and rational nature of the outcomes, and those that stress its negotiated nature. They reflect a technical rational model of education, or the output model, rather than the negotiated order model. The quality debate of performance indicators leads to quality control, which results in reification, where quality takes a life of its own.

Introduction

Globalisation and education reforms

Globalisation, marketisation, and quality/efficiency driven reforms around the world since the 1980s have resulted in structural and qualitative changes in education. One of the effects of forces of globalisation is that educational organisations, having modelled their goals and strategies on the entrepreneurial business model, are compelled to embrace the corporate ethos of the efficiency, accountability and profit-driven managerialism. Hence, the politics of education reforms in the twenty-first century reflect this new emerging paradigm of standards-driven and outcomes-defined policy change (Zajda, 2014). This focus on standards-driven reforms was already taking place in the US during the 1980s. The report 'A Nation at Risk: the Imperatives of Education Reform' (1983) and Bloom's (1987) 'The Closing of the American Mind' prompted the US to launch a series of education reforms to improve quality and excellence in schools. The result was a greater use of standardised test scores and raising academic standards.

Recent education policy research also reflects a rapidly changing world. This is largely due to powerful forces of globalisation, global competiveness, and the spectacular growth of knowledge, generated by information communication technologies (ITCs). Education policy research reflects this, as evidenced by a global reliance on Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) generated indicators of academic achievement, defined by test results and examinations (OECD, 2013; Weisenthal, 2013; PISA, 2012). Research indicates that cultural capital, as a significant dimension of educational inequality, continues to shape and influence students' academic achievement and destinies globally (Sullivan, 2002; Saha, 2005; Zajda, 2014). Cultural capital, as coined by P. Bourdieu (1986), defines dominant conceptions of what constitute knowledge, knowing, and social value (see Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, for the origins of the term cultural capital).

Educational systems, by upholding a single 'gold standard' defining knowledge, excellence and quality in education, not only reinforce the differentiated achievement status of privileged groups/levels in society, but also reward those who are conversant with implicit rules of dominant ideology (Zajda 2009a). In their quest for quality and accountability in education both locally and globally, governments increasingly turn to global models of academic performance, and comparative education data analysis. The use of the World Bank and OECD in international comparisons of educational outcomes demonstrates the perceived need for such comparisons. The OECD, in co-operation with UNESCO, is also using World Education Indicators (WEI) program, covering a broad range of comparative indicators in academic achievements.

Defining quality in education

There is a global consensus that quality education is not an easy concept to define. Quality, in general, means different things to different individuals both locally and globally. The concept of 'quality' in education conjures up many metaphors. In general, one could distinguish between two dominant metaphors in the quality in education debate:

the functionalist metaphor of quality in education, and the negotiated order metaphor. The functionalist metaphor, with its emphasis on merit and hence meritocracy, focuses on performance and outcomes. Unlike the functionalist metaphor, which defines quality as absolute or total, with clearly defined outcomes, the negotiated metaphor derives from the 'interactionist or 'interpretive' approach to education, and organisational cultures (Zajda, 1994; Verenikina, 2003). The negotiated metaphor is a dynamic one, where patterns and images of quality are continuously rediscovered, redefined and negotiated.

Hence, quality in education, from a teacher's perspective, building on the negotiated metaphor, can be defined as a classroom pedagogy, which transform's the learner's cognitive, emotional, and social base to a new dimension of critical thinking, empowerment, values, wisdom, and creativity. It results in an innovative and complex ways of thinking and transformational nexus between the self, the community, the world and the universe. Here, the student, the teacher and the school principal/curriculum team leader, participate fully in negotiating and interpreting meanings of quality in education. It is also an example of an authentic social constructivism in the classroom.

What is quality in education? What are the most important aspects of quality and how can they be measured? These questions have been raised for a long time and are still widely debated. When George Psacharopoulos (1995), from the World Bank, was asked to define 'quality education', he answered that quality education definitions could be classified into two major groups: those using the input method and those using the output method (Psacharopoulos, 1995, p. 33). According to him, the input policy analysts 'compute the expenditure per student in different schools and conclude that schools spending more on each student are better quality schools than those that spend less'. The output policy analysts, to which he belonged, 'compare the level of student cognitive achievement in different schools and conclude that the higher achieving schools are of better quality' (Psacharopoulos, 1995, p. 33). He added that achievement is measured in 'value-added terms', that is by comparing what a student gains in terms of achievement (other things being equal) by attending school A instead of school B. Finally, he concluded that 'quality is a continuum concept'.

Bacchus (1995) on the other hand defined quality in education by using a professional versus a popular (as viewed by parents and the community in general) view. At the Commonwealth Secretariat's Consultative Meeting on 'Improving Quality of Basic Education' (November, 1989), it was noted that quality in education was a multi-dimensional concept, with a 'range of definitions and with differing weight given to its various components by different actors in the educational process' (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1989, p. 1). Despite this fact, the public in general, and parents and students in particular, often seem to have 'fewer doubts about what is implied by the term and for them, improving the "quality of education" often means raising the level of academic performance' (Bacchus, 1995, p. 7). This emphasis on examination results as an index of the quality of education is particularly significant in the marketing of schools and the resultant competition for top schools, based on students' academic performance.

Understanding the quality debate in education

The current understanding of quality in education has considerably benefitted from the conceptual work undertaken through national and international initiatives to assess learning achievement. To provide possible answers to these questions on quality education, the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) organized a Strategic Debate 'Defining and measuring the quality of education: Is there an emerging consensus?' (15 December, 2011). The topic was approached from the point of view of recent cross-national surveys: the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The evidence on the quality of the outcomes of education systems was drawn from PISA. OECD's performance indicators have generated a quality control in educational outcomes globally (Zajda 2009b; Zajda 2009c).

One of UNESCO's first policy statements on quality in education appeared in 'Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow' (1972). In another UNESCO (2014) policy document 'Quality Education', a quality education is defined broadly as one that 'satisfies basic learning needs' and more importantly 'enriches the lives of children':

> Quality is at the heart of education and what takes place in classrooms and other learning environments is fundamentally important to the future well-being of children, young people and adults. A quality education is one that satisfies basic learning needs and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living (http://www.unescobkk.org/ education/efa/efa-goals/quality-education/).

Power (2014) argues that that quality education 'empowers individuals', and that education empowers only if it leads to the development of 'knowledge, expertise, talents and values, and to the wise and ethical use of that knowledge and expertise' (Power, 2014, p. 13). In addition, Andreas Schleicher (2011) at the IIEP Strategic Debate suggested that creativity was one of the indicators of quality education:

> Students' capacity to extrapolate from what they know and apply this creatively in novel situations is more important than what the students know.

Schleicher (2011) also argued that there was a need for a paradigm shift in quality pedagogy, where all students needed to learn at high levels, where curriculum, pedagogy and assessment were structured around the notion of 'learning to learn', and 'complex ways of thinking', and where teacher quality was exemplified by 'high-level professional knowledge workers'.

The two main principles that characterise most attempts to define quality in education, as listed in 'The Education for All: Global Monitoring Report 2005 - The Quality Imperative', refer to learners' cognitive development, and the role of education in 'promoting values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and in nurturing creative and emotional development' (p.17). In attempting to answer 'What does quality mean in the context of education?' Rasheed (2000) in his paper presented by UNICEF at the meeting of the International Working Group on Education in Florence in June 2000, wrote that 'many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept', and that such terms as

Adams (1993) explained 'efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously' (Rasheed, 2000).

In addition, Sadig Rasheed (2000) argued that quality education had to include the following five indicators, with reference to students, environment, curriculum content, classroom pedagogies and 'knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education':

- Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities

- environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities

- content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace

- processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities

- outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society (http://www.unicef. org/education/files/QualityEducation.PDF).

According to this particular definition the concept of quality takes into account the 'global and international influences that propel the discussion of educational quality' both locally and globally (Rasheed, 2000, p. 4).

In October 2009, Angel Gurría, (OECD Secretary-General) in 'Education for the future - Promoting changes in policies and practices: the way forward' described some of the changes and priorities in education for tomorrow. Some of them are:

> First of all, in our schools, students typically learn individually and thus, at the end of the school year, we certify their individual achievements. But the more globalised and inter dependent the world becomes, the more we need great collaborators and orchestrators, not isolated individuals, no matter how well they do. We need to form people for a more inclusive world: people who can appreciate and build on different values, beliefs, cultures. Inter-personal competencies to produce inclusive solutions will be of growing importance. Second, the conventional approach in school is often to break problems down into manageable bits and pieces and then teach students how to solve each one of these bits and pieces individually. But in modern economies, we create value by synthesising different fields of knowledge, making connections between ideas that previously seemed unrelated... Third, if we log on to the Internet today, we can find everything we are looking for. But the more content we can search and access, the more important it is to teach our students to sort and filter information. The search for relevance is very critical in the presence of abundance of information...The 21st century schools therefore need to help young individuals to

constantly adapt and grow, to develop their capacity and motivation, to expand their horizons and transfer and apply knowledge in novel settings. (Gurria 2009).

The concept of quality in education in our culture has an almost taken-for granted or as the French thinker, Barthes called the mythical aspect in the sense that a 'myth prefers to work with poor and incomplete images, where meaning is already relieved of its fat, and ready for signification' (Barthes, 1973, p. 127). Also, 'myths can function to hide the ideological function of signs and codes. The power of such myths is that they 'go without saying 'and so appear not to need to be deciphered, or interpreted' (http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/semo6.html).

The key measure of quality education in schools continued to be an instrumental one, namely the 'final year results, or scores of the schools' students and the number of these students who gained places in, firstly, prestigious universities and secondly, in prestigious faculties within those universities (Zajda & Zajda, 1995, p. 46).

Re-conceptualising of the quality debate

Having briefly considered various approaches to quality education debate, we need to offer a new paradigm of quality in education. Using policy documents from the UNESCO, OECD, and UNICEF, and such authors as Rasheed (2000), Gurría (2009), Schleicher (2011), and Power (2014), we can suggest that quality education needs to demonstrate quality in all of these aspects: students, environment, curriculum content, classroom pedagogies and 'knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education'. To these we can add learning to learn, complex ways of thinking, critical literacy, creativity, and empowerment. We can visualise the quality education as concept map: a sphere with many-sides, each side representing a particular aspect of quality in education.

The above-mentioned policy documents defining, describing and critiquing quality in education can be divided into two broad categories. The OECD's PISA study, which regularly measures academic performance of students, belongs to the first category. PISA (2012) is the programme's 5th survey. It assessed the competencies of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science in member and non-member countries. It offers a numerical measure of performance, or quantitative, rather than qualitative analysis of academic achievement.

Policy documents on quality in education offered by UNESCO belong to the second category. In 'The Education for All: Global Monitoring Report 2005 - The Quality Imperative' (2005) the authors argue that 'It could be judged unfortunate that the quantitative aspects of education have become the main focus of attention in recent years for policy makers' (p. 29). UNESCO's policy documents offer predominantly qualitative and holistic definitions and discussions of quality in education. In discussing quality in education they refer to equity, social justice, human rights, peace education, and advancing values of active, informed and responsible citizenship.

Quality for all

Having discusses quality in education; we need to address the question of quality for all. The question of quality for all can only be meaningful in the context of the inequality debate in our societies. It would be unrealistic to pretend that every individual in a society has an equal access to quality education, and can be educated to the same qualitative outcomes as all others. Quality in education is therefore denied to large sections of society simply due to lack of cultural and economic capital. For decades sociologists and educators have argued about the importance of life chances or socio-economic and cultural factors which are essential for one's success in life. These are still on the quality education agenda debate.

Conclusion

The above demonstrates that quality in education, apart from numerous views and definitions, involves numerous organisations and individuals. From a critical theory perspective, there may well be some serious flaws in the usage of the metaphor of quality in education, whenever attempts are made to package such a great and diverse variety of processes, outcomes, and absolute standards of academic performance. This is particularly the case when such processes and educational outcomes depend not only upon the degree of power and control of various accreditation agencies and the assessors of quality in education in educational institutions, but also on the motivation and personal commitment of students, teachers, and visionary school leaders in the overall enhancement of quality in education in the teaching/ learning process. The focus on standards-driven reforms, and the current outcomes-based quality debate, which is driven by assessment and examinations results, may be one-dimensional in essence. We need to include a whole range of other indicators, which describe individual, social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions impacting in the on-going education quality debate. Unless we do this, our present quality education debate, with its ubiquitous focus on norm-referenced testing, which refers to standardized tests that are designed to compare and rank students against one another, will remain linear and one-dimensional, which is at odds with diversity and pluralism in societies.

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