Commercialisation in Australian public education and its implications for the delivery of English as an Additional Language/Dialect: An EAL/D teacher perspective

Sue Creagh
Queensland University of Technology
University of Queensland

Skye Playsted
University of New England
University of Queensland

Anna Hogan
Queensland University of Technology

Tae-hee Choi
University of Southampton

Bob Lingard
Australian Catholic University

Abstract: *Privatisation and commercialisation in education encompass a range of interrelated practices, including the outsourcing of educational services as well as increased reliance on commercially produced resources for the delivery of learning and assessment. An increase in these practices has accompanied the shift from centralised systemic management of schools and specific programs like English as an Additional Language/ Dialect (EAL/D), to school autonomy whereby principals control budget expenditure decisions, ostensibly in response to the needs of their school population. The intersection between school autonomy, commercialisation and delivery of the specialised service of EAL/D is the focus of this paper.*

This paper presents the findings of a survey with EAL/D teachers in Australia, in relation to the extent to which they are experiencing commercialisation and the impact this is having on the delivery of a longstanding service designed to ensure equity of outcomes for English language learners. The data suggests that the use of commercial products in schools may not be aligned with appropriate educational practices which target language learning needs. There is a strong need for further research in the uptake and use of commercial products for specialist language support. This will elucidate the extent to which EAL/D as a specialisation is being impacted by the use of commercial products both in the appropriacy of the products and in the deprofessionalisation of specialist EAL/D teachers.

Introduction

In the Australian education system, the delivery of English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D hereafter) has moved from being a specialist targeted and stand-alone aspect of migrant settlement services[1] to being encompassed by the broader umbrella concept of Inclusive Education (IE). Concurrently, Australian education has not been immune to the forces of neoliberalism and associated practices of accountability, standardised large-scale assessment, school-based management and the implementation of privatisation practices (Keddie, et al., 2020; Le Feuvre, Hogan, Thomspon & Mockler, 2023; Lingard, Sellar and Savage, 2014). The impact of these policy forces on the delivery of EAL/D in Australia is complex. IE is intended to recognise and embrace the diversity of all learners in the classroom; however, the enactment of this concept for specific groups of English language learners has been problematised as needing clearer and more specific guidance on how inclusion is actioned, along with specific professional guidance for teachers on best practices (Baak et al., 2021; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Teachers are required to make mainstream curriculum content accessible for EAL/D learners, and special consideration for compulsory standardised assessments is limited. For example, only in their first year in Australia are EAL/D learners allowed

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[1] The authors recognise that English language learning is not limited only to migrant populations but includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are speakers of traditional and/or creole languages. However, no similar program of English language support has historically existed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

exemption from the National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) if their English language level is considered not sufficient to cope with the demands of this literacy and numeracy test (ACARA, 2023b). Programs of support in schools can include intensive English programs, and access to the support of a specialist EAL/D teacher, though this service is now hampered somewhat by the removal of EAL/D as a specialist teaching area in all pre-service teacher programs across Australia (Dobinson & Buchori, 2016). However, there is a requirement that all preservice teachers are prepared for teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms (Ollerhead, 2018). Consequently, the majority of EAL/D students in Australia are participating in mainstream classrooms, with diminishing access to specialist EAL/D support. This situation has enhanced the likelihood that teachers are searching for support to deliver specialist content and/or differentiate curriculum for EAL/D learners (Hammond, 2012; Nguyen & Rushton, 2022). This support often comes from commercial providers.

There is virtually no research examining the impact of privatisation and commercialisation on the delivery of programs like EAL/D in Australia. In this space, this paper is examining the contemporary uptake of commercial products, when EAL/D sits within inclusion and in which the delivery of EAL/D, beyond initial beginner stage, is largely provided by classroom teachers. Since the 1990s, the government has decentralised its support for EAL/D funding, which has resulted in individual schools being responsible for managing their budgets for EAL/D provision autonomously. However, the specific details of how EAL/D education is provided are left to the discretion of individual school management, with "limited accountability in terms of how this funding is spent" (Creagh et al., 2022, p. 10). This lack of accountability regarding how EAL/D funding is spent raises concerns about equitable access to EAL/D education across Australian schools. The purpose of this study was to better understand how the delivery of EAL/D is operating under these new policy conditions.

The paper will proceed in the following way. First, we will define and present a summary overview of the literature relevant to privatisation, commercialisation and the delivery of English services. We will then present the research project and key findings. Finally, we will draw out the key messages from the project, suggesting direction for further research.

Background

The privatisation of education has been described as enabling greater choice for parents, improved quality and greater efficiency, whilst, at the same time, threatening educational equity (Burch, 2009; Verger et al., 2016). Both of these conditions are resultant from privatisation practices which see increased marketisation of schools expressed through performance reporting and comparison (Hogan & Thompson et al., 2018), and devolution of budget control to school principals, accompanied by reduced bureaucratic control (Ball & Youdell, 2008). Into this space, there is an associated uptake of commercialisation, where education goods become a source of commercial gain for external providers, who engage in contractual relationships directly with schools (Hogan & Thompson et al., 2018). Hogan and Thompson (2017) note that privatisation happens to schools, through changes to institutional or policy structures that develop competitive, 'quasimarkets' promoting parental choice or school autonomy, while commercialisation occurs *in* schools, through the "creation, marketing, and sale of education goods and services to schools by external providers" (p. 3). Practices of privatisation and commercialisation are framed as increasing access to quality education within schools, providing opportunities for greater innovation and enabling choice in schooling (Burch, 2009). Educational policy documents can leverage the language of 'educational reform' in promoting the need for private providers in schools. Policies can be framed with the language of educational "improvement, accountability and management" (Burch, 2009, p. 57), offering to meet reform goals and equitable access to education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 1990). However, there is potential for marketised models to negatively impact equity in education (Burch, 2009). For example, the privately funded and managed charter school movement in the US that has grown out of the school reform movement offers select students in low socio-economic areas access to resources and educational opportunities they may otherwise not afford. Lack of regulation within the charter school movement, however, has raised concerns of deregulation and competitive, profit-oriented structures operating in these schools (Stahl, 2018).

Ball and Youdell (2008) provide a useful distinction between endogenous and exogenous forms of privatisation. Endogenous privatisation sees ideas and practices from the private sector

imported into the public sector to make schooling "more business-like" (p. 21) whereas exogenous privatisation opens services in public education to external private sector providers "to design, manage or deliver aspects of public education" (p. 10). In the UK, private sector involvement has occurred across a range of management structures, partnerships between schools and private organisations and tendering systems for resourcing and assessment management (Ball & Youdell, 2008). In the context of school programs which deliver English to speakers of other languages (ESOL), educational equity is at stake when endogenous and exogenous privatisation measures are in place. For example, in the UK, policy decisions made during the roll out of the national curriculum (National Curriculum Council [NCC], 1991) saw changes from a "withdrawal" model of tuition for EAL/D students, in which these students were withdrawn from mainstream classes and taught in smaller groups by an EAL/D specialist teacher. These changes were made in the name of "educationally principled" models of equitable inclusion of EAL/D students, regardless of their educational backgrounds. However, as Costley and Leung (2013) have noted, the endogenous practice of streamlining provision of educational support in schools has resulted in a default to mainstreaming education for students whose EAL/D needs are no longer adequately met. Such failure is observed in other contexts as well. For instance, in Hong Kong, exogenous privatisation practices are seen in the outsourcing of English language tuition in government schools. Choi (2019) investigated both high and low SES schools to compare the impact of outsourcing tuition to third-party educational providers of English language education. Government school funding was used to outsource English language tuition so that students from low SES schools had more equitable access to English with a view to levelling the field in relation to university entrance opportunities for these students. However, while "low SES districts prioritised building basic English skills", the schools serving high SES districts "focused on elite and showcase programs (e.g., to demonstrate students' achievements), providing their students with a competitive edge for admission to prestigious universities" (p. 14). In this situation, despite the intention to attend to equity, outsourcing of programs was not successful in this regard and inequity was in fact sustained (Choi, 2019).

In the Australian context, the links between privatisation practices and equitable education for students from EAL/D

backgrounds have been highlighted in the pressures around student performance on Australian national literacy and numeracy tests (NAPLAN). The creation of standardised national systems of schooling to improve outcomes in student and school performance has been linked to an increased pressure on school management to meet performance targets and demonstrate a school's "improvements in efficiency and effectiveness" (Hogan et al., 2018, p. 143). A school's lower NAPLAN scores can potentially point to literacy risk areas of English language proficiency, prompting school leadership to seek "privatised solutions to [such] educational problems" (Dooley, 2020, p. 242). Solutions can include the use of commercial products (for example, commercially produced assessment and reporting tools purchased by individual schools to gather and report on student data in areas targeted for improvement such as literacy or numeracy) (Hogan & Thompson, 2017) framed as helping to improve student outcomes. Private providers offer schools what seem to be "ready-made 'solutions' to various education 'problems'" (p. 143), such as declining results reported in national assessment benchmarks (Daliri-Ngametua & Hardy, 2022), through the purchase of externally produced resources (Hogan et al., 2018). At an individual level, the pressure to perform well in national tests can heighten parental concerns that a student from an EAL/D background may be at a disadvantage because of language proficiency. This also has links to privatisation measures, as revealed in Dooley's (2020) recent research with families from migrant backgrounds. Dooley's (2020) study highlighted that parents from migrant backgrounds were more likely to engage private, external tutoring to improve their children's English language and literacy achievement in NAPLAN tests. Whilst it is true that additional time is required for EAL/D students to achieve academic parity with their English-speaking peers on national literacy tests (Creagh et al., 2019), this should raise concerns for policy makers as it highlights the need for more adequate funding, targeting academic support for EAL/D students in Australian schools (Creagh et al., 2022).

We posit that these examples of solutions from external providers being sought by school leaders and families to supplement resources are indicative of increased privatisation practices as funding arrangements enable schools the autonomy to seek solutions for students requiring additional support (Burch,

2009; Hogan et al., 2018). The growing input of commercial organisations to fill this gap suggests that there is a lack of acknowledgement for federal support for equity groups, such as students from EAL/D backgrounds (Creagh et al., 2022; Oliver et al., 2017). Reports showing productivity and academic results as national areas in need of reform in Australian schooling note that a "transparent, systematic approach" is needed to "evaluate the case for new priority equity cohorts" (Australian Government Productivity Commission [AGPC], 2023, p. 36), including EAL/D and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Yet, there is little clarity in these reports (AGPC, 2023) around how the specific needs of these groups will be supported through federal initiatives or funding. The call for adequate support for EAL/D students and teachers has been an ongoing area of advocacy (Creagh et al., 2022; Oliver et al., 2017). In 2014, a survey conducted by the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA hereafter), the peak body for TESOL in Australia, reported on teachers' experiences of reduced systemic support for EAL/D students in Australian schools (ACTA, 2014). In this paper, we seek to contribute to ACTA's (2014) EAL/D advocacy by drawing attention to a specific area of concern that is the increase and impact of privatisation and commercialisation practices in EAL/D education. Presenting preliminary findings of a recent survey conducted with the support of ACTA, we introduce concerns of teachers about practices that are potentially jeopardising the provision of equitable, government-funded support for EAL/D students in Australian schools.

Research design and methods
Context of study
The study reported in this paper is part of a larger, international comparative study which is investigating privatisation of the teaching of ESOL in the government school systems of four countries including Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, and Greece. In each country, the research examines how the privatisation and commercialisation of the education sector have impacted the provision of English language services. The impetus for the Australian study reflects a growing concern in relation to the impacts of Australian government policy and funding decisions on equitable provision and access to EAL/D education (ACTA, 2014; Creagh et al., 2022).

Each country in the project was required to complete a survey with teachers with the intention of better understanding how privatisation and commercialisation practices were occurring specifically in relation to the delivery of English language services within government schools. The Australian survey results being reported here include description of the respondents, their work situation and their engagement with EAL/D students, and their reports, primarily of commercialisation in EAL/D, in contrast to sites like Hong Kong, for example, where English support is outsourced to private companies who operate within government schools (Choi, 2019). The process of designing the survey was done in consultation with ACTA, to ensure that the questions were relevant to ACTA's advocacy and research foci. The survey was designed as an online tool, using Qualtrics software. Ethical approval to conduct the research was granted through the University of Queensland Human Ethics Committee (Ethics application: 2022/HE001040).

The decision was made to approach EAL/D teachers and mainstream teachers of EAL/D students, nationally and across all schooling systems, through convenience sampling, via ACTA's network of state and territory based professional associations in Australia and through social media platforms. Two factors influenced this decision. First, in order to carry out research in Australian schools, gatekeeper permission is required from each relevant state and/or territory system, in the case of government and catholic schools, and from each school, in the case of independent schools, and the process can take considerable time. The larger project, of which this study is a part, had already endured lengthy COVID-related delays. Secondly, the impact of COVID on the schooling system continues to have ramifications for access to schools and teachers for research purposes.

Survey distribution and completion rates

The online survey opened on August 24, 2022, coinciding with the final weeks of the Australian school term, and remained open for seven weeks, closing on October 6, 2022, after completion of the ACTA International Conference and Australian school holiday period. In total, 139 respondents of the potential 926 members in state and territory ACTA affiliated organisations (ACTA Treasurer, personal communication, June 23, 2023) gave consent for the use of their survey data. This disappointing response reflects the

situation that Australian teachers are reporting of extremely stressful work situations (see Stacey et al., 2022, for example) and they may simply not have had time to take on the additional task of an on-line survey. This fact, coupled with the decline of clear EAL/D policy and management in some states and territories may have added to this situation. It is noteworthy that most respondents were from NSW which has a very clearly delineated policy response to and support for EAL/D in schools (New South Wales Education Standards Authority [NESA], 2023).

Findings and Discussion
Due to the limited number of participants, the following results are presented as descriptive statistics. However, we argue that because most of the respondents are highly experienced EAL/D teachers, their insight into the situation 'at the coalface' of schools, in the delivery of English for EAL/D students, has merit and value. All output was generated using Stata V15.1. Open (qualitative) responses were thematically analysed and recurring and common themes in these data are highlighted below.

Description of the respondent group and their teaching situations
By far, the majority of respondents were EAL/D specialist teachers, with TESOL qualifications and a number of years of experience in the field of TESOL. In addition, there was some representation of mainstream teachers of EAL/D students, as well as school leaders. Table 1 below shows the details of respondents' work roles.

Table 1. Work roles of respondents

Work role	Frequency (%)
EAL/D specialist teacher	85 (67)
Mainstream teacher with EAL/D students	20 (16)
School leader	10 (8)
EAL/D advisor/co-ordinator/consultant	9 (7)
Other (university/adult context)	2 (2)
TOTAL	126 (100)

Two thirds of respondents (83 or 66%) had more than eight years of experience teaching English, while a further 23 (18%) had between four and eight years of experience. Of the remainder, 14 teachers had one to three years of experience and 5 teachers had less than one year of experience. 82% of this group had some kind of TESOL qualification, including a Masters in TESOL or Applied Linguistics (34 teachers, or 27% of the group), or a post graduate diploma or specialist degree (31 teachers, or 25%) A small proportion of the teachers (17, or 14%) had no qualification in the field of TESOL.

We did not limit the survey to any particular system of education across states and territories and have representation of all systems including government (67%), Catholic (14%), Independent (15%) and Vocational Education and Training (5%). The majority of schools represented by the respondents are in urban locations (77 schools, or 71%), followed by regional locations (28 schools, or 26%) with a very small number of remote schools (3 or 3%). Of these schools, 47 (44%) were primary schools, 31 (29%) were secondary, and 16 (15%) were P to 12 schools (consisting of both primary and secondary combined). Six schools were senior secondary schools, and the remaining six sites were vocational/TAFE/adult contexts. Just under half of the schools (47%) were reported to have a student population of low socio-economic status (SES), 41% were classified as middle, and 12% were reported as having a high SES population.

Respondents were not necessarily confined to a particular year level of schooling and reported a range of teaching levels within primary and secondary schools. Half of the group worked across lower and upper primary school, while 33% worked in junior or senior secondary, or both. For the remainder, 17% reported that they worked across a range of levels in both primary and secondary schools. This reflects the nature of EAL/D teaching roles, which can be distributed across schools, or within a school, providing specialist support at different levels of schooling.

Using the broad categories of EAL/D learner provided by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority [ACARA], 2023a) on the Australian Curriculum website[2], we asked teachers to indicate all the groups they worked with in their teaching roles. The majority of teachers reported a broad mixture of these student groups.

Table 2 shows the frequency of each category across the selections made by respondents. Teachers who participated in the survey are primarily working with students who have immigrated to Australia, including refugees, or who are of migrant heritage. Less represented are international students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This has relevance to the validity of some findings which may not translate to the experiences of these two groups of learners. (see Creagh et al., 2022, for problems with identification and counting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools.) For those students who are represented in this survey, there is enormous diversity of language and dialects, with teachers uniformly reporting multitudes (sometimes "over 35", "over 50", "40+") of languages spoken in the open responses to this question.

Table 2. Student groups represented by survey respondents

EAL/D group	Frequency of selection (%)
Immigrants to Australia and temporary visa holders from non-English speaking countries	93 (24)
Children born in Australia of migrant heritage where English is not spoken at home	86 (22)
Students with a refugee background	70 (18)
International students from non-English speaking countries	48 (12)
English-speaking students returning to Australia after extended periods in non-English speaking settings	45 (11)
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students	41 (10)
Children of deaf adults who use AUSLAN as their first language	9 (2)
TOTAL	392

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[2] ACARA use the following classifications to describe EAL/D students: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, immigrants to Australia and temporary visa holders from non-English speaking countries, students with a refugee background, children born in Australia of migrant heritage where English is not spoken at home, English speaking students returning to Australia after extended periods in non-English speaking settings, children of deaf adults who use AUSLAN as their first language, and international students from non-English speaking countries.

We asked teachers to describe all types of support provided for EAL/D students in their schools. We provided ten categories of options (for example, EAL/D teacher, mainstream teacher support, literacy program) and asked teachers to select all that applied. In addition, we provided an open response option for teachers to report other forms of EAL/D support. There were 39 combinations of the ten responses, and most of these combinations included an EAL/D teacher, which is unsurprising given that most respondents were EAL/D teachers. Table 3 shows the frequency of each option given by respondent.

Table 3. Types of support for EAL/D learners

Support	Frequency	%
an EAL/D teacher	89	35.18
Mainstream classroom teacher support	55	21.74
Bilingual teacher aides / teacher assistants	35	13.83
The literacy program	20	7.91
Resources in languages other than English	15	5.93
Teacher/community made bilingual resources	12	4.74
The Inclusive education program	11	4.35
Other (Please give detail)	10	3.95
A bilingual program	5	1.98
Don't know	1	0.40
TOTAL	253	100

For the open response, there were 10 further comments and four of these listed Intensive English programs. The remainder included comments such as "An hour here and there", "Collaborative planning", "English speaking teacher assistants in the classroom", "reading program", "EAL/D education leader in network" and "AMEP".

Finally, in better understanding the situation of EAL/D in the schools of the respondents, we asked teachers to evaluate, using a Likert scale, the extent to which equity groups (rather than ACARA groupings) of EAL/D learners are supported in their

schools. The scale range was "not well", "ok", "very well" and "not applicable". Table 4 reports their responses to this question.

Table 4. Level to which equity groups are supported

EAL/D group	not well (%)	OK (%)	very well (%)
Low academic performance	17	47	38
Special needs	25	37	37
Beginners	20	34	46
Limited prior schooling	25	37	37
Low-income family	10	47	43
Gifted	21	53	27
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	29	46	23
Refugee-background	13	50	37
Experiencing trauma	17	50	33

On face value, it could be observed that support is perceived to be OK or better for most groups, though perhaps better for those who are from low-income families, or of refugee background and both these categories fall into broad groups who are targeted through funding. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D students could also be noted as a group not well supported, in comparison to other EAL/D groups. This aligns with research in this area (Angelo & Hudson, 2020; Creagh 2022). Indigenous students have historically been marginalised in the TESOL field, with limited or no recognition of languages, insecure funding, and insufficient access to EAL/D pedagogy (Angelo & Hudson, 2020). In addition to this question, teachers were asked whether they believed the support provided by their school was sufficient for the current EAL/D learner need. The majority of respondents (77%) indicated that the support was not sufficient.

Practices of commercialisation
i) in the classroom
As noted previously, the uptake of commercial products and practices is facilitated when schools have autonomous control over budgets and accountability is not targeted to particular

groups such as the EAL/D learner group. Teachers were asked about funding sources to support EAL/D programs and one quarter of the respondents did not know how EAL/D programs are funded in their schools. Commonwealth and/or state/ territory government funding was identified as a primary source of funds by just over half (52%) of respondents. In the open responses, broad categories were named (e.g. "system funding", "new arrivals program", "school allocated funding"). Generally, given that most of the survey participants were EAL/D teachers (67%), this data suggests that there is limited understanding amongst teachers about how EAL/D programs are funded, suggesting limited capacity to advocate for use of those funds for the delivery or improvement of EAL/D programs. Further, with limited knowledge of how funding is allocated, there is uncertainty regarding whether EAL/D expertise plays a role in the processes of selecting, applying and reviewing classroom resources for EAL/D students.

In order to understand whether and how commercialisation was occurring in relation to the support of EAL/D learners, the survey asked a series of questions about particular forms of commercialisation, occurring through the purchasing of products and their use in the support of EAL/D students. The questions were asked twice, first in relation to EAL/D student support, and then in relation to resources being used for EAL/D students, but not specifically designed to target language skills. In other words, these would be products possibly used more broadly throughout the school, but not necessarily designed to target the development of English as an additional language. The responses are presented for both sets of questions in table 5.

Table 5. Types of products being used to support EAL/D learners

Types of products	Resources designed specifically for EAL/D learners			Resources used for EAL/D but not specifically targeting EAL/D pedagogies		
	Never	Sometimes	Often	Never	Sometimes	Often
Materials sourced from within the dept as a paid subscription	46	40	14	31	47	22

Learning materials from outside providers	25	53	22	14	52	34
Standardised instruments for measuring macroskills (R/L/S/W)[3]	37	37	26	21	47	31
Online learning programs (e.g. Education Perfect) from commercial providers	56	29	15	36	46	18
Online learning programs from non-commercial providers. (e.g. charity, other schools)	76	18	5	54	36	9
Resources are created within the school	5	20	75	3	32	65

There are two points that could be drawn out from these data. First, the findings suggest that it may be more common for schools to purchase and use commercial products created for "mainstream" classes as a way of supporting EAL/D students. Secondly, the data suggest that teachers and schools are still creating their own resources for the support of EAL/D students. This again is unsurprising given that most respondents are highly experienced EAL/D teachers who would be skilled in the design and creation of such resources.

Teachers were also asked to name products purchased by their school, which are either designed for EAL/D learners specifically or are being used for the support of EAL/D but are not specifically designed for EAL/D. The open responses for this question are presented in table 6, in Appendix 1. The first column shows the resources which are purchased to support EAL/D

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[3] Results are reported as percentages and are rounded. R/L/S/W = Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing

learners but are not identified by a specific brand name and include materials such as bilingual texts, books and dictionaries, language games, grammar reference books, visual aids etc. The second column lists those products or their brand names, being specifically used for EAL/D learners and some of these are designed to support EAL/D pedagogy (e.g. Pearson EAL/D science) or are being adapted for that purpose. The third column lists products purchased in the school which are not specifically designed for EAL/D but are used to support EAL/D learners. These commercial resources are categorized in relation to the skill/s they are targeting. The third column lists a range of literacy related products which may not necessarily be designed for EAL/D students and may be designed with the assumption that students using the product are English speakers. Such products may require considerable adaption by teachers to be appropriate for English language learners.

The numerous resources listed in third column suggest that schools are making considerable use of commercial products, accessible through digital technology. This raises questions about how the materials are used for engagement with the Australian curriculum, the appropriacy and adaptability of the products for students who are learning English, and the extent to which student performance with these materials is interpreted through an EAL/D lens. It suggests that commercialisation occurring in schools may not support equitable educational practices, in this instance, for EAL/D learners. What is unclear is the extent to which these products are replacing well-delivered programs of EAL/D support.

We asked a series of questions designed to better understand how resources for EAL/D learners are selected, and who is involved in this process. The procedure for selection of resources is presented in table 7 and shows that the most common process for selecting resources occurs informally, or through staff meetings.

Table 7. Procedure for selection of resources for EAL/D students

Support	Frequency	%
Informal chat with colleagues	48	23.08
Staff meeting	36	17.31
School management (or School board) make decision	31	14.90

Seek advice from departmental EAL/D officers	31	14.90
Seek advice from experts (e.g. academic in EAL/D)	26	12.50
Talk with service providers	22	10.58
Other	10	4.81
Parent survey or meeting	2	0.96
Student survey	2	0.96
TOTAL	208	100

There were ten open responses about this process. A common theme across these comments was that there are no purchases made for EAL/D learners across the school, or that purchasing resources for EAL/D learners does not happen beyond the intensive EAL/D program. Another comment related to the nature of the purchases being whole of school, "many programs are whole of school programs or whole site literacy. We rarely purchase programs for EAL/D alone".

We asked which school personnel were involved in the selection of resources for EAL/D students, and the two main groups are the EAL/D teacher or the principal (both 28% or responses), followed by faculty heads or heads of department (18%). We were also interested in whether resources purchased for EAL/D learners were evaluated within the school. Table 8 shows that the process is mostly based on teacher feedback, the results of student learning, and in-class observation. However, it is noteworthy that 11% of responses indicated that there is no process of evaluation. This may indicate an inherent faith in the quality of commercial products, or a lack of capacity for schools to review the myriad commercial options available to them (see Creagh et al., 2022).

Table 8. Evaluation of resources purchased for EAL/D learners

Process of evaluation	Frequency	%
Teachers' feedback	53	24.77
Student learning outcome	53	24.77
In-class observation	41	19.16

Students' feedback	29	13.55
There is no evaluation of products normally	24	11.21
Other	9	4.21
Parents' feedback	4	1.87
Report from service provider	1	0.47
TOTAL	214	100

Finally, teachers reported the value and impact of commercial resources in their school. Table 9 reports a compilation of a series of Likert style questions, with a range of four responses. The findings suggest that in the experience of the respondents of this survey, commercial resources may not align well with EAL/D learner need, have not necessarily enhanced EAL/D support, generally requiring some kind of modification for suitability for EAL/D learners. The lack in specialised EAL/D resources and the subsequent need to allocate time to adapt commercial resources exacerbates the intensification of teachers' workloads and the "time poverty" experienced by teachers (Creagh et al., 2023).

Table 9. Value and impact of commercial resources (%)

Commercial resources...	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	A lot	Highly
Align well with EAL/D learner need	12	31	43	11	3
Have enhanced EAL/D support	30	28	29	12	1
Need modification to cater for EAL/D	5	10	27	29	29

ii) Teacher professionalisation

The other area of interest in relation to the impact of commercialisation on EAL/D services, has been the impact on the professionalisation of teachers. Respondents reported that they are infrequently targeted by commercial education providers and

rarely used software products for reporting, or for data analysis purposes. When asked whether they felt that their professional knowledge was enhanced by commercial products, responses were predominantly at the negative end of the scale, with respondents reporting 'not at all' (35%), 'slightly' (27%), 'somewhat' (30%), 'a lot' (6%) and highly (1%). There was more evidence of concern about the deprofessionalisation of EAL/D teachers caused by the uptake of commercial products, with responses of 'not at all' (29%), 'slightly' (18%), 'somewhat' (22%), 'a lot' (13%) and 'highly' (18%).

Discussion and Conclusion

The study presented in this paper interrogates the issue of commercialisation in the delivery of EAL/D services in schools in Australia. The findings indicate consequences not only for EAL/D students, but also for the professional standing of EAL/D specialists. We would argue that the commercial practices reflected in the purchase of educational resources, and in particular, digital resources are now well established in schools and that this practice is enabled by school autonomy and limited accountability in budget expenditure, both features of endogenous privatisation (Ball & Youdell 2008). Whilst, ostensibly, this freedom to use expenditure enables provision of services and resources to target local need (Hogan & Thompson, 2017), our survey findings suggest that in the case of EAL/D, schools are purchasing and using commercial products, a number of which are not designed for nor are inclusive of EAL/D learners.

As one respondent stated:

> "Products like Read Write Inc have good intentions but are overused and not adapted for EAL/D learners' language and cultural needs. Products like Reading Eggs are used unsupervised to keep students quiet during group rotations."

It is not clear the extent to which this responsibility to modify, adapt or reject commercial products not suited to EAL/D students is understood by mainstream teachers, who would be using some of the resources listed in Table 6 (Appendix 1). The expectation of inclusion would require that mainstream teachers have these skills, however they may not have the time, nor the professional guidance to do so (Nguyen & Rushton, 2022). At the same time, it is concerning that EAL/D teachers are feeling

deprofessionalised by this situation, that their knowledge and skills are being replaced by such products. As such, some of the current survey's findings raise serious questions which deserve to be explored in further research related to funding, the nature of commercial products being used for EAL/D support, and the impact commercialisation is having on specialist teacher roles, such as that of the EAL/D teacher.

There are additional implications, suggested by the research data. Firstly, it is important that all teachers understand how support programs are funded in schools, and this process should be transparent, both for teachers and for parents. As noted earlier, reports continue to highlight the need for transparent funding processes (AGPC, 2023), without going the next step and making such processes visible at the school level. Even though EAL/D students are targeted through various funding programs, the survey data suggest that this is not well understood by teachers and the consequences are such that there is little capacity then for specialist (or mainstream) teachers to engage in conversations with school management about how best to allocate funds to support students. This devalues EAL/D specialists' professional judgements in relation to appropriate resource selection for their students. Instead, there appears to be a general uptake of numerous commercial products, the majority of which are part of a whole of school response to literacy and numeracy pressures imposed now on schools through accountability measures and standardised testing (Daliri-Ngametua & Hardy, 2022). This is somewhat unsurprising when there is little accountability attached to individual student funding, and highlights how commercialisation can work against equity (Burch, 2009). The respondents have reported concerns about deprofessionalisation caused by the uptake of commercial products, while at the same time reported that the products themselves may not align well with EAL/D learner need, have not necessarily enhanced EAL/D support, and generally require some kind of modification for suitability for EAL/D learners. There is a sense also, from open responses, ("doesn't happen", "outside the small Intensive English Unit at schools, this never happens. Money is not spent on supporting EAL/D students so there are no procedures") that EAL/D teachers may have little influence on the purchase of products for mainstream use, despite the understanding that EAL/D support is required for a number of years beyond any kind of intensive

EAL/D program (Creagh et al., 2019). There is scope for EAL/D specialists in schools to play a key role in providing advice on the kinds of commercial products which would be appropriate for continued EAL/D support if schools see the uptake of such products as valuable to the delivery of education programs.

The key limitation of this study is lack of sufficient participants, particularly, of teachers who work as mainstream teachers supporting EAL/D learners in their classrooms, nevertheless, the respondents who have participated are representative of specialist EAL/D teachers. As such, they offer informed insight into some of the practices occurring in schools. Methodologically, the survey has raised further questions, but potentially generates an incomplete understanding of what is happening, particularly within mainstream classrooms without specialist EAL/D teacher support. It would be useful now to take the questions raised by these data and pursue these qualitatively. Specifically, research needs to explore in depth the phenomenon of commercialisation as an aspect of inclusive education, and to examine to what extent it is either amplifying or ameliorating inequity.

Funding

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Dr Sue Creagh is a research fellow at Queensland University of Technology and an honorary Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Queensland. Sue has researched and written about the statistical processes used in national education testing in the Australian context which serve to misrepresent the performance of students for whom English is an Additional language. Her research areas include educational policy, particularly in relation to EAL/D and refugee education, EAL/D pedagogy and assessment, and, more recently, the intensification of teacher work. She has more than twenty years' experience as an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom teacher and educational administrator. Sue's research has been published in a range of national and international journals, including the Journal of Education Policy and the Australian Educational Researcher.

screagh@uq.edu.au

Skye Playsted is an educator with over 20 years of teaching experience who has taught in primary and high schools, academic English programs and adult migrant English programs. She is a part time lecturer in English, literacies and language education at the University of New England and a doctoral candidate at The University of Queensland. Skye researches and teaches in the areas of literacy education, TESOL and research methods.

s.playsted@uq.ed.au

Associate Professor Anna Hogan is an Associate Professor of education policy within the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at the Queensland University of Technology. Her research interests focus on issues of marketisation, and how related concepts of privatisation, school choice, commercialisation and philanthropy affect public schools and those in them. She currently has ARC DECRA investigating private income in

Australian public schooling, and an ARC Linkage in partnership with the Queensland Teachers Union that focuses on the intensification of teachers' work and the role commercial edtech devices might play in 'saving' teachers' time. Anna is a lead editor of the *Journal of Education Policy* and the *Australian Educational Researcher*.

ar.hogan@qut.edu.au

Associate Professor Tae-hee Choi is an Associate Professor and the Director of Internationalisation at the Southampton Education School, University of Southampton. Prior to joining the University, she worked at The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) (2013-2022) and part-time at King's College London (2010-2013). She has provided consultancy on policy processes and teacher development for international organisations (e.g., Asian Productivity Organisation; British Council) and national and local governments of various countries. She is an Honorary Professor at the National University of Battambang, Cambodia, and a Fellow of the East-West Center, UK, and of the Higher Education Academy, UK. As a scholar who researches education policy processes and teacher change therein, she has been invited to serve as an editorial board member of multiple journals, e.g., the Journal of Education Policy, and executive committee members of academic societies, e.g., President, Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong. She is currently a co-convenor of the network *Policy Studies and Politics of Education* of the European Educational Research Association.

t.h.choi@soton.ac.uk

Professor Bob Lingard is a Professorial Fellow with the Institute for Learning Sciences and Teacher Education. at Australian Catholic University. He is also Emeritus Professor at The University of Queensland, a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in the UK. He has previously worked at the University of Edinburgh, where he held the Andrew Bell Chair of Education, and the University of Sheffield. He is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Glasgow and at the Education University of Hong

Kong. Professor Lingard has an international research reputation and has published widely in the sociology of education and education policy. His most recent books include *Exploring education policy through newspapers and social media* (Routledge, 2023) and *Global-national networks in education policy* (Bloomsbury, 2023).

Robert.Lingard@acu.edu.au

Appendix 1

Table 6. Products purchased by schools for support of EAL/D

General resources (non-specific) for EAL/D support	Commercial resources used for EAL/D support, target-ing language	Commercial resources used for mainstream students including EAL/D
atlases, globes, maps	ACER PAT tests and AGAT (general ability test)	**Maths:**
bilingual texts/books		Mathletics
concrete materials	Adele's ESL Corner	Mathsonline
craft supplies including paper, cards	AMES Readers	Mathspace
	Beach Street 1 (NSW AMES)	Stepping Stones
dictionaries/bilingual and picture dictionaries		
language games (including for grammar, positional and vocabulary), board games	BrainPOP (children's educational websites)	**Phonics:**
	Cengage	Crack the Code
	CSWE 1 and 11	Get Reading Right
	EAL/DD Ed Studio (Education Qld)	Heggerty Curriculum
language flash cards		InitiaLit
maths resources especially con-crete materials	Education Perfect	Jolly Phonics
	Fitzroy Readers	Phonics Hero
posters	Focus on Grammar series by Pearson	Phonics Play
puppets		Sound Waves
	Get Reading Right	Sounds Write
teacher reference books on grammar, language acquisition	GoGrammar (series of English workbooks)	Speech Sound Pics (SSP)
		THRASS
	Hidden4Fun (Shopping with Grandma game)	The Sound Way
technology such as iPads		
textbooks, books, literature, picture books, readers	Insight education Books	**Reading:**
	iSLCollective	Alpha Kids
	Jacaranda	Corrective Reading
trial HSC exam papers/EAL/DD English past papers	Kids Lips (Instructional guide for reading)	Decodable Readers
		Fitzroy Readers
	Lexia Core5 Reading	Fountas and Pinnell
visual aids	Little Learners Love Literacy	Inquisitive Readers
wall charts		Literacy Box
	Longman Academic Writing series by Pearson	Morpheme Madness Multilit programs (multiple programs)
	Maths online	Read Write Inc.
		Reading Eggs
	Milpera publishing texts	Springboard readers

	MultiLit/InitiaLit/MacqLit	Sunshine Online
	myON (digital library)	Targetted
	Nessy (online learning program for reading and spelling)	PM Readers
		Wushka
	Pearson EAL/D Science	York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC)
	Pearson English Readers	
	PM eReader	**Spelling:**
	Reading Eggs	Spelling Mastery
	Renaissance Products	
	Sentence Science	**Writing/Grammar:**
	Sounds-Write Spelling	GoGrammar
	Spelling Mastery (McGraw-Hill)	Jolly Grammar
	Studyladder, K5Learning	Oxford English Skills Builder/Grammar Skills
	Study.com	Seven Steps for Writing Success
	Ted-Ed (free lesson plans)	The Writing Revolution
	The Sound Way	Twinkl
	Twinkl	
	Words Their Way (Pearson)	**Cross curriculum & assessment:**
		Education Perfect
		Essential Assessment
		History Mysteries
		K5 Learning
		Interactive learning platform:
		SeeSaw
		Studyladder