

How not to fund teaching and learning

Leesa Wheelahan

In the increasingly research and innovation-driven landscape of higher education, the Federal Government's Teaching and Learning Fund is supposed to redress the balance. Leesa Wheelahan is unconvinced. She argues the Fund simply encourages game-playing between institutions in manipulating their teaching outcomes, and rewards good teaching on grounds that make no statistical or policy sense.

The Commonwealth Government's Learning and Teaching Performance Fund (LTPF) is not about improving the quality of teaching and learning in Australian universities, it is about creating winners and losers in the higher education market. This article critiques the LTPF on two levels. First, it argues that it is conceptually and methodologically flawed and cannot succeed in its own terms. The measures used are not valid or reliable. Second, the paper argues that the primary purpose of the LTPF is to further differentiate the higher education market through the creation of winners and losers, generate market information for consumers, contribute to the culture of audit and accountability within universities, and foster market subjectivities in which academics feel the need to 'add value' to themselves (Ball 2003: 217). The measures used by the LTPF and the processes used to implement them are suited for these purposes.

The first section of the paper outlines the aims of the LTPF and the way in which it is implemented. The next section explains why it is conceptually and methodologically flawed in its own terms. The third section situates the LTPF as part of broader processes of neo-liberal reform.

The putative aims of the LTPF

The Learning and Teaching Performance Fund was announced in 2003 as part of then Commonwealth Education Minister Brendan Nelson's suite of 'Backing Australia's Future' reforms.

The putative purpose of the Fund was 'to reward those institutions that best demonstrate excellence in learning and teaching' (Nelson 2003: 29). Approximately \$250 million was committed to the Fund over three years: \$54 million was distributed in 2006, \$83 million will be distributed in 2007 and \$113 million will be distributed in 2008 (DEST 2004: 5). As well as the announcement of the LTPF, the Commonwealth allocated \$8 million for teaching awards from 2006 to 2008, and \$22 million per year for the establishment of the Carrick Institute, Australia's national institute for learning and teaching in higher education (DEST 2004: 5).¹

The Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) (2004: 5) explains that the LTPF was needed to raise the status of teaching and learning so that it was *equal* to that of research (DEST 2004: 6). DEST explains that internal staff promotion and staff reward systems rewarded staff for research performance (implying but not stating that this was at the expense of teaching performance), and that there were no comparable processes to reward excellent teaching and excellent learning outcomes.

DEST (2004: 5) emphasised that the Fund wasn't an attempt to create 'teaching only' universities, but that it would help to contribute to the diversity of the sector explaining that: 'It is envisaged that an increased focus on learning and teaching will foster diversity and help to ensure the ongoing quality of the Australian higher education sector'. Exactly how the Fund would contribute to diversity was not explained. Presumably

this would be through identifying some institutions as excellent in learning-teaching, and implicitly contrasting these institutions to the rest, who are, by definition, not excellent, or even high performing.

The LTPF differs from research funding in some important respects. First, far more money is allocated to research funding than to teaching and learning. There are three main government block grants that support university research: the Institutional Grants Scheme (IGS), the Research Training Scheme (RTS) and Research Infrastructure Block Grants (RIBG). In 2005, the Commonwealth spent \$290.591 million on the IGS, \$552.153 million on the RTS, and \$182.982 million on the RIBG, totalling just over \$1 billion (DEST 2005a: 77-78, Table 3.17).²

Second, the IGS, RTS and RIBG funds are allocated and distributed to all universities on the basis of performance. This means while some universities get a lot more money for research than others, all universities get some funding under these schemes. The more a university improves its performance, the greater its share of funding from the research funding pool.³ In contrast, the LTPF prominently identifies losers, as DEST (2004: 6) explains:

It should be emphasised that the stated intention of the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund is to reward excellence. This means that a performance improvement model is not appropriate.

To be eligible for funding, an institution had to be listed under Table A of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*. This includes all the public universities, the Australian Maritime College, and the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education.⁴ Fourteen institutions were funded in the initial 2006 funding round. Five institutions (including the Australian Maritime College) were awarded a total of \$30.38 million for demonstrating excellence in teaching and learning, and a further nine institutions were awarded a total of approximately \$24 million for demonstrating high achievement (DEST 2006b: 12).

All funded institutions were awarded a \$1 million base grant and the remainder was allocated by size by undergraduate student load (DEST 2006b: 12). Of the five that were awarded the most in the highest category, two were members of the elite Group of Eight universities (Melbourne and Queensland) and they were awarded 66.75% of the total funding in this category. Four Group of Eight universities were in the second group (Monash, ANU, Sydney and Western Australia) and they were awarded 59% of the total allocated to this group (DEST 2006b: 12). In total, of the fourteen institutions awarded funding, six were from the Group of Eight, and they were awarded 63.36% of the total funds. It is hard to see how this contributes to institutional diversity; rather it reinforces the existing hierarchy of universities, in which those universities that are the oldest and richest as a consequence of decades of public investment receive the most resources, just as they do in research.

All institutions bidding for funds had to, as an initial requirement, submit evidence that they had teaching and learning strategies and policies, undertook student evaluations of subjects, provided professional development support for teaching staff, incorporated effectiveness as a teacher in probation and promotion policies and processes, and made all this information publicly available on their website (DEST 2005b: 6). DEST (2005c) claims that this has increased the amount of information that is available, and the current Minister is pleased because:

This information, once collected, should be a valuable resource to universities using negative results to drive reform and improvement, and positive results to market to potential students as we have seen the University of Wollongong promote - quite unapologetically.

In just one year of the Fund's operation, the increase in the amount of information available for students and staff on universities' learning and teaching policies and practices has served to shift the focus onto this essential part of a university's reason for being. (Bishop 2006).

In other words, the key thing that matters is the increase in information to the market. In turn, this is used as a lever by government to drive reform within universities that emphasise audit, and accountability defined as compliance with government outcomes, in which students are characterised as consumers in the higher education market. This is revealed by the nature of the indicators, with one key set of indicators based on student (customer) satisfaction.

Following evidence that they published the necessary information on their websites, institutions were assessed using quantitative indicators. Seven elements were grouped under three sets of indicators. The first set of indicators was based on student satisfaction and had three elements derived from responses students gave to the 2004 Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ), which all graduates are asked to complete following graduation. The student satisfaction indicators were based on responses graduates gave to the generic skills scale, good teaching scale, and overall satisfaction items in the CEQ (DEST 2005c: 5). The second set of indicators had two elements around student outcomes, and these were derived from the 2004 Graduate Destination Survey (GDS). Positive outcomes were based on the percentage in either full-time study or full-time work (DEST 2005c: 5). The third set had two elements around student success, and this measured the progress (pass rate) and student retention of first year undergraduate students, derived from DEST's statistical collections for 2003 and 2004 (DEST 2005c: 5).

Outcomes for each of these areas were calculated at the level of the institution, and not at the level of field of education or faculty. Outcomes were adjusted according to a range of factors, because the different student composition, location, entry scores, differing combinations of fields of education and

institution size affect each of these outcomes (DEST 2005b). These three sets of indicators were weighted so that student satisfaction indicators accounted for 55% of the outcome, student outcomes 22% and student success 23% (DEST 2005b: 10). Ordinal rankings were allocated in each of the three areas, and then multiplied by the weighting for each of the three groups to determine an overall ordinal rank (DEST 2005b: 10).

A number of changes have been made for the 2007 round of funding. Rather than deriving an overall institutional score on each dimension, results will be calculated within institutions by the following broad discipline areas:

- Science, Computing, Engineering, Architecture & Agriculture.
- Business, Law and Economics.
- Humanities, Arts and Education.
- Health. (DEST 2006b: 6)

The seven indicators under the three broad headings of student satisfaction, outcomes and success will be weighted equally rather than with the weights used to allocate the 2006 Fund. Student retention and progress will be calculated across all undergraduate years, and not restricted to first-year. Part-time study will be included as a good outcome along with full-time study, but part-time work will not be included along with full-time work as a positive outcome (DEST 2006b). The Department will not produce an ordinal ranking of institutions but will combine the results from each of the seven indicators into a single score for each discipline grouping (DEST 2006a). The Government has announced no other change to the operation of the scheme.

Why the Fund won't work on its own terms

DEST's tweaking of the funding method for 2007 has allayed some, but not most (and not the most important) concerns raised by universities following the allocation of the 2006 fund. This section first discusses the methodological problems before discussing the conceptual problems with the LTPF.

Methodological problems

First and foremost, aggregating results from the CEQ and GDS at the level of the institution is an improper use of both. The CEQ was designed as a performance indicator of teaching effectiveness *at the level of the whole course or degree* and not *across* disciplines or at the institutional level (Wilson, Lizzio and Ramsden 1996: 1). This is because there are, according to Paul Ramsden (2003b: 3), one of the main architects of the CEQ in Australia, 'large field-of-study effects and aggregated results are of little use in making inter-institutional comparisons.' Ramsden (2003a: 100) explains that 'students' perceptions of the relative quality of teaching varied by field of study.' Medicine and engineering students were more likely to give lower ratings in the CEQ, while natural science students gave average ratings, and humanities and visual arts students

rated above the average (Ramsden 2003a: 101). Ramsden also explains that students provided different ratings *within* fields of education: electrical engineering students rate their course experience lower than other engineering students, and psychology students lower than other social science students (Ramsden 2003a: 101). Hand *et al.* (1998: 3) say that CEQ results 'are not valid for comparing different subjects/fields of study within institutions or across institutions.'

The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) and Graduate Careers Council of Australia's (GCCA) (2001: 3) code of practice for the use of the CEQ and GDS say that comparisons should be made on the basis of like with like. The code of practice states that comparisons on the basis of the CEQ should be 'between like courses, in like institutions with similar survey response rates.' Similarly with the GDS: comparisons should be made between programs that are similar, *and* in similar institutions, with similar response rates, and similar student demographics (AVCC & GCCA 2001: 3). The fact that the LTPF will be determined on the basis of four broad disciplinary groupings rather than at an institutional level does not address the concerns raised here. The groupings are too broad to be meaningful and to allow like with like to be compared, and they do not distinguish between institutions with very different student demographics, very different labour markets, and very different post graduate program profiles.

The fact that DEST will not be allocating an ordinal rank does not mean that a *de facto* ordinal rank will not be applied. Ordinal ranking was problematic because it greatly exaggerated minuscule and homogenised major differences between universities. For example, one university could be one point lower than another and six points higher than another on the raw score, yet they could still be ranked one, two, three. It will still be possible to generate league tables, but the differences will not be homogenised to the same degree (except for, perhaps, in the national media which is likely to assign ordinal rankings).

More problematic is the fact that tiny and *insignificant* differences may account for major differences in outcomes. In other words, results that could be the consequence of the standard error of the mean, or as a consequence of chance, were used to distribute funds. The AVCC and GCCA's (2001: 5) *Code of Practice* states that differences *that exceed one-third of the relevant standard deviation* are considered noteworthy, yet allocations in the Fund can be made on the basis of differences that are much smaller than this. According to Gavin Moodie (2006), 'the 2006 learning and teaching performance fund purported to distinguish between institutions on 1/270th of a standard deviation.' While these differences are so small as to be meaningless, the consequences are dramatic, and can make the difference between one institution getting funded, and another receiving nothing at all. In contrast, if there is a small error in the results in research funding, a university may

receive a little bit more or a little bit less than they should, but they won't be denied all funding all together. Moodie (2006) explains that the GCCA, the AVCC and twelve universities recommended 'that results be reported by grouping universities into bands or clusters' because many of the reported results used to rank universities were not significant. He continues: 'Furthermore, as some universities pointed out, where there is little difference in universities performance there should be little difference in their funding' (Moodie, 2006).

Response rates are another problem. The AVCC and GCCA's (2001: 4) code of practice states that the *desirable* response rate for the GDS and CEQ is at least 70%, and response rates lower than 50% should not be publicly disclosed. Yet, according to Griffith University (2006), in its submission to DEST following the allocation of 2006 funding:

Of the institutions placed in the top 10 in the learning and teaching performance fund rank, half had a response rate of <50% to the course experience questionnaire (University of Wollongong, University of Melbourne, University of Queensland, University of Canberra, and Australian Maritime College, which with 36 responses gives it a response rate of 32.1%) and the Australian Maritime College also had only 38 responses to the graduate destination survey, giving it a very low response rate of 33.9%.

The University of Wollongong received \$5.108 million, the University of Melbourne \$9.853 million, the University of Queensland \$10.424 million, the University of Canberra \$1.898 million. The Australian Maritime College received \$1.143 million or just over \$30,000 per respondent (DEST 2006b: 12).

Finally, the method universities use to collect this data and to account for missing data varies. Guthrie (1998: 44) explains that some universities impute responses from non-respondents by adding graduates who continued studying in another program at their university (which improves the graduate outcomes). This is not necessarily a problem, and neither is gathering data from other sources (such as relatives) as long as it is accurate (Guthrie 1998: 44). The problem arises because not all universities do this, and so the method of collecting data differs, making reliable comparisons difficult.

In their paper on university rankings, Stella and Woodhouse (2006: 9) from the Australian Universities Quality Agency, draw on wide ranging research to argue that the great majority of university rankings fail tests of validity and reliability. The LTPF is no exception.

Conceptual problems

The LTPF Advisory Group (DEST 2006b: 4) said, in its report to the Minister, that:

Although there are limitations with the existing performance indicators – including that they can only be regarded as 'proxy' indicators – the indicators are still the only feasible ones available at a national level.

In its submission to DEST on the future of the LTPF, The Carrick Institute (2006: 1) said that the selection of indicators reflected the requirements of the LTPF, and indicators that were available and could be compressed into a single ordinal figure, rather than those that reflected educational excellence. In other words, what can be measured becomes important, and what is important but can't be measured becomes unimportant. This is a similar criticism made of other university rankings (Stella and Woodhouse 2006: 10).

When the funding available under the LTPF reaches its peak in 2008 it will still be only 11 per cent of the funding currently allocated to institutions under the research block grant schemes, and therefore it will never seriously rival the prestige of research. Nonetheless, it is still enough to drive institutional behaviours and to encourage institutional game-playing, games that often have nothing to do with improving teaching and learning. For example, an internet search using the terms 'course experience questionnaire' and 'strategies', and restricting the domains searched to 'edu.au' returns 1680 hits. While many of these provide advice to academics on ways they can improve their teaching, many are university strategy documents focussed on increasing response rates and positive outcomes in ways that don't impinge on teaching and learning at all. Ramsden (2003b: 2) refers to this as 'the process of winning without actually cheating.'⁵ The lack of fit between the LTPF and the outcomes it purports to measure encourages this sort of gaming behaviour, and as Moodie (2005: 10) argues in a paper critiquing current university rankings, can lead to a misallocation of resources because institutions focus on the indicators rather than seeking to implement measures that may improve outcomes, but not performance against the indicators.

The LTPF may also drive institutional behaviours that *reduce* institutional diversity, by encouraging universities to drift from their mission to provide access to higher education for their communities, particularly universities that serve traditionally disadvantaged communities. The Group of Eight dominate the winners and accounted for almost 43% of the institutions awarded funding under the LTPF but 63.36% of the funds. Of the remainder, most were relatively small institutions, when compared to the rest of the sector.⁶ Student outcomes and student success at the Group of Eight universities is higher because they recruit the highest performing students from the highest socio-economic backgrounds, who are already privileged because they come to university with the highest levels of cultural capital, and the highest levels of social capital. Such students are more likely to continue to further study and to obtain jobs with higher salaries after graduation.

Weighting raw data to reflect different student demographics does not provide a level-playing field between universities, because it does not account for the emergent properties that ensue when large cohorts of extremely privileged students

attend the Group of Eight universities, and large cohorts of extremely disadvantaged students attend the new universities and regional universities, particularly those universities in these categories with multiple campuses, who must as a consequence, spread their resources more thinly. A Griffith University (2005: 1) paper to DEST explains that:

...according to the bivariate regressions reported in appendix C of the Characteristics and performance indicators of Australian higher education institutions, 2000, from as little as 0.42% to 4.97% of the variance in the performance indicator data is explained by institution and from 80.17% to 99.03% of the variance in the data is not explained by factors for which the Department of Education, Science and Training adjusts.

Jacqui Elson-Green (2006: 11), in an article in *Campus Review*, cites John Dewar, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at Griffith University to the effect that universities can be penalised for fulfilling their mission in trying to serve under-privileged communities with low participation rates in higher education. A purely market-based 'rational' decision would be to pursue students who normally go to the Group of Eight universities. Universities will try to emulate the winners, rather than differentiate themselves. However, they cannot win this game, because apart from the accumulated social prestige that is a consequence of decades of public investment in the Group of Eight universities and the social capital networks these universities have developed over this time (Marginson 1993, 1997), is the fact that the Group of Eight are resource rich, whereas most of the other universities are not. A table compiled by *Campus Review* (2006) shows that the total revenue per equivalent full-time student unit is many thousands of dollars higher at the Group of Eight than at other universities. Moodie (2005: 9) argues that performance on current university rankings are a direct measure of institutional resources at each institution. This reflects the LTPF outcomes as well.⁷

It is clear that the use of the CEQ and the GDS in the LTPF are extended beyond that which is appropriate. The CEQ and the GDS may be appropriate as *one* source of information, but this must be contextualised by broader forms of evidence, and this is the only valid way in which it can be used. Ramsden (2003b: 7–8) argues that the CEQ and GDS results should not be considered 'in isolation, but always in association with other sources of information.' This includes qualitative data from students, employers, accreditation bodies and overseas partners. He says comparisons must be appropriate, for example, through benchmarking with other, similar universities. Only *substantial* differences should be reported, which 'can be explained with reference to some specific intervention' (Ramsden 2003b: 7). This enables universities to understand the impact of specific changes. He says that his most important rule is this: 'Whether writing an account of a QA process or assessing its effectiveness, focus

more attention on the use of the results than on the results themselves' (Ramsden 2003b: 7).

Moreover, Ramsden (2003b: 1) questions whether we should be focussing on student satisfaction or whether we should be focussing on quality of student learning outcomes, because they are not necessarily synonymous. His paper is not written in response to the LTPF and I am extending his argument in applying it this way, but his argument is relevant because of the emphasis in the LTPF on student satisfaction. It is also important because the CEQ is not primarily about student satisfaction, even though these elements of it are privileged in the fund's indicators. Ramsden cites the work of Richardson concerning student satisfaction, who says that the satisfaction approach:

Privileges satisfaction as a notion that is coherent, homogenous and unproblematic. The limited amount of research on this topic suggests that student satisfaction is a complex yet poorly articulated notion that is influenced by a wide variety of factors which are not intrinsically linked to the quality of teaching. (Richardson, cited in Ramsden 2003b: 2)

Ramsden asks if it makes sense for student satisfaction to be an important goal of higher education in its own right, and whether it tells us 'enough about the quality of the core business of a university' (Ramsden 2003b: 2). He makes the point that we don't ask questions about academic satisfaction and nor do we think it 'a tangible correlate of research performance, as a criterion for measuring research outcomes' (Ramsden 2003b: 2).

Finally, while it is clear that the CEQ (and GDS), if used appropriately, may measure something, and that this something is related to the quality of teaching and learning, it is not altogether clear what the something may be. Neumann *et al.* (2002) argue that the process of teaching and learning that occurs across different disciplines is not the same. They argue that 'pure' and 'applied' and 'hard' and 'soft' disciplines are (broadly speaking) distinguished by the social purpose of the discipline, the structure of knowledge, the cognitive demands made on students, the kinds of outcomes that are expected, and associated teaching and learning and assessment practices. They argue that:

The clear implication is that to ignore disciplinary differentiation – a seemingly inevitable tendency in institution-wide assessment regulations – may serve seriously to undermine the main learning objectives and the intrinsic requirements for effective educational programmes in particular knowledge areas. (Neumann *et al.* 2002: 414)

They argue that blindness to these differences across disciplines can result in inequitable or false judgements, yet standard questionnaires (such as the CEQ) are based on the assumption that the questions seem to be asking the same thing of students, regardless of their discipline. In contrast, they argue that observed outcomes across the disciplines may be a consequence of epistemological and cultural factors asso-

ciated with the intrinsic differences between the disciplines. Survey instruments that measure graduate outcomes similarly fail to take into account disciplinary differentiation, because there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that employability and job status are affected by 'the characteristics of the related degree subjects, [yet] quality assessment agencies continue to treat them as valid indicators of the intrinsic merit of degree programs' (Neumann *et al.* 2002: 415).

Clegg and Ashworth (2004) also explore the relationship between learning outcomes and disciplinary understandings. Their focus is on the idea (firmly entrenched in policy in England and in Australia) that the notion of learning outcomes can be universally applied in ways that are transparent and unproblematic. However, their argument also applies to quality assurance mechanisms that homogenise the disciplines, and arguments that quality assurance outcomes provide us with 'objective' and transparent data about those disciplines. Induction into the disciplines and into inter-disciplinary programs results in the formation of quite different academic identities and epistemological approaches (Bernstein 2000). Clegg and Ashworth (2004: 58) explain that the 'customer oriented judgements' that underpin newer fields in higher education 'are not necessarily at odds with disciplinary knowledge', but they 'do represent a re-ordering' of disciplinary knowledge and the way it is used. A universal discourse of quality assurance and learning outcomes is based on positivist notions that different kinds of outcomes and disciplinary ways of knowing can be represented in universal, transparent, and unproblematic ways. They explain that:

Academics as scholars in the humanities and social sciences have been grappling with issues of representation and epistemology for centuries, yet in their pedagogical practice they are being invited to set aside these concerns and operate within crude positivist formulations based on ideas of transparency. (Clegg and Ashworth 2004: 60)

To summarise the argument thus far: the indicators in the LTPF are not valid and they are not reliable. They do not measure what they say they measure, and we may get quite different results should the exact same process be repeated because differences that are not significant and could have been the result of chance are used to construct lists of winners and losers, where the winners take all. The existence of the LTPF will not raise teaching to the same status of research, because the amount of money expended on the Fund is only a fraction of the funds allocated to research. However, the amount is sufficient to drive institutional behaviours to compete for funds, sometimes through game-playing, and at other times through fostering behaviours that reduce rather than increase diversity within higher education.

There may be a limited role for measures such as the CEQ and GDS, but only when the data is used in appropriate ways and as it was intended. We need to consider the possibility that the CEQ and GDS measure different things in different

disciplines because of intrinsic differences in knowledge structures, academic identities, orientations to knowledge, cognitive demands, and teaching and learning and assessment practices. In other words, we need measures that account for, explore and promote diversity, not measures that exclude all that it is important from consideration.

The marketisation & surveillance of higher education

The LTPF may not be a valid or reliable instrument to improve teaching and learning in higher education, but it is very effective as part of a broader suite of strategies and reforms designed to increase the marketisation of higher education, in which relations between students and universities are based on a consumer/service provider model. As well as the LTPF, universities must implement quite detailed staffing and quality assurance arrangements that meet the Commonwealth's requirements. The Commonwealth has also introduced public funding to private higher education providers, income-contingent loans schemes for private higher education fees and other competitive arrangements that force universities to compete with each other and with the growing number of private providers. The Commonwealth has also tied funding increases to detailed regulation of universities' governance and their employment relationship with their staff, and this includes the requirement that universities offer their staff *individual* workplace agreements as an alternative to collective bargaining.

Ball (2003: 215) explains that education reform in England (and in Anglophone nations such as Australia) is: '... embedded in three interrelated policy technologies; the market, managerialism and performativity.' Together this 'package' overrides the 'older technologies of professionalism and bureaucracy' characteristic of public systems and the 'state-centred, public welfare tradition of educational provision' (Ball, 2003: 215-216). He argues that these three technologies 'play an important part in aligning public sector organizations with the methods, culture and ethical system of the private sector' (Ball, 2003: 216). This helps us to understand that market mechanisms are being used to discipline universities, to elicit competitive and entrepreneurial behaviour. Ball (2003: 216) explains that:

Performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic).

Neoliberal reform to higher and other areas of public provision is based on the belief that markets are the only way to overcome the problem of 'producer capture' in which academics run universities for their own interests and not in the interests of students, employers, government or the economy more broadly (Olssen and Peters 2005). Student evaluation of

teaching, the specification of learning outcomes (so the 'customer' knows what they are buying), performance appraisals, and quality assurance mechanisms are part of a transformed institutional culture oriented to markets, measured through external performance indicators, and associated with visibility and audit (Avis 2000: 41). They all result in indicators that can be homogenised, compared, ranked, made 'transparent', and summarised as part of providing 'the market' with the information it needs to make informed purchasing decisions.

Government policy changes have resulted in securing the right of 'management to manage' in a policy environment of external accountability, audit and targets. This has resulted in transformed relationship between academics and university managements, based on conditional trust for those who are 'successful' and performance management for those who are not (Avis 2003: 326). Those who embrace the new market orientation are rewarded through individual performance appraisals or awards for 'best' performance through competing with others, while those who lag behind are disciplined through processes of audit and accountability mechanisms.

Avis (2003: 322) explains that 'All staff across an institution should share a similar 'vision' and 'buy' into and accept unreflexively, given notions of excellence and continuous improvement.' This includes the construction of students as consumers, and the notion that students and employers can articulate students' learning needs (Avis 2003: 322). However, we are not just expected to (however reluctantly), comply with external requirements, we are meant to internalise and 'own' these goals as our own. Ball (2003: 217) explains this as follows:

Within this ensemble, teachers are represented and encouraged to think about themselves as individuals who calculate about themselves, 'add value' to themselves, improve their productivity, strive for excellence and live an existence of calculation.

The marketisation discourse has also co-opted progressive student discourses of student-centred learning and recontextualised these as part of a discourse of customer responsiveness. Practices that sought to make learning more transparent for students who do not have generations of cultural capital behind them have been transformed into tools of surveillance and control. Formative and collaborative student evaluations of teaching have been transformed into compulsory and public evaluations used in performance reviews and other accountability frameworks. For example, at one university I know of, staff are required to include the outcomes of student evaluations of their teaching in their course outlines, and to explain the measures they are planning to implement to improve their teaching. This is a 'confessional' culture intrinsically linked to continuous improvement discourses.

Jones and Moore (1995) provide insights into the way in which progressive, student-centred learning discourses have been transformed into a customer-service orientation. Jones

and Moore (1995: 81) explain that educational policy must be located within the political context in which it arises. While educational policy may draw from educational theories, including progressive, student-centred approaches this is always selective: the 'political and policy context act selectively upon the realisation of the various *possibilities* suggested by different approaches ... Whether it is the controlling or emancipatory possibilities that come to be realised will be settled not by theoretical or definitional debates but within real world, institutional contexts...' (Jones and Moore 1995: 81-82). The real world, institutional policy context acts by selectively borrowing from other discourses and constructs 'an approach appropriate to the particular objectives of the agency assembling it' (Jones and Moore 1995: 83).

This is what has happened in Australia with the LTPF. It has transformed student-centred notions of evaluating teaching, improving outcomes and helping disadvantaged students access the structures of disciplinary knowledge into measures that are quite different. Student satisfaction is now a proxy for quality of teaching and learning. Student outcomes such as access to further study and full-time employment reflect the background students have when they enter university, and the extent of institutional wealth of the university they go to. Success and retention are similarly measures of students' cultural capital and social capital, as well as institutional resources.

Conclusion

The LTPF will do little to improve teaching and learning in Australian universities. Indeed, it is more likely to foster institutional game-playing and conformity between universities. The Fund is designed to stratify and differentiate the higher education 'market'. The indicators used to measure teaching and learning performance are not valid, and they are not reliable. The CEQ and GDS have a place in improving teaching and learning, but only as an element contextualised by a much broader and richer framework that draws on multiple sources of evidence. If the Government were serious about creating differentiation amongst universities it would *reward* universities for focussing on their specific institutional missions, particularly when this includes providing access for students traditionally excluded from higher education. However, the LTPF punishes universities for having these students, and rewards the already privileged Group of Eight universities for their good fortune in recruiting students who already have high levels of cultural capital and social capital.

Leesa Wheelahan is a senior lecturer in adult and vocational education in the Faculty of Education at Griffith University. Her main research interests are lifelong learning, the relationship between the sectors of post-compulsory education, and the role of knowledge in the curriculum.

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Endnotes

1. The Carrick Institute is not involved in implementing the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund, as it is administered as a DEST program (DEST 2004: 5).
2. An additional \$3.029 million was allocated under the Regional Protection Scheme in 2005 to protect small, regional universities from losses they may incur under the other schemes.
3. Although, there are safety nets for the IGS and the RTS, which mean that even if a university's performance falls, they will not lose more than 5% funding under the IGS and the RTS for that year (DEST 2005a: 77).
4. Bond University, the University of Notre Dame, and the Melbourne College of Divinity are all Table B providers under the Act.
5. Ramsden uses the term 'gamesmanship' here, and cites Stephen Potter as the originator of the term.
6. Of all the non-Group of Eight universities awarded funding, none were in the top half of the biggest universities. In 2004, AMC had 340 EFTSL, Canberra had the smallest number of EFTSL of all universities, Ballarat the 5th smallest, ACU the 8th, Murdoch 10th, UNE 11th, Swinburne 12th, and Wollongong the 18th smallest number of EFTSL. Moreover, most of these universities had most of their students on their main campus. The average for the sector was 78% of students on the university's main campus. With the exceptions of Swinburne, which had 73% of its students on its main campus, and Ballarat, which had 76%, UNE 99%, Canberra 98%, Murdoch 93% and Wollongong 92% of students on their main campus. ACU is in a different category, as its campuses are spread across states, and they are not required to share resources in the same way, as are other multi-campus universities. A Griffith University (2005: 2) also points out that universities with highly dispersed student populations did relatively poorly in the LTPE.
7. Or, as illustrated in footnote 5, a reflection of small size and a relatively high concentration of students on the university's main campus.
8. See Bernstein (2000) for the most theoretically developed account of these differences.

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