Policy Implications of Research in Education 3

Helen Proctor
Patrick Brownlee
Peter Freebody *Editors*

Controversies in Education

Orthodoxy and Heresy in Policy and Practice

Springer

Policy Implications of Research in Education

Volume 3

Policy Implications of Research in Education

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ISBN 978-3-319-08758-0 ISBN 978-3-319-08759-7 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7
Springer Cham Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014948553

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media (www.springer.com)

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Heresy and Orthodoxy in Contemporary Schooling: Australian Educational Policy and Global Neoliberal Reform

Helen Proctor, Peter Freebody, and Patrick Brownlee

Abstract This book grew out of a colloquium series, hosted by the University of Sydney, in which leading scholars and researchers were invited to name what they took to be the deep, potentially lethal flaws at the heart of contemporary schooling practice and policy. They were invited to identify and challenge prevailing orthodoxies and to voice their potentially 'heretical' views about education in the twenty-first century. The chapters in this volume arise from an Australian schooling and policy context that has international resonance. Australia provides, we argue, a good case study of the kinds of globally popular reform strategies that have been described by the celebrity Finnish educator, Pasi Sahlberg as 'GERM'—the Global Education Reform Movement: standardisation; a focus on core curriculum subjects at the expense of areas such as creative arts; risk-avoidance; corporate management models, and test-based accountancy policies. In this chapter we introduce key elements of our authors' critiques of contemporary education policy and practice and consider the purpose of critique (or 'heresy'), and the practical impact, or otherwise, of this kind of academic work at a time of uncertainty and change for university research and teaching in the field of education.

This book grew out of a colloquium series, hosted by the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney, in which leading scholars and researchers were invited to name what they took to be the deep, potentially lethal flaws at the heart of contemporary educational practice and policy. They were invited to identify and challenge prevailing orthodoxies and to voice their potentially 'heretical' views about education in the twenty-first century. The 'Heresies' colloquia were designed as occasions for debate and contestation not only via exchanges with the audience

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_1

but also via the inclusion of critical responses that countered or built on each leading address. This collection, which also includes some additional contributions, is the outcome of that set of exchanges, organised into chapter pairs, a lead chapter and a shorter response.

Heresies named by our authors included:

- The traditional age-graded school, operating on a narrowly-theorised model of child and adolescent development is no longer "fit for purpose" (Wyn).
- "Testing, formative assessment, and even more recent approaches to performance-based and real-time diagnosis of learning" are informed by inadequate understandings of how people learn (Reimann).
- "Evidence-based policy" is not as neutral an idea as it sounds (Welch). Neither is "quality teaching" (Vickers).
- Staying longer at school does not necessarily benefit "at risk" students (Reid; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler).
- "Multiculturalism" is now a heretical proposition (Tsolidis).
- Education itself—"the social process in which we nurture and develop capacities for practice"—is currently at risk (Connell).
- Neoliberals are the real heretics (Brownlee and Freebody).

The book is predicated on the conviction that informed critique is a necessary accompaniment to developing and sustaining good school systems. Just how 'heretical' the assertions above are, and for whom, are issues discussed below.

The chapters in this volume arise from an Australian schooling and policy context that has international resonance. Australia provides, we argue, a good case study of the kinds of globally popular reform strategies that have been described by the celebrity Finnish educator, Pasi Sahlberg (2011) as 'GERM'—the Global Education Reform Movement. Sahlberg lists five reform strategies that have 'infected' such Anglophone countries as Australia, the US and England but which some other more successful educational nations such as Finland, have managed thus far to eschew. These are standardisation; a focus on core curriculum subjects at the expense of areas such as creative arts; risk-avoidance; corporate management models, and test-based accountancy policies. The enactment of these strategies is framed by governments as a national—often indeed a nationalistic—matter; they are encouraged and facilitated by global competition and international agencies notably the OECD.

This volume offers a collection of varied case studies and critiques of the application of what is otherwise known as neoliberal education reform. Australia is a world leader in some elements of GERM, notably in its well-developed school choice regime (Jensen et al. 2013; Musset 2012; Campbell et al. 2009). The Australian case is also characterised by growing socio-economic disparities, increasing concentration of advantage and disadvantage in its schools, and a complex set of legislative entanglements around schooling, involving multiple levels of jurisdiction (e.g., see Gonski 2011; Sherington and Hughes, Chap. 14, this volume). In the next section we introduce some key elements of our authors' critiques of contemporary education policy and practice. We then consider the purpose of critique (or 'heresy'),

and the practical impact, or otherwise, of this kind of academic work at a time of uncertainty and change for university research and teaching in the field of education. The final part of the chapter offers a guide to the chapter pairs.

Australian Schooling as a Case Study of Neoliberal Reform

It is possible that the term, 'neoliberalism', is becoming overused in contemporary critical discourse (see Brownlee and P. Freebody, Chap. 18, this volume on "neoliberal fatigue"). It is certainly a charged descriptor, widely used by the (many) critics and opponents of the set of arrangements it describes, but rarely if ever by 'neoliberals' themselves. Practitioners and supporters of neoliberal, or market-oriented reform tend to describe what they do in language that assumes moral and ideological neutrality, thereby offering few spaces for professional or public debate other than around the procedural details. In this book we nevertheless argue that naming and explaining some of the detail of neoliberal arrangements continues to be important, precisely in order to create spaces for thorough-going discussion and critique, rather than just tinkering with details. We mentioned above Sahlberg's list of the key features of 'GERM', all of which are addressed in this collection. The most detailed account of neoliberalism in this book is Raewyn Connell's. Contributing to an already rich critical literature (for example, Marginson 1997; Davies and Bansel 2007; Lingard 2010; Meagher and Goodwin 2014), Connell examines the history of Australian education policy from the 1970s to the early 2010s and locates the Australian story in a global context, reaching back to the Monetarist experiments of Chile in the 1970s. She focuses on how a particular set of policy and institutional arrangements has come about (managerialism, marketised accountability, new hierarchies of schooling) and how and why these arrangements seem poised to continue to dominate the provision of mass education for some time to come. Connell argues that it is crucial to recognise the significance of international financial markets in the shaping of national social policy and infrastructure and also that market-oriented education policy is brought about within a broad bipartisan consensus in Australian state and federal governments. In fact this effective bipartisanship points to one of the issues raised by this book and elaborated on below: the apparent epistemological schism between policy-makers aligned with both sides of the main party political divide and the kinds of critical social scientists who have contributed to this volume.

The two main questions asked by our authors of contemporary Australian education policy and practice are "is it fair?" and "does it work"? Of course this is not the first and will not be the last time these questions are put, but they are important. Concern that marketised systems of schooling exacerbate social and educational inequality is a pervasive argument in this volume (for example, Reid; Vickers). A conclusion to be drawn from a number of the chapters is that neoliberal or market-oriented policy frameworks, despite claims about the flexibility and responsiveness they afford, frequently fail to foster genuine school engagement and

learning. The market-consumer model of engagement does not seem up to dealing with the complexities of twenty-first century schooling or with the longstanding challenges of providing authentic and rich educational experiences for all young people no matter who they are or where they live. This may be because of impoverished conceptualisations of children and young people themselves both as learners (e.g. Reimann) and as participants in society. As Wyn points out,

> The sociology of youth in particular, with its focus on analysing the ways in which youth is mediated by social context, provides extensive evidence of the diversity of the meaning of youth and the experience of what it means to be a young person.

Bottrell argues for an enriched theorisation of school-community relationships which includes a thorough recognition of structural inequality and an authentic commitment to reciprocity (see also K. Freebody, Chap. 9, this volume).

We discuss the connections and disconnections between "evidence" and policy further below, but note here that some of our contributors are critical of the efficacy as well as the equity of new school policies, including new policies designed to increase Australia's relatively low secondary school retention rates (for example, Reid; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler). With a particular focus on the OECD, Groundwater-Smith and Mockler discuss "the failure of global educational governance ... to recognise the particularity of the local". As for test-based accountancy policies, this book includes contributions from the learning sciences suggesting that there are better ways to spend educational money. Australia's whole cohort testing programs differ from those of some other jurisdictions in that Australian schools do not suffer penalties for poor test results (other than bad publicity, of course) and also in that Australia's national league tables system, the MySchool website includes an index of 'socio-educational' advantage (see Campbell and Proctor 2014). Even so, Reimann (Chap. 4, this volume) argues that standardized testing is not actually a valuable source of information about learning, even when decoupled from accountability regimes, because it is based upon impoverished and outmoded conceptualizations of cognition. Martin argues that standardized tests can be valuable if used only as 'growth-oriented' pedagogical tools.

History is an important mode of analysis in this book, employed in different ways by different authors. Historical explanations of contemporary policy and practice offer a challenge to the apparent neutrality and common sense of some contemporary education discourses. As Proctor (Chap. 17, this volume) points out, citing Foucault (1988: 37), "Since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were made". Te Riele's critique of current high school retention policy, for example, includes an analysis of shifts in the language of key Commonwealth government policy statements over the decade from the early 1980s to the early 1990s, from an emphasis on social to an emphasis on economic concerns. Sherington and Hughes offer a fine-grained account of the long and peculiarly Australian history of the public funding of private schools. They explain, *inter alia*, how Australian state and federal governments' well-developed support of 'school choice' has its origins in the bitter religious divides of nineteenth

century Britain. Publicly funded 'school choice' in Australia entangles the logic of the market with an old historical tradition of the separation of Protestant from Catholic children at school.

These historical discussions raise questions about whether or how things were different in the past, and about the nature of the constituency for current arrangements. If, as Connell (Chap. 16, this volume) proposes, there has been a 'neoliberal coup', what is the view from below? Citing Larner (2005), Forsey (Chap. 15, this volume), cautions,

> What we see in contemporary polities such as Australia reveals less of a unified and coherent political philosophy than complex, hybrid, multi-vocal imaginaries and realities that are never simply imposed on an unsuspecting population from a great height.

At the same time, some of the teenage school students unsuccessfully looking for useful work experience placements in Reid's research study (Chap. 8, this volume), do seem to have been imposed upon by a series of policy initiatives over which they had no control and which they lack the cultural and social capital to negotiate. Writing about multiculturalism, Tsolidis demonstrates the fragility of what had seemed, 20 years or so ago, to be secure or settled collectivist policy principles. Nevertheless, Tsolidis and Watkins disagree about what has been lost or gained since the celebratory policy launches of "multiculturalism" in the 1970s and 1980s. Watkins sees real possibilities in newer 'integrationist' policies for the accommodation of more complex and diverse cultural identities and identifications, beyond the tokenism or essentialism of some multicultural practices in schools.

Looking at Schools Through the Lens of "Heresy": The Social Sciences and Schooling Policy

The name for our colloquium series, "Heresies in education", came from a chance discovery in the University of Sydney library of an old book of essays collected by the Australian national broadcaster from a series of radio talks in the early 1970s (ABC 1974). The book, simply called *Heresies*, was apparently intended as "a forum for essentially radical, provocative and unorthodox views on social, political, economic and cultural issues" (ABC: 7). Several of the authors came from Sydney University, including the progressive Methodist minister, Norman Webb, 'master' of one of the University's residential colleges and the political economist Ted Wheelwright. These two, at least, were genuinely controversial. Webb came close to facing real religious heresy charges and was eventually removed from his post for his questioning of institutionalised religion and his relatively permissive management of the residential college (Brown 2012). Wheelwright is well known by historians of the period for his part in the bitter ideological disputes at Sydney

University over the teaching of economic theory.[1] The most important contributor on school education was the high school teacher and socialist intellectual Helen Palmer. Palmer had been expelled from the Communist Party of Australia after the international publication of Khrushchev's 1956 Secret Speech, subsequently responding to her disillusionment by publishing the nonaligned socialist journal *Outlook* (Bridges 1982). The titles of her two contributions to *Heresies*, 'Education is good, so more education is better' and 'If you can't measure it, it doesn't exist', signal the kinds of criticisms she levelled at schooling. Among other things Palmer wrote against timed multiple-choice testing and the then new technology of 'Optical Scanning'. The development of the Optical Scanning Machine, she complained, meant that vast numbers of test papers could be scored and ranked without having to be read by human eyes—so long as the answers were simple enough. Palmer did not view such a process as having much to do with genuine education. Her larger argument was about the dehumanising potential of schooling. 'If there is one over-riding need as we approach the twenty-first century', she concluded, 'it is for human beings to take over control of their destiny; to say "this is how we want to live and how we want our children to live". The values of people must prevail over the domination of things' (Palmer 1974: 120–121).

Palmer was a strong supporter of schools and reputedly enjoyed working in them. She was concerned about their potential to entrench inequality and to dampen real curiosity but she also had faith in their possibilities. To some of her contemporaries on the right and left she was heretical; to others she spoke nothing more than good sense. In the twenty-first century, as in the 1950s or 1970s, heresy is somewhat in the eye of the beholder. As Reimann (Chap. 4, this volume) points out, arguing against the use of high-stakes mass testing regimes might be uncontentious in a room full of sociologists (for example) but is, we propose, indeed a heretical proposition to put to just about any national government in the world, or to the OECD or to any of the many businesses large and small that operate within the testing industry. In fact this problem of evidence and audience is one of the educational problems around which this book coheres: that is, the apparent failure of certain kinds of social sciences research to have more of an effect on the making of public policy. In his critique of so-called "evidence-based policy", Welch argues that there are epistemological and moral flaws in the contemporary relationship between 'evidence' and policy, in nations such as the US and Australia (at least) and that this provides a pressing and difficult set of challenges for researchers in the social sciences. Connell (Chap. 16, this volume) is dismissive of a variety of too-easy research evidence which, she argues, "is provided by the testing system, via an international literature, now very large, of correlational studies on what variables are associated with improved test results". Writing about the enthusiastic international policy embrace of 'quality

[1]For a recent account of the dispute over the subject, Political Economy, including the current Australian Prime Minister's opposition to it during his years as a student politician, see "Radical economics: The Political Economy dispute at Sydney University", *Hindsight*, Producer Catherine Freyne, ABC Radio National, 1 September, 2013. http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/hindsight/radical-economics/4910750

teaching', 'authentic pedagogy' and 'productive pedagogy', Vickers describes how research evidence can be deliberately over-simplified when transmuted into policy, as in the case of "Quality teaching".

Finally, this book also raises questions about the place of intellectual, critical and political work in teacher education, as K. Freebody, Chap. 9 points out in this volume. As we write this introduction the teacher education programs at the University of Sydney are going through a process—repeated every few years—of formal accreditation under the Australian National Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL 2011; Bloomfield 2009; Connell 2009). These new standards promise "a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality" in the following terms:

> The National Professional Standards for Teachers ... define the work of teachers and make explicit the elements of high-quality, effective teaching in 21st century schools that will improve educational outcomes for students. The Standards do this by providing a framework which makes clear the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across teachers' careers. They present a common understanding and language for discourse between teachers, teacher educators, teacher organisations, professional associations and the public.

The three "domains" ("Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice, Professional Engagement"), seven standards and further focus areas seem fair enough, including such sensible advice as "Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area". But there is little advice about critical engagement with the field of education broadly defined, much less with its politics, contest, controversy or heresy. Where research expertise may be required for accreditation under the standards it tends to framed as if there is only one kind of answer, for example, "Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds". There is little in the standards about how teachers in schools might engage with and contribute to the kinds of debates represented in this book, or how they might question current arrangements or work to effect structural or systematic change, for example. Part of the impetus for putting this book together was to stake a claim for the continued importance of deep critique and robust debate in faculties of education and teacher education institutions—the promotion of a vibrant intellectual climate, including the contributions of knowledge from such fields and disciplines as youth studies, the learning sciences, philosophy and economics. We believe that this is important in the formulation of good policy and in the education of genuine "quality" teachers.

A Brief Guide to the Chapter Pairs

Drawing on a youth studies perspective, Johanna Wyn argues that the schools in which contemporary young people find themselves are not "fit for purpose", citing a figure of about 25 % of young people who have been failed by schooling in Australia (Wyn, Chap. 2, this volume). This is a large group, comprising

a disproportionate number of people from low socio-economic or Indigenous backgrounds. Wyn argues for changes in the categorical conceptualisation of youth—away from old fashioned and inflexible developmental models—as well as for changes in the conceptualisation of schooling for marginalised youth—away from the dominant instrumental-vocational framing. A better model of schooling, she suggests, is one that nurtures young learners as 'navigators':

> Being good navigators requires a conscious approach to personal development so that young people can see how their personal biography has developed and how is being constructed in the present so that they can make decisions about their options for the future. Being good navigators also requires a deep understanding of the nature of the social, economic and political world in which they are living and their relationships with others, locally and globally (Wyn, Chap. 2, this volume).

Responding to Wyn, Dorothy Bottrell looks to school-community relationships to "break the nexus of educational success and the resources of privilege" (Bottrell, Chap. 3, this volume). Current policy movements often frame communities in neoliberal terms; as having a narrow school improvement role in education. Bottrell sees community differently. Rejecting deficit or problem-based views of disadvantaged or marginalised communities and their youth, Bottrell argues for the recognition of diverse cultural capital and the mobilisation of local funds of knowledge, including the expertise of young people themselves. A community development approach to the education of young people, she proposes, must also be collective, informed by broader democratic and emancipatory purposes.

While Wyn and Bottrell critique narrow policy conceptualisations of youth and their schooling, Peter Reimann and Andrew Martin address fixations with testing and measurement. Reimann identifies problems both with the construct validity of current testing regimes—we are not measuring what we really need to measure—and consequential validity—the assessment system is demonstrably not improving the quality of decision-making about our educational systems. At least two important elements are lacking. One is that testing and assessment is so intensely specialised that few people truly understand what is going on. Classroom teachers, school principals and even most policy-makers are not adequately educated in its technical, disciplinary knowledge or even its application. Second, current tests are insufficiently informed by well-developed theories of learning and cognition. At best they are very blunt instruments, offering limited information about only the most elementary of educational skilling.

Responding to Reimann, Martin makes the case that testing has its place, proposing a reconsideration of small-scale classroom testing, not for the purpose of ranking and sorting, nor to discipline and measure school or teacher efficacy, but rather as a pedagogical tool to enlist students' support for their own learning. Testing in this framework is strategic at the level of the individual student, who is invited in to the process to participate in the management of their own achievement, learning and feedback processes. Martin's focus here is immediate and practical—on making productive connections between classroom testing and student motivation, and on insisting that testing perform only the functions it is good at.

Big numbers can be irresistible, not least for policy-makers. Decisions determined by 'hard', countable data is an attractive but dangerous fantasy, according to Anthony Welch in his critique of so-called "evidence based" policy. The use and abuse of educational research underline the pair of chapters by Welch and by Margaret Vickers. Welch argues that the idea of evidence has been misused in recent educational policy in Australia and internationally in the service of what has been described as the 'new instrumentalism' or the 'utilitarian turn'. First, he argues educational problems are not so easy to solve, second that policy-makers are unreliable consumers of data—prone to cherry-picking—and third, invoking the work of the philosopher Paul Feyerabend, that a purely technocratic management of education will be ethically bankrupt.

Vickers applies the problem of evidence to the contemporary discourse of 'quality' in teaching: a common formulation about the power of 'good' teachers to 'make a difference' to student outcomes, which she argues, has become untethered from the careful research evidence that originally gave rise to it. Teacher effects may be powerful but they are less so than student-related factors, including the important influence of mixing in school with academically-engaged peers. Drawing on her own recent research into young high school students, Vickers argues that residualised schools are more of a problem than poor teachers.

Several chapters in this collection touch on responsibilisation; whereby collective, social or even policy-caused problems are incorrectly named as personal or individual. The recent raising of the minimum school leaving age in New South Wales can be seen as a case in point. Carol Reid argues that the imposition of this policy neglects the real causes of disadvantage and does not address the social context of schooling, falsely reading the decision to leave school early as an individual mistake. Reid's own research in western Sydney revealed,

> patterns of inequality, when, for example, low student numbers affect the range of subjects a school can offer, while inequalities in the level of social and cultural capital in the form of community networks restrict work experience options and work readiness programs for some ethnic groups (Reid, Chap. 8, this volume).

Reid argues that this policy forms part of a larger set of dogmas in Australian education which neglect not only the diversity of social and economic contexts but also, by focusing too much on individual responsibility, fail to attend to the development of system capacity.

Kelly Freebody responds to Reid by looking for possibilities in the connections between schools and the people they work with. Using Jean Anyon's ideas about 'radical possibility' and 'relationship-as-alliance', Freebody argues that the responsibility of educators is to work with communities for the mutual enrichment of school *and* community. "Educators", she proposes, "need to become researchers of their communities; to explore and understand the political and cultural resources that can be called upon to help address the school's and community's problems". Further, this work must be informed by a realistic understanding of community and an acknowledgement that "communities are not homogeneous or stable" (K. Freebody, Chap. 9, this volume).

Georgina Tsolidis and Megan Watkins disagree about what is heresy and what is orthodoxy in twenty-first century formulations of multiculturalism and integrationism. Offering a "qualified defence" of multiculturalism, Tsolidis finds that even if imperfect, "multiculturalism provided a discursive space within which cultural differences could be acknowledged positively" (Tsolidis, Chap. 10, this volume). Evident even in such developments as the renaming of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism as the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in 2007, multiculturalism, she argues has been replaced by integrationism, whereby differences other than apolitical non-structural differences of individual choice and consumption, become suspect or invisible.

Megan Watkins, in contrast, finds policy-mandated multiculturalism confining, as ethnicity becomes an over-simple, often essentialised form of identification. In a study conducted with the NSW Department of Education, Watkins found that the achievements and difficulties of children of Chinese and Pasifika backgrounds were frequently attributed to their culture, where young people of Anglo or non-specific background were described by their teachers in terms of their individual ability, family or social class. If multiculturalism struggles to manage cultural complexity, Watkins wonders whether 'every day' integrationism might be able to better accommodate diversity and heterogeneity.

Susan Groundwater-Smith and Nicole Mockler issue the provocative prediction that increasing school retention rates can be a problem rather than a solution to helping marginalised young people manage their lives. Such globally popular policies, they argue, are at best misguided and at worst counterproductive in that they pay insufficient attention to the internal structures of mainstream schooling, prioritising the economic returns of schooling at the expense of the social. Both this chapter and Kitty te Riele's response offer a critique of interpretations of school "failure" that do not recognise that the real problem is that some students are in fact failing at "doing school"—at performing the arbitrary and superficial competencies and rituals of schooling. Tracing a recent history of Australian policies addressing school attainment, te Riele argues that, whereas documents from the early 1980s foregrounded social equity, later documents determinedly prioritised international economic competitiveness. This, she argues, has effects on policy implementation and the treatment of marginalised young people. Somewhat against the grain she suggests that flexible, non-linear pathways through school and work may in fact work better for many young people than the standard one-way transition.

Turning at this point to the making of privilege is Geoffrey Sherington and John P. Hughes's history of the fall and rise of state subsidised private schools in Australia and the concomitant rise and fall of governments' commitment to universal, equitable public schooling. Their account describes the importance of money: the public funding of government and nongovernment schools is one of the most hotly debated issues in contemporary Australian education. The distribution of funding and the bitter struggles associated with changes in funding arrangements, argue Sherington and Hughes, underpin the grand narratives of church and state, public and private in Australian schooling, as does a history of state and federal struggles over taxation revenue.

Focussing particularity on the decline of the popularity of public education in Australia, relative to private schooling, Martin Forsey responds to Sherington and Hughes with the question, 'how do we become neoliberal subjects?' interrogating the movements in consciousness and imagination that contributed to and were in turn shaped by the structural, material changes described by Sherington and Hughes. "Commitments to the equitable aspirations of high modernity have not suddenly disappeared", argues Forsey (Chap. 15, this volume), "but they sit alongside an intensified commitment to self-expression and fulfilment".

The final pair of chapters, by Raewyn Connell and Helen Proctor, addresses the history of neoliberalism. Connell's excoriating account of late twentieth and early twentieth century market reforms describes a "cascade" of policy and organisational changes to educational institutions—universities, schools and technical colleges—propelled by historically-situated economic forces outside the awareness of many educators. The language and practices of the market now saturate our daily lives and, argues Connell (Chap. 16, this volume), "The market is, in a sense, its own teacher. ... With markets all around, what else are people likely to learn?" Nevertheless, Connell exemplifies emancipatory possibilities, in new forms of collective alliances and in the persistence of older forms of public service.

Proctor argues for a longer historical explanation of late twentieth century transformations in the relationships surrounding schools. She explores some of the longer histories of debate over the relative merits of centralisation and local control in public schooling and also proposes that a history of mothering for schooling might shed further light on the development of a consumer relationship between schools and parents.

In the concluding chapter Patrick Brownlee and Peter Freebody raise some final questions such as 'historically, what educational ideas and practices are heresy and what orthodoxy?' and 'who, in the end, are the real "heretics"?'. They take a long view of the history of institutionalised education and aim to show how changes have resulted not just from intellectual and technological developments, but also from the changing material and cultural conditions of the clients of education—nation building, responding to external threats to economic arrangements and internal threats to cultural arrangements, and so on—all have framed the long contest over what education is, whom it benefits, whom it should benefit, and what the history of contests can tell us about the current predicament.

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Chapter 2
Schools Not Fit for Purpose: New Approaches for the Times

Johanna Wyn

Abstract In this chapter it is argued that schools that are fit for purpose in these new times require a strengthening of educational polices to implement programs that are holistic, flexible and based on social justice. Educational and socio-demographic data are marshaled to point to deep systemic inadequacies in the educational assumptions and practices that currently organize schooling in developed countries. Positive ways forward are outlined that are aimed at the more equitable and appropriate preparation of young people for the challenges that face them in the future.

Introduction

This chapter builds on the publication *Touching the Future: Building Skills for Life and Work* (Wyn 2009a) and subsequent work. As Furlong identifies in the foreword, the central tenet of that book is the heresy that:

> In advanced contemporary societies, education is simply no longer fit for purpose. Young people's lives have moved in ways which call into question some of the central principles on which post-war education was founded (Furlong, foreword to Wyn 2009a, p. iii).

Focusing on this proposition, this chapter is written as a provocation, contributing to current debates about the relationship between education and society. Contemporary research within the field of youth studies makes a significant contribution to understanding the interrelationship between broader social, economic and political change, young people's lives and education. This work challenges one of the basic assumptions on which mass secondary education was based: that youth is a universal and undifferentiated category or stage of life based on biological age. The sociology of youth in particular, with its focus on analysing the ways in which youth is mediated by social context, provides extensive evidence of the diversity of the meaning of youth and the experience of what it means to be a young person.

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_2

Institutions by definition bear the legacy of their origins, and education is no exception. However, if the institution of formal education is to have ongoing relevance and legitimacy, there needs to be a critical awareness of how past educational discourses, policies and politics have shaped the form that education takes in the present. In other words, an element of reflexivity about educational policies is required, demonstrating a consciousness of the contexts in which schools are operating and of the ways in which existing structures may need to change. Australian educational policy does to some extent demonstrate a reflexive consciousness in the domain of the economic. Drawing almost exclusively on thinking that originated in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Australian educational policies of the 1990s were informed by the recognition that globally, modes of production and consumption were changing and education became a prime tool for the transformation of the workforce (and economy) into a post-industrial (service sector dominated and knowledge-based) economy.

This significant shift in thinking about the role of education in response to social and economic imperatives of a post-industrial economy was inserted into an existing model of age-based, standard education that was developed to serve the needs of Australia when it was primarily an industrial economy. I argue that these conflicting elements of educational policy contribute to a particularly unresponsive education system that, despite the policy goals of enabling young Australians to achieve universal school completion, continues to fail up to a quarter of young people. Although school completion rates are improving, young people from the lowest socio-economic groups are much less likely to complete secondary school than their peers in the highest socio-economic groups. Young people who are in the category that has been called (as for some time in the UK) "Not in Education, Employment or Training" or "NEET", represented 10 % of 15–24 year old Australians in 2011 (Robinson and Lamb 2012). This group is disproportionately made up of young Indigenous people and young people from low socio-economic backgrounds (Robinson and Lamb 2012). One quarter of young Australians aged 20–24 were not engaged in full-time study or work in 2011 (Robinson and Lamb 2012).

The entrenched failure of Australian education systems to respond to the needs of the most marginal presents them with a significant challenge. New approaches are needed to enable education in the twenty-first century to be responsive to the diverse needs of all young Australians. Presenting an argument that is intended to be a provocation, and that may perhaps be considered heretical, this chapter explores the idea of an education that is fit for purpose, analysing the changing realities of life and work for young Australians.

Young People in the Twenty-First Century

There has been a sustained engagement with thinking about the relationship between young people and social change in the field of youth studies over the last decade (Furlong 2013; Talbut and Lesko 2012; Cuervo and Wyn 2012; Wyn 2009b;

Jones 2009; Henderson et al. 2007; Leccardi and Ruspini 2006). These authors and others have built a compelling body of work that shows how the experience and meaning of being young changes across time and place. The idea of youth is fluid; its meaning given by social context. This is illustrated by variations in policy and institutional age categorisations of youth across different organisations and countries (Furlong 2013; Valentine 2003; Mizen 2004; Hopkins 2010). In Australia, the categorisations of youth employed in government policies span the ages of 10–25, encompassing different phases of psychosocial development and stages of life.

The changing and contingent nature of youth poses both a challenge and an opportunity for educationalists. It poses a challenge to the idea of standardised educational provision and assessment because such provision must be based on a political judgement about the 'standard' young person, which inevitably benefits some groups and disadvantage others. The use of standard national tests (e.g. NAPLAN) as an indication of achievement in literacy and numeracy, regardless of the weight of evidence that literacy and numeracy achievement is influenced by social factors (Polesel et al. 2012) is an example of this approach. The use of biological age as an organising principle for educational provision, as in the Australian Government's Earning or Learning policy (COAG 2009) also reinforces standard educational practices that fail to recognise that age no longer maps neatly onto educational development.

Yet the changing and contingent nature of youth also presents an opportunity for educationalists, because shifts in the nature and experience of youth compel educationalists to respond to social change with new and innovative approaches to learning, based on an understanding of who the learner is. In other words, the reality of social change encourages educationalists to recognise the diversity of youth and to understand and respond to the impact of different social environments and cultures on learning. This is especially significant in the 2000s, as Australia navigates emerging economic relationships and social transformations in the Asia-Pacific region. Potentially, social change may achieve what decades of research on the implications of culture, gender and class have failed to deliver: an educational system that recognises the learner and their community. As Bottrell and Goodwin explain, "it appears that the role of schools in society may be changing, as new understandings of the relationships between the state, institutions, communities, families and individuals emerge" (Bottrell and Goodwin 2011, p. 1).

The nature and dimensions of social change in relation to young people has been extensively explored in the youth studies literature. For example, Jones (2009), drawing on Bourdieu's insights, discusses how the idea of youth is a reflection of societal power relations. Popkewitz agrees, arguing that it is necessary to understand the historical practices that have constituted the idea of youth over time (Popkewitz 2012). Others like Mizen (2004) and Talbut and Lesko (2012) take issue with the tendency for the idea of youth to become naturalised within discourses that give prominence to the physiological transformations that are taking place during adolescence. They and many others argue that physiological transformations are taking place throughout life, and their meaning and effects are interpreted in different ways at different times. In other words, physiological processes are not deterministic nor are they universal.

Yet the idea that youth is a universal category, independent of time or place, is difficult to dislodge from educational discourses. The legacy of developmental psychology continues to have a powerful impact on educational practice (Lesko 1996; Cohen 1997; Wyn 2009a; Wyn et al. 2012). It provides the conceptual scaffolding to support standard approaches to education, and is the foundation on which 'new' educational approaches such as positive psychology are based. Developmental psychology was a defining influence on the establishment of universal secondary education in Australia in the 1950s (Connell et al. 1957), and its legacy is felt today.

Despite the changes that have occurred in Australian society since the 1950s, the emergence of the new mass education sector of tertiary education in the 1990s did not have a transformative effect on the basic assumptions that underpinned secondary education. Indeed, in some respects older assumptions have been reinforced. The widespread use of the concept of transition (from school to work) in secondary educational policy discourses naturalises a linear progression from school (immaturity, youth) to work (maturity, adulthood). This approach to transition treats adulthood as a point of arrival, underplaying the reality that learning takes place throughout life and that adulthood is constituted by multiple transitions.

To return to youth studies, the understanding that the meaning and experience of youth is given by its social context has inspired a number of researchers to explore generational change. This interest has been shaped by the evidence that in Western countries a significant shift in life patterns and approaches has occurred between the baby boomer generation and the generation born after 1970 (Wyn and Woodman 2006; Bynner 2005; Mizen 2004). The idea that distinctive social generations are formed through the common experience of historical processes and events has been influential in youth studies and beyond. For example, in the US, sociologist Gerson (2010) has written about the increased participation in education and employment by women in the 1990s and 2000s, which she argues has created an 'unfinished revolution' in expectations and lifestyles. Generational change, focusing particularly on women's roles is also the focus for economist Esping-Andesen (2009). On the basis of an analysis of labour market and education patterns in Europe and the US, he argues that social policies have lagged behind the significant increased participation in education and the labour force by women, creating an 'incomplete revolution'. Andres and Wyn (2010) too, analyse the distinctive generational shifts that occurred in the education, employment and life experiences of Canadian and Australians born in the early 1970s.

The social changes that have impacted on the experience and meaning of youth are associated with three domains. These are education, work and technology. The description of these changes have been well-rehearsed elsewhere, (e.g. Wyn 2009a; Furlong and Cartmel 2007; Henderson et al. 2007) so I provide a summary of the main points here.

Education

Driven by a combination of forces, including the decline of the teenage labour market (in the late 1980s) and government economic policies that sought to create a more globally competitive work force in Australia, the shift to universal post-secondary education had a profound impact on what it meant to be a young person. It became normative for young people to spend longer in education. The introduction of tertiary fees meant that young people or their families incurred costs, some of which was managed through debt. A majority of young people who were in education were, as a consequence, also employed. By the mid 1990s the extended period of educational participation, and the economic dependence that accompanied this led commentators to claim this generation had 'extended transition' patterns. That is, compared to the previous generation (which is often referred to as the Baby Boomer generation) they stayed in the parental home for longer, married later, and had children later, hence the notion that they actually took longer to transition into 'adult' patterns of life. Of course, this is only an 'extended' pattern of transition if the Baby Boomer's patterns of transitions are taken as a standard.

Work

During the 1980s and 1990s young people were also greatly affected by the deregulation of the labour market and the introduction of new industrial relations laws. The Workplace Relations Act of 1996 in particular contributed to a new climate of uncertainty for young workers, including precarious work. Since the 1990s, most workplaces have seen the expansion of 'flexible' employment regimes. Young people's engagement with the student labour market means that work becomes a part of their lives early (before they leave school) but it is relatively precarious work and continues to be so across all areas of work, not just low-skill jobs. The contingency and precariousness of work for all groups is one of the most important changes to have occurred over the last 20 years. One response to a climate in which precariousness is commonly experienced is placing a priority on horizontal mobility and placing great emphasis on developing 'multi-dimensional lives' that reflect and constitute a response to labour market uncertainty (Willis 1998). Even the educated found it difficult to get secure work (see Andres and Wyn 2010), creating a disjuncture between education and employment that remains to this day. A report in 2012 documents the "unprecedented growth of insecure work" in Australia, that shifts "the risks associated with work from the employer to the employee, and minimises labour costs at the expense of job quality" (ACTU 2012, p. 9).

Technology

Digital information and communication technologies, which have had a profound effect on social relations, are seen by many social theorists as a defining feature of the present generation for whom traditional communication boundaries of time and space, of producer and consumer, have been crossed or blurred, as digital communication technologies, released from limits of physical space, bring a new way of visualising and experiencing communities and offer new possibilities for constructing identities (Fraser and Dutta 2008).

This research and knowledge base offers significant implications for educationalists, because it provides an evidence base for the creation of relevant, inclusive and meaningful lifelong education. In other words, it should underpin educational approaches that are indeed fit for purpose in a world increasingly characterised by uncertainty, and in a region in which societal, political and economic transformation is occurring (Australian Government 2012).

The False Binary Between Work and Life

Although there is an historic tension reflected in Australian educational policy between the goals of educating for work or educating for life (Wyn 2009a), there are lines of convergence. Both goals draw on narratives about change in society and the economy and the need for education to respond to these changes.

In the late 1980s policies focused on matching Australia's workforce to changing global markets, recognising the need for a new generation of workers with "conceptual, creative, and technical skills" and "the ability to innovate and be entrepreneurial" (Commonwealth of Australia 1988, p. 105). This imperative to produce a new kind of worker created a policy push to increase educational participation (Blackburn 1985). Following the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Australian education policy became a tool for economic development (OECD 1996), through the idea of the "knowledge economy" (Rawolle and Lingard 2008).

The goal of increasing levels of participation in education and ensuring a smooth transition between education and employment is an enduring one. The Learning or Earning policy (COAG 2009), outlined the Australian Government's commitment to providing education and training places for all young Australians, and implemented a mandatory requirement to complete Year 10 and to be engaged in full-time education, training and or employment until the age of 20. The goal of 90 % Year 12 or equivalent completion by young Australians by the year 2015 contained in this policy was ambitious. In 2011 the Government released the final report of the national review of schooling (DEEWR 2011), with the sobering assessment that "there is a significant social gap in Australia in student performance and student

outcomes and that this gap is greater in Australia than in many other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries" (Robinson and Lamb 2012, p. 15).

But more importantly, research shows that around a quarter of young people aged between 20 and 24 were not engaged in full-time learning or earning in 2012 (Robinson and Lamb 2012, p. 63). Robinson and Lamb (2012) report that three quarters of these young people did not want to participate in education or training. While the reasons given were lack of information about education and training options or because of a lack of prerequisite skills or qualifications, it would have been interesting to know what these young people thought about their past experiences of education and its relationship to the world of work.

Stokes (2012) illustrates the importance of understanding young people's experiences of school and work in her analysis of how young people across Australia engage with work practices while they are secondary school students. Her analysis reveals that many young people are actively involved in preparing themselves for work: they use available networks to gain part-time employment and career advice, and they have an understanding of the skills, dispositions and attitudes they need to participate in their chosen fields of work. Stokes shows how work is integral to young people's sense of identity and reveals that for many young people, not unlike most adults, having a job enables them to feel that they have value, make a contribution to society and feel connected to others. What Stokes also reveals is that these practices are generally not understood or supported by schools. Instead of recognising the everyday engagement of students in workplaces – and the identity work they are undertaking to enable this – many schools continue to hold on to the idea that school prepares young people for their future employment.

Stokes and others identify this as an 'industrial' model of education, drawing on an instrumental and vocationalist approach that (a) sees work as something that occurs subsequent to education and (b) is based on a narrow interpretation of what young people need to know and be. Seddon (2008) emphasises the importance of work in school curricula, arguing for a shift of focus from employer-determined 'skills' to a focus on the social practices that young people gain through 'situated learning' in workplaces. She is referring to the pastoral, emotional and relational learning that young people gain in workplaces; learning how to be as well as what to know. As Seddon points out, workers in service industries need to have the social skills and personal confidence to interact with a wide variety of people; to be capable of offering the illusion of shared understandings.

The reality of workplaces in the 2000s presents a complex picture, but one that has significant educational implications. The Independent Inquiry into Insecure Work (ACTU 2012) found that the internationalisation of the Australian economy over the last 30 years has given rise to an unprecedented growth in insecure work, creating new inequalities in Australia's workforce. One fifth of Australia's workers are employed on a casual basis (ACTU 2012, p. 13), and Australians are working longer hours than ever before (ACTU 2012; Campbell and Brosnan 1999; Bittman and Rice 2002). Research also shows that labour markets are highly gendered.

Men and women use their skills and educational qualifications in very different ways (Cuervo et al. 2012; Campbell 2000). In addition, Australians have been gradually moving away from 'standard' trajectories in relation to the sequencing and role of study, work, family formation and accommodation (Martin 2009).

These developments create significant challenges in identifying the kinds of skills as well as the attitudes and knowledge that young people need to enable them to participate in the workforce. In 2003, The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA 1999, 2003) endorsed a set of eight employment-related skills. This report drew heavily on information from employer groups (the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the Business Council of Australia). The MCEECDYA report opted for a broader approach than the employers groups put forward, arguing that there was a need to recognise a set of generic skills that would equip young people for wider life experiences, including citizenship and family life (MCEECDYA 1999).

This approach is reinforced in the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Insecure Work (ACTU 2012). This report recommends:

> A broader focus on work-life transitions, rather than the narrow preoccupation with the transition between employment and unemployment that has led to an emphasis on "Welfare-to-Work" initiatives; and a commitment to lifelong learning, including a call for the ACTU to investigate learning accounts as a model for investing in the capability of workers over the lifetime (ACTU 2012, p. 10).

These reports (MCEECDYA 1999; ACTU 2012) recognise that work is not a separate domain from life, and that formal education, if it is to continue to have legitimacy, must draw on and reflect the realities of young people's lives.

What Do Young People Need to Learn?

It is not new for young people to have to assume some responsibility for making school-work connections and to determining what they should learn to be successful. However, the scale of the shift towards dependence on individual resources in late modernity has made this a defining feature of young people's transitions. Responsibility for learning is shifting from the educator to the educated – breaking down the boundary between the roles of student and teacher. How young people learn in formal education settings can and should more closely approximate the way they learn outside of formal institutions, developing the capacities to understand what is relevant, how to access information, how to learn and how to develop knowledge.

If education is to become fit for purpose in the changing social, economic and political landscape of Australia (and the Asia-Pacific region) in the 2000s, education policy will develop from being primarily a tool for economic advancement towards a wider societal role contributing to capacities to navigate complexity and to contribute to a sustainable society. Education is about the production of ways of being and knowing – not just about sets of skills and areas of knowledge.

Educational systems have been slow to respond to changes in young people's learning needs. Indeed some developments in education have further isolated education from broader social trends, through a focus on internal processes that disconnect schools and classrooms from their social and economic context. An example is the focus on universal notions of 'quality of teaching' based on normative expectations of a (disembodied) learner and a narrow notion of (academic) outcomes. The separation of schools from communities limits opportunities to make learning relevant, locally as well as globally and reinforces a view that 'disadvantaged communities' have nothing positive to offer education.

Positioning young people in a passive decision-making role with regard to learning, having an inflexible approach to age, and failing to tailor education to the diversity of young people do not make a good fit with the demands of living in late modernity. Young people's active engagement in decision-making, flexible approaches to the relationship between age and learning, and creating learning environments that meet diverse needs are important elements that help to equip young people to be effective navigators of their own lives and participants in creating a sustainable society.

Decision-Making

Despite the rhetoric about student participation, most students have limited opportunities to exercise decision making in schools. Even though greater proportions of older youth are in school, the old assumption that young people are *future* citizens and decision-makers (rather than having civic qualities and decision-making responsibilities in the present) dominates. The relative lack of opportunities for participation in decision making by young people in formal education does not support the engagement of students as participants in learning. Yet the message from the National Assessment Program is clear – students learn about being active citizens by having opportunities to act in a civic role in schools (and in the community). There are many existing processes that support student participation through representative councils, student-centred pedagogies and involvement of students as partners in learning. More widespread use of these processes would contribute to a better fit between what schools offer and what young people need in order to be successful in work and life. The 2007 National Assessment of Civics and Citizenship in Years 6 and 10 found that the greatest gains in proficiency in civics and citizenship were in schools in which students had the opportunity to actually participate in civic activities, including voting and decision making (MCEECDYA 2009).

Flexibility About Age

The reliance on age as a key organising principle reinforces a normative approach to learning and disconnects that learning from the context and circumstances of

individuals and communities. The current age-based system of education stigmatises those who do not conform. Early school leavers in particular find themselves shut out because, having left school, it is difficult to reconnect with formal education. Very few schools offer a 'second chance' once the normative, education–age nexus is broken. The organisational reliance on age, despite its administrative convenience, creates artificial barriers to learning.

Diversity

The idea that there is a mainstream in schools and in classrooms is pervasive. The concept of a mainstream obscures the academic, cultural, economic and social diversity that exists in every school. There is much at stake in moving beyond the idea that there is a relatively homogenous mainstream and a small proportion of 'at risk' that need to be brought into line. Recognising and responding to the diversity of young people's learning needs is one of the most significant challenges facing contemporary schools. It is central to the promotion of social and emotional well-being and to improving educational achievement for traditionally excluded groups.

Young Learners as Navigators

Being 'self-navigators' is increasingly necessary, in part because the links between education and employment are complex. Research shows that educational qualifications, although important, do not correspond directly to employment outcomes (Cuervo and Wyn 2012; Andres and Wyn 2010). Young people do not necessarily expect to take up employment in their field of training or seek work in that field for a short period of time only, exploring options to re-train in order to enter different fields of work. Being good navigators requires a conscious approach to personal development so that young people can see how their personal biography has developed and is being constructed in the present so that they can make decisions about their options for the future. Being good navigators also requires a deep understanding of the nature of the social, economic and political world in which they are living and their relationships with others, locally and globally.

The focus on effective navigation addresses the needs of those who are currently most disadvantaged within education: young people from low socio-economic backgrounds, young Indigenous people and young people from rural areas. Already many educational programs consciously connect learning to place, locally and globally (Smyth et al. 2008). These programs explore local histories, linking local stories and experiences across different places and recognising the skills that parents and community members can offer schools (Wierenga and Guevara 2013; Thomson and Harris 2004).

While credentials do matter, many young people understand that gaining educational credentials will not guarantee them a job and that they must actively construct education and employment biographies that make them attractive in precarious and changing labour markets, drawing on both formal and informal learning. But many do not make that connection, intellectually or in practice. The trend towards individual responsibility for creating effective pathways through education and work has heightened the relevance of identity and the task of actively constructing one's biography. For these reasons, identity work is a significant new dimension of learning in late modernity, especially for those groups whose possibilities are constrained by their history.

Conclusion

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, individuals and populations are destined to repeat and perhaps deepen the patterns of poor performance in education that have marked the previous quarter of a century. During this period Australia has experienced an increase in wealth inequality (Saunders et al. 2008) and an increase in the diversity of the population (Smolicz and Sercombe 2005). When combined, these developments create a context in which addressing social cohesion and focusing on changing entrenched patterns of poor educational achievement demand a high priority. The entrenched nature of marginalisation from education raises significant questions about how education is positioned, its goals and the ways in which it is organised. Keating (2009) makes the point that:

> . . . schooling needs to look to the future, but in doing so, it depends on the past. It has a role in advancing the economic future of society, but it cannot do this unless it also underpins the social fabric of the society. (Keating 2009, p. 4).

This chapter has argued that more of the same will not shift these entrenched patterns of inequality; but as importantly, formal education risks legitimacy if it fails to recognise the extent of social change impacting on young people's lives. Prevailing frameworks that position education as a tool for economic development are no longer sufficient to ensuring that Australia's educational systems meet the increasingly diverse needs of all young people.

The traditional tension between the goals of education (for work or for life?) at the policy level increasingly makes little sense. Youth researchers, analysing the impact of contemporary social change on young people, reveal the interrelated worlds of education and work, even for school-aged young people. Learning is an accepted part of life for young people, across many domains of life. Educational systems that ignore the significance of these wider domains risk underperformance, creating patterns of marginalisation and failure.

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Chapter 3
Schools and Communities Fit for Purpose

Dorothy Bottrell

Abstract This chapter discusses how changing relationships of schools and communities may facilitate the expansive learning advocated by Johanna Wyn. Both schools and communities are shaped by social change, structured inequalities and policy; and reciprocally influence young people's lives in and out of school. Both need to be responsive and adaptable in the pursuit of inclusive education and a sustainable society. Drawing on recent scholarship on school-community engagement, I argue that a community development approach reorients schools and communities as fit for purpose. Learning through and as community development provides opportunities for young people's decision making, identity work and social action toward improving the quality of life in and out of school.

Introduction

This chapter is a response to Johanna Wyn's "heresy", that schools are not fit for purpose and need to change if young people are to develop the knowledge, skills and "ways of being and knowing" they need "to be effective navigators of their own lives and participants in creating a sustainable society". It discusses how changing relationships of schools and communities may facilitate an expansive approach to learning that can integrate individual and social purposes. As schools *and* communities are reciprocal influences on the quality of young people's learning and lives in and out of school, working for these purposes requires "an educational system that recognises the learner and their community". However, situating schools and learners in their social context as the "interrelationship between broader social, economic and political change" underlines the need to respond to how inequalities that have marked social change over the last quarter of a century are shaping the conditions, structures and sites of young people's "navigations" – including their communities.

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_3

In educational research and practice the development of new pedagogical frameworks is in part a recognition of the reciprocal influences of schools and communities. In disadvantaged schools in particular there is renewed attention to the importance of bringing community into classroom processes to embed and value diverse cultural capital and funds of knowledge (Mills 2008; Zipin 2009). These approaches are explicitly inclusive and aim to break the nexus of educational success and the resources of privilege. In diverse ways, specific to classroom, school and community contexts, they aim to foster young people's consciousness of the value of education for navigating their lives in the present and future (Munns 2007). It is also recognised in work for educational justice, however, that there are limits to what individual teachers and schools can achieve in the face of the increasing social inequities. These inequities serve in part to consolidate hierarchies of power as classed, raced, gendered and stratified by a variety of disenfranchised/ing social identities. New pedagogies "can make a difference, but not *all* of the difference" (Original italics, Hayes et al. 2006, p. 178).

Because educational disadvantage is intertwined with a broad array of systemic inequities, changing schools alone will not enable the expansive learning purposes Wyn proposes. As Rigney argues, "the patterns of Aboriginal disadvantage occur together and are multiple, and require multilayered strategic action across education, health, poverty, housing and employment" (Rigney 2011, p. 39). Such patterns are not uniquely local but rather historically formed through policy, institutional and "everyday" forms of racialised exclusion. They are reproduced anew and often exacerbated by globalising trends of the past quarter of a century as the flow of neoliberalisation effects "*circuits of dispossession and privilege*" (original italics, Fine et al. 2010, p. 30). Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) have shown that wider disparities of income and wealth within rich nations are associated with greater prevalence of health and social problems than in more equal societies, including larger discrepancies of aspiration, educational opportunity, attainment and associated social mobility. These dimensions of social change are often most tangible at the local community level and represent significant barriers to young people's effective navigation of their lives. In short, increased social inequalities undermine the conditions of/for expansive learning and run counter to the notion of sustainable societies.

In this chapter I argue for a community development approach that incorporates place-based and student centred pedagogies as important to connecting not only with how young people are learning out of school, but to enhance the *conditions of and for* learning and to engage with questions of *what* young people need to learn for individual and societal purposes. The chapter draws on recent scholarship on schools and communities oriented toward social inclusion. This work is in the tradition of research and practice that recognises the potential of school-community engagement to contribute to the redress of educational *and* social inequity (Bottrell and Goodwin 2011a). However, in this work we recognise that invoking "community" is not unproblematic. As there are diverse communities associated with people, places, interests and issues, cross-cut by chosen and ascribed identities (Bottrell 2007), there are similarly multiple and contested notions of

community that may serve dominant interests without critical engagement with questions of who is included and excluded and how conceptualisations of individual and social purposes may reproduce or transform inequitable structures. In particular, we have highlighted policy constructions of community centred on an "achievement turn" in educational and social policy (Bottrell and Goodwin 2011b). We argue that the legitimacy accorded "community" has increasingly been harnessed by governments in Australia and internationally to manage social and economic inequity through neoliberal discourse and strategy that is essentially concerned with individualising responsibility for educational success and social cohesion, serving state and economic purposes. As existing school-community practices are shaped by neoliberalism, they can be appropriated for neoliberal purposes. Yet community development practices are clearly concerned with individual, cultural and social relational goals that are outside a neoliberal instrumental rationality. The 'heresy' addressed here is actually already being brought to life in many places in spite of policy-blindness to these initiatives in school-community development.

Learning, Communities and the Achievement Turn

Young people's informal learning contexts are not immune from neoliberal influences; indeed they exemplify how historical and emerging social inequities permeate young people's lives and, as "communities", informal learning in non-school contexts highlights the tensions inherent in community development. Whether interest, occupation or practice based communities, local or geographic communities, or communities foregrounding social identities, young people's learning in these contexts necessarily engages with the power structures within and between communities. As Wyn (Chap. 2, this volume) argues, how and what young people learn in these contexts may empower their ways of being and knowing. For example, Australian and international studies of young people's online experience (Collin and Burns 2009) indicate the value of social networks and their reciprocal influence on offline everyday life. Sharing information, feeling a sense of belonging, and the space to explore identities are common experiences. Exploring gender, sexual identities, issues of race and 'dis'/abilities through social networks and blogging are means of individual and community consciousness-raising around diversity, rights and related campaigns as young people produce knowledge and collaborate in creative and political projects (Harris 2008). However, there are significant costs involved for some young people as social networks have also provided new means of intensifying abuses of power such as bullying and a platform for oppressive ideologies through racist, xenophobic, homophobic and misogynist "communities". The new media are powerful learning tools but also infrastructure of social exclusion, including the "digital divide", as well as key sites of pervasive marketing, consumption and top-down "e-governance".

In this context, the skills, knowledge and identity work that help young people navigate their lives are not confined to individual matters but rather are socially

critical, concerned with rights and the "common good". As Wyn points out, these purposes have been suppressed in the ascendance of policies centred on economic aims and narrow strategies of social inclusion premised on the idea of the "mainstream".

As Bottrell and Goodwin (2011b) have similarly argued, and as other contributors to this book have elaborated, neoliberal educational policy, despite including broad democratic and inclusive goals, has increasingly taken a narrow focus on learning as basic skills of literacy and numeracy and these in the narrow form of performance on standardised tests. "Community" in this context is narrowly defined in terms of parents' roles: of "involvement" for the purpose of improving their children's test results; and in school and teacher accountability through school choice, informed by public comparisons of results. This "achievement turn" is evident internationally and has similarly applied to social policy. Strategies for building "stronger communities" are narrowly focused on economic participation and community involvement to support individual self-reliance. However, as Randolph (2004) has shown, such strategies may reproduce the "geography of disadvantage" as their implementation often coincides with scaling down government provided services for young people and families. Within the managerial model of public service in the community sector, organisations assisting people in disadvantaged communities are required to focus on "targets" (people and outcomes) and sort people into intervention programs supposedly based on standardised assessments. In this context the educational needs, interests and social opportunities of historically marginalised young people, their families, schools and communities are reinscribed in deficit terms of low achievement and failure and subject to compelled support to improve performance. For example, the professionalism of teachers and community workers is narrowly conceptualised as technical, instrumental and standardised work for "measurable results". Expansive curricula and pedagogy in both schools and community work is subordinated to efficiencies. The overarching aim is not to transform but to fit people into the existing and inequitable institutional and social systems. In educational terms, the fixation on standardised assessment and results is an abstraction of the real demands of workplaces and civic life. In these ways, schools and communities are focal sites for governing through community (Rose 2000), a way of managing rather than addressing social and economic inequalities as "top-down" policy is "delivered" through local communities.

Both schools and communities thus need to be responsive and adaptable in the pursuit of inclusive education and a sustainable society. As Ife argues, local action is necessitated in "communities that have been excluded from the networks of power and marginalised by the new global economy" (Ife 2002, p. 144). He argues for sustainable community development that seeks to challenge structures of oppression, embrace cultural diversity and "reconstruct an agenda of globalisation that is in the interests of ordinary people and communities" (p. 224), centred on the least advantaged.

Community Development Practices for Expansive Purposes

Community development has priorities and forms that are highly diverse: they include residents' action groups, intercultural dialogue, advocacy and support groups, the establishment of new services, education and training, local environmental and heritage campaigns, networking and inter-agency collaborations. The core principles of contemporary practice reflect the historical roots of community development in the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, with the goal of democratising state institutions through grassroots decision-making and popular control of social resources. With the enduring aim of social justice, now commonly integrated with environmental justice around the goal of sustainability, community development is concerned with the local-global connectedness of inequalities that are people and place-based.

Principles that guide the work of community development include developing "bottom-up" agenda, participatory collective action and mutual support (Fawcett et al. 2010). Community development begins with people's concerns and aspirations specific to their historical and cultural settings, and proceeds by harnessing community expertise and resources for practical action, including the knowledge, skills, stories and cultures of residents, workers, organisations and networks, along with a range of other physical and economic resources. Inclusion is a central process and value in community development. As Ledwith suggests, it "embraces a range of ways of being in the world that are not seen as *deviant* from the norm – young, old, 'dis'abled, single, lone parent, lesbian, gay, all faiths and none, and so on" (2011, p. 42, emphasis in original). Inclusionary practice is enacted through dialogue and participatory processes and grounded in ongoing analysis of power. As any local community typically involves diverse groups with both shared and conflicting interests, working with conflict is expected, indeed considered a basic principle (Kenny 2007). This requires attention to process as much as project to work against hegemonic ideological, structural and everyday forms of oppression and exclusion; while harnessing the power of individual and collective agency realizable through local community praxis (Westoby and Shevellar 2012). Both within and beyond local communities, advocacy for rights and resources is an important role of community workers.

Engaging schools and communities in community development thus reorients education toward improving the quality of community life and changing the conditions of and for lifelong expansive learning. Young people engaged in community development regard their opportunities for learning as making a difference rather than as fitting into or finding ways to navigate inequitable structures and barriers. Navigating paid work is a case in point. Alongside the positive experiences of work, opportunities are highly classed and gendered, and workplaces can be sites of harassment, bullying and health and safety concerns (NSW Commission for Children and Young People 2005). Such patterns underline the importance of educating

young people on their rights to and at work and, as Wyn suggests, how their labour market and work experiences are structured historically and politically. This involves learning about processes "creating labour market insecurity (flexibility) and replacing collective bargaining with incentives for individual 'achievement'" (Connell 2013, p. 279) as well as skills for advocacy and organising.

Community Development In and Out of School

There are many ways that schools and communities can and currently do work together for community development centred on expansive learning. They include collaborative projects and processes in schools and in the local community. A community development framework may indeed reconceptualise communities *for* schools and communities *as* "schools".

Community development may be situated in the school, to harness support to education programs, young people and families. Examples of this approach include youth workers and social workers in school programs, the community schools model in the US and full service or extended schools in the UK which co-locate health, welfare, family and recreational services in the school grounds. In NSW, the Schools As Community Centres program similarly takes an interagency approach to supporting the development of individual, family, school and community capacities. Specific programs such as supported playgroups, breakfast programs, parent education, early literacy and cultural events have emerged out of discussion and service planning with families. As hubs for community activities, SaCCs connect families and schools with community resources (Velkou and Bottrell 2011).

Community development focused on environmental sustainability co-ordinates community participation in developing on-site "learnscapes" such as microecologies of wetlands, rainforests and indigenous, sensory and kitchen gardens. The national network of Sustainable Schools now includes one third of Australian schools. Their projects are diverse, including water and energy conservation, recycling, plant propagation and other biodiversity work. Similar networks are growing internationally. For example, Eco-Schools involve over 11 million young people in 52 countries. Most sustainability programs take a whole-school approach and involve multiple partnerships with community organisations, businesses and government agencies.

Sustainability projects are also community based. Along with service learning, community-based research and participation in forums, events and social action projects, this form of community development situates the community as "curriculum". For example, schools may link with local councils, youth services and other NGOs, resident groups, government agencies and chambers of commerce to plan and work on urban renewal or regeneration toward social, environmental and economic sustainability. Young people's action projects make a significant contribution toward these aims (Walsh and Black 2011). In "student action teams" (Holdsworth 2005), the "ruMAD?" (are you Making A Difference) (Black et al. 2009) and similar

programs, young people design and implement social action around highly diverse issues including racism, homophobia, bullying, homelessness, community safety, transport, physical and mental health.

Community development situating communities *for* and *as* schools opens up opportunities for expansive learning. It involves "real life" learning in/with local communities and the development of transformative skills for citizenship (Black et al. 2009; Hayes et al. 2006) in collaborative planning, research, organising, negotiating and communicating. For example, one ruMad? project undertaken by young people from a rural school in Victoria raised community awareness about depression. They organised forums, staged a photography exhibition at the local art gallery and presented at a music festival. Additionally, young people may draw on new extended networks and knowledge of community resources gained through this work, for their wellbeing and further developing school and life skills.

The roles and relationships enabled by community development foster identity work on many levels. Collaborating as co-learners means that the role of teacher or leader is a fluid one, as experience and expertise are taken to be more important than age. For example, young people may often take the lead with fresh, innovative ideas for tackling social problems; their lived experience of "youth issues" positions them as expert groups with critiques and insights regarding dominant institutional framings of those issues (for example youth crime and vicitimisation) as personal problems. Young people may be the most expert group in terms of how technologies can be harnessed for their own and others' learning and in change projects where their utility is centred on knowledge production rather than consumption. While community development has traditionally focused on local communities, young people may well lead action for change in and through diverse communities including those online.

Community development is an important means of strengthening community ties. For young people, this may mean seeing themselves, their peers, parents, teachers and community members in a new light, as they demonstrate their talents and passions, and take on responsibilities unavailable in regular schooling. Perhaps even more importantly, they, and their families and schools, are seen by others in new ways. For example, te Riele (2011) found that the personal relationships of community work in a regional town broke down the sense of "us" and "them", including significant shifts in employer attitudes that have brought strong and lasting support to the school. Community development work may thus establish conditions for continued breaking down of segregation and prejudice in everyday encounters well after a project is completed.

Community Development, Identity Work and Alliances

Because it is relational and involves negotiating conflicting interests within heterogeneous communities, community development, like teaching, is complex work. One ambiguity of the work is the desire to build community solidarities while

working with the principle of respect for people's level of participation – in the context of personal commitments and societally uneven commitment to work for social justice. For young people, space for participation with and without adults is an important condition of learning and identity work. For example, young women engaged in online communities are often "expressing a desire to occupy public space on their own terms", in resistance to "regulatory culture" (Harris 2008, p. 492) which may be associated with community.

School-community engagement is being developed in the context of neoliberalism. Consequently, while disadvantaged schools and communities are compelled to reinvent themselves as achievers and economic contributors, there tends to be a policy silence on broader issues of the uneven distribution of privilege and advantage. In this context, *community development as* school-community *alliance* emphasises the crucial role of advocacy. For example, in residualised public schools located in residualising communities, advocacy through local community development can be extended through the building of social movements around school-community issues (Anyon 2005). Community engaged teachers (Gale and Densmore 2003) are well positioned to lead this work, extending advocacy for the school to build its community support and linking with other organisations, including labour coalitions or "community unionism" (Tattersall 2010, p. 18) to improve the quality of people's lives in school and community. K. Freebody et al. (2011, p. 78) argue that "along with enhancing the educational experience of students, schools and communities that advocate for one another reveal and challenge those practices and policies that can intensify disadvantage and exclusion".

Just as education systems rely on the work of disadvantaged schools, the beneficial conditions enabling individual wellbeing and privilege in "other" communities are intertwined with disadvantage. From this perspective, the conditions of/for privilege also need to shift, for they too are detrimental to young people's identity work. As Connell (1995, p. 15) has argued, "education that privileges one child over another is giving the privileged child a corrupted education, even as it gives him or her a social or economic advantage".

Community development may, then, bolster a split system of "common good" praxis and individualised and self-interested accumulative development, unless we question the benefits of Whiteness and the uses of power based on wealth and hierarchies of social and cultural domination and distinction. A challenge for expansive community development work, then, is to reach communities of privilege, across as well as within communities.

Relationships are central to learning through community development that provides conditions for dialogue, decision-making and identity work, to build trust, solidarities and commitment to social justice. It provides opportunities for young people to work with a diversity of individuals, groups, organisations and authorities – often extending beyond the local – to participate in official and informal decisions affecting them and their communities and through observation and active roles in negotiating different perspectives imbued with differential power, to appreciate the politics of communities and social change and how the local intersects and is shaped by societal structures, policy and social processes.

A year-long project undertaken by Strathfield South High School (a highly multicultural community) illustrates these facets. In a series of workshops involving local community members, youth workers, academics and peers from Windsor High School (predominantly Anglo-Australian with a significant proportion of Aboriginal students), young people researched, debated and analysed racism and stereotyping, tracing the interrelationships of pejorative public perception and media treatment of Muslims with the racist treatment of Indigenous communities and vilification of various groups throughout Australian history. The film made by the students, *We Are All Australian* (NSW DET 2008), documents their research, interspersed with excerpts from the workshops, showing young people in dialogue about "difference" and power, exclusion, inclusion, personal and collective responsibility.

Stoudt et al. (2012)'s participatory project, *Polling For Justice* (PJF) on differentiated youth experience of education, health and criminal justice illustrates ways in which privilege is contested when a community of researchers brings diverse expertise to the work. The group included students from the richest and poorest schools in New York, young people identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning sexualities, formerly incarcerated, homeless, and immigrant, working with activist academics and professionals. As well as documenting circuits of dis/advantage, in presenting their findings, the team used performance methodologies to both unsettle "audience members/readers/adults and youth of privilege standing by as witnesses and bystanders" (p. 187) and to build political solidarity. Through such collaboration, young people, educators, social workers, lawyers and the diverse public audiences of the group's presentations of the research may gain insights that resonate with Wilkinson and Pickett's (2010), that working to address these inequalities is in everyone's interest. As their evidence shows, better health and social outcomes, including community life and social relations, accrue to all levels of society where disparities of wealth are smallest. Moreover, their analysis suggests that greater equality is a pre-condition for social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainability. As PFJ illustrates, learning in and with diverse communities opens up public spaces to bridge understandings, challenge us all to be more than "bystanders" and to build commitments, through empathy and solidarity, to justice.

This is uncommon community development, yet it may be necessary if, as Wyn proposes, young people are to participate in experiences where learning to be successful "navigators" matters beyond self-interest for a sustainable society. However, this significant work is no substitute for the role of "quality government" (Rigney 2011, p. 47) in redistributive and recognitive social inclusion.

Conclusion

The expansive practices discussed in this chapter may contribute to schools and communities 'fit for purpose' where young people develop ways of being and knowing to effectively navigate their lives and build a sustainable society,

with overarching aims of equity and social inclusion. However, because school-community relationships are re/forming in the context of neoliberalism, they can be, and often are at the policy level, represented as a good fit with neoliberal purposes. A more expansive view of learning in and out of school could be integrated into the model of predominantly separate schools and communities in service of the achievement turn. Indeed, the imperative that young people, especially those "at risk" learn to "navigate life's challenges" (Australian Government 2010, p. 3) is a centrepiece of youth policy that is concerned with the production of entrepreneurial, individualised and responsibilised identity and citizenship (Kelly 2006).

In the context of increasing educational and social inequities, spearheaded by neoliberal economic priorities, the role of education for social change through collective work has become more pressing. A community development approach may harnesses the commitments and resources of activist professionals in schools and community work toward transformational goals. As the collaboration of schools and communities it is not only concerned with including young people but their active participation in community building, forging new roles, relationships, social arrangements and democratising institutions for a sustainable or more "expansive" (critical, just, generous, caring, solidaristic) society, locally and globally. Learning through and as community development thus invokes the broader democratic and emancipatory purposes of education and reasserts the ideal that schools may be agents of social change (Connell 1995; Lingard et al. 2011; Smyth et al. 2009).

Reorienting education toward expansive purposes requires change in a broad range of institutional and community contexts and, as Wyn has argued, most importantly at the policy level. Perhaps if young people are to gain what they need from schools *and* communities, we most need a "heretical break" (Bourdieu 1983, p. 313) with neoliberal priorities that have narrowed the conceptualisation and scope of learning, community capacities and collaboration between schools and communities.

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Chapter 4
Testing Times: Data and Their (Mis-)Use in Schools

Peter Reimann

Abstract The chapter starts with an overview of the widely documented 'collateral damage' resulting from the combination of standardized school testing with high-stakes decision making. Such damage takes the form of curriculum reduction (covering only what is tested), reduction of pedagogical strategies (teaching to the test), reduced attention to students that are far below and far above the achievement standards tested, and teacher demotivation and increase of anxiety levels. Since the achievement gains under regimens such as the No Child Left Behind Act in the US have been quite limited, the high-stakes testing strategy is increasingly being questioned. I then inspect the claim that standardized testing is valuable as a source of information on learning, provided testing results are not tied to high-stakes decisions. I argue that this position is also problematic because of the (unintended) detrimental effects on students' motivation, and their epistemic beliefs. The chapter ends with identifying requirements on twenty-first Century assessment so that it is better aligned with twenty-first Century learning.

Introduction

It is difficult to be at the same time heretical and original about assessment in schools. So much has been written and said already on the many disadvantages of combining testing with high-stakes decision-making. Yet another testing-critical essay would just be an additional voice in what already is a pretty large choir. It would gain me only a small heretic-score. I decided therefore to up the ante by arguing that formative classroom assessment practices are also not good enough to improve teaching. And for good measure, I throw in a critique of the use of data as evidence in schools in general. (That should raise my heretic-score. I want to pass this test.)

One of the scandals of modern education is how little teachers know about diagnostic methods, assessment, and testing. An even bigger scandal is how little they are taught on these matters. The current focus on increasing (pre- and

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_4

in-service) teachers' "data literacy" (more appropriately named "test literacy") is but a small, and overly restricted measure to address this scandal. Teachers, I would argue, are not provided with state of the art methods that psychologists, educational researchers, and neuro-scientists are using in their research. Instead, they are left with methods that were developed half a century ago. Imagine how you would react if the staff in the emergency unit of a hospital your child arrives for urgent medical treatment would use diagnostic techniques and instruments that were 50 years old, or older. Why is it that we would call this an outrage right away, while we accept the direct analogue of this on a daily basis when it comes to pedagogical rather than medical decision making? Admittedly, nobody's life is at stake in schools as much as it is often in hospitals, but surely we should be worried about how our children are supported in their learning and development, and about what our society is prepared to invest in its future.

Although the analogy between the teaching profession and health professions has strict limits, is helpful in one respect: It shows how tool-poor teaching practices still are, compared to the tool-richness prevalent in hospitals and other health related settings. We need to keep in mind that "capacity" for teaching is not only a personal capacity, but is a system capacity: The system classroom/school must be better enabled to deal with the challenges of teaching in the modern world, including capacities for using high-quality data on students' learning. Calling for developing test literacy in pre- and in-service teachers is not in any way new (see e.g., Stiggins 1999), but certainly worth repeating. But even so this addresses only a small part of the data available to teachers and hence is not comprehensive enough a competence. We are still in the unfortunate situation that teachers cannot offer convincing alternatives to testing, at least not by training. Arguably, schools and school systems rarely have had the capacity to capture, process and disseminate data on learning in an efficient and timely manner (Mandinach et al. 2008).

My critique of data use in schools has three elements; I start by picking the low hanging fruit, summarising the arguments why standardized testing is not a good way for improving teaching and learning. My second point is that current classroom practices for measuring students' learning for summative and formative purposes are, like testing, grounded in a limited perspective on learning, are deficient, and are not doing full justice to students. My third and final point is that even the most recent suggestions for creating better information on learning, such as "learning analytics" are in danger of starting off on the wrong foot: Like tests, and like teachers' assessment practices, they are grounded in a limited view of learning, and a problematic view of 'data' and of 'evidence'.

In this chapter, I will use the label "testing" to refer to the practice of applying standards-oriented tests developed outside schools themselves to measure students' knowledge and skills. A case in point is the "National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy" (NAPLAN), the test applied in school all over Australia. I use the term "assessment" to refer to other ways of diagnosing students' knowledge and learning, usually the kind of diagnosis conducted in classrooms, administered by teachers. I speak of "formative assessment" when the main purpose of the assessment is to provide guidance ('feed-forward') to students, and to inform the

teacher about the potential need to adapt instruction, and of "summative assessment" when the main purpose is grading, or similar forms of judgment that do are not intended as to guide future learning (in specific terms).

Known Problems with Testing

The arguments against testing for the (main) purposes of providing information to the public, in particular parents, about how individual schools 'perform' and for school improvement have been made so frequently and are so well elaborated (e.g., Graham 2010; Nichols and Berliner 2007; Popham 2001) that a short summary will suffice here. (By the way, both these purposes were mentioned in 2012 on the homepage of the My School website, www.myschool.edu.au, which publishes results of the Australian-wide administered NAPLAN test yearly on a school level.)

A first line of argument concerns the relation between teaching and testing (Popham 2001). Nation-wide administered achievement tests such as NAPLAN of necessity only partially reflect what has been taught in any specific school; such tests need to be short, and hence to include only a small sample of what has been taught. The argument that these items are representative samples is difficult to maintain for tests that assess content standards. An even more troubling issue with such tests is that items that are sensitive to teaching and learning tend to not make it into the test because items that can be answered correctly by most of the respondents yield little information about differences between the respondents. Items are chosen that maximally differentiate, not that reflect what most teachers have taught well. Yet another worry is that test performance is affected by many factors other than what students learn in schools, such as differences in aptitudes, in language background, and in socio-economic status. There are many ways to statistically 'control' such factors, but none of them is perfect or agreed upon by all stakeholders; in any case, such factors make any straightforward interpretation of achievement scores impossible.

A second line of argument concerns the validity of decisions that are based on achievement tests. For instance, it is not a secret that differences between schools account only for a small percentage (10–20 %) for variations in learning achievement; about 40 % are accounted for by differences between students, and another 40 % by differences within schools (see Ladwig 2010 for the NAPLAN numbers). Parents' choice regarding what school to send their child to should not be based on such information. The government organisations that publish such testing results are aware of these limitations, and do not recommend using such information for making school decisions. But parents will be tempted to, in particular if the testing information is further reduced to 'league tables' by the press.

A third line of critique identifies "collateral damage" (Nichols and Berliner 2007), un-intended effects of testing and using testing data for high-stakes decisions. The collateral damage has been particularly pronounced in the United States, where under the so-called *No Child Left Behind* act (NCLB) the fate of schools has been

linked directly to achievement test outcomes. The effects this law had on the US education system cannot even be sketched here superficially (in addition to Nichols and Berliner (2007), see for instance Taubman (2009) for the effects on the teaching profession) I turn to effects on students below; here, I only mention the effects on taught curriculum and pedagogy.

Both are affected by the strategy of *teaching to the test*, which is a widespread reaction to an accountability regimen that combines testing with high-stakes decisions (Firestone et al. 2004). The first effect is pretty straightforward: What is in the test (or rumoured to be) affects what is taught. The world-wide observable trend to focus on STEM disciplines leads to a reduction of teaching in other areas (Stecher and Barron 1999). Effects on pedagogy are more varied. In the worst but not infrequent case, teachers increase the use of drill-and-practice methods to teach directly specific item formats, if not specific items (Whitford and Jones 2000). A number of teachers, however, look for a more encompassing pedagogy, *provided* the test content requires deeper understanding and the testing format affords a variety of forms to express understanding, for example, with open answer formats, or even with performance-based assessment. On average, however, higher standards combined with a high stakes testing regimen have not led to an alignment of teachers' pedagogical practices with the standards. For instance, in an in-depth study in schools in New Jersey the conclusion was: "Teachers did not substantially refine, revise, or extend practices to create more challenging learning opportunities for children" (Schorr and Firestone 2004, p. 160).

Some may say that the collateral damage could be justified, provided that all students are learning more. Research, however, affirms the negative: High stakes testing has not resulted in more equitable education and has not helped to innovate teaching practices. As Lauren Resnick put it: "The evidence is now pretty clear. We seem to have figured out how to teach the 'basics' to just about everyone. . . . But we are deeply unsuccessful at our twenty-first century agenda of moving beyond basic competencies to proficiencies" (Resnick 2010, p. 184).

The Wider Context: Teaching by Numbers

Since it is so easy to be negative, if not downright cynical, about standards and testing, why do we still have them? Indeed, why has the use of testing been dramatically increasing since the 1980s, and doing so worldwide? I see three main reasons for the uninterrupted growth of state, national, and international educational testing. The first is political: education is expensive (at least, seen as such), it is important for a nation's welfare, and the size of the educational bureaucracies have been growing, not only increasing the costs of education, but also the number of people who can request and use data; the net effect is that accountability regimens have proliferated. The second reason is economic: education is potentially big business, and educational testing is really big business. The third reason is strategic: assessment and testing are seen as key to educational reform.

This is worth recalling: In most cases, the testing movement is grounded in the best of intentions, namely to increase equity and to raise educational standards. (Of course, one can question in each case, as for instance Taubman (2009) does, how serious these intentions really were, and if at least some of the decision makers had not a different agenda.) The same can be said for the more general move towards evidence-based decision making, and data-driven school improvement: The expected positive effect of evidence-based decision making, and by extension, policy making is that decisions about a student's fate in the school system are not left to a potentially 'biased' teacher, that educational policy decisions are not longer left to the whims of politicians, or to the latest fad; and that teachers will become highly regarded professionals, as highly regarded as doctors, because they will be using 'scientific methods' and 'modern equipment'.

But before I look at these more recent developments that go along with the availability of new technologies in classrooms, let's consider first the usually positively portrayed alternative to external testing: formative classroom assessment.

Not All Is Well with Classroom Practices

When critiquing testing, one should also consider the alternatives; usually portrayed as the main alternative is formative assessment, performed by the teacher in the classroom. Intended as assessment *for* learning rather than *of* learning, it combines assessment with planning for adapting the teaching to the diagnosed student needs (Andrade and Cizek 2010). My critique of formative assessment does not follow the line that there is insufficient evidence that it 'works' (Bennett 2011; Dunn and Mulvenon 2009), but has more to do with what is measured. I argue that formative assessment, like testing, is rooted in a limited view of what constitutes learning, a view that has been increasingly challenged. The current discourse of assessment, data, evidence, and their role for decision-making is still largely committed to a cognitive-individualistic account of what constitutes learning, and where knowledge resides.

There have been many years of research in the socio-cultural tradition, with its focus on learning as a property of a system (e.g., an activity system, Engeström 1999), but, when it comes to assessment and data on learning, we are still looking only at one component of the system: the student, and as regards him or her, we look at one organ almost exclusively: the brain/mind (and at that largely as a memory system) The role of the situation, and in particular of technology, is underestimated and under-theorized. In essence, we look at technology as a means for learning (knowledge acquisition), rather than as an extension of the person in the pursuit of action. This is true for testing as well as formative assessment. Related to this point, I will touch shortly on the relationship between testing and classroom assessment methods to students' epistemic beliefs, and the effects on the students' relationship to what is it they learn about.

Situativity and Distributed Cognition

Both testing and classroom assessment see the completion of cognitive tasks as largely an individual achievement, based on knowledge 'stored' in long-term memory. Knowledge is seen as a "structure" located in the mind/brain – literally between our ears – and so are cognitive functions such as problem solving, decision making, language processing. However, for a number of reasons, not the least the rapid growth of digital technologies, questions such as where cognition is achieved and what constitutes knowledge need to be revisited.

That resources in the environment play a larger role for achieving cognitive functions than classical cognitive theory suggests is exemplified by milestones such as Hutchin's (1995) studies of reasoning and representational practices by navy ship-navigation teams or Lave's (1988) analysis of mathematical reasoning in people without any formal mathematical education. In these and many other studies, it has been shown that competent performance is achieved by the skilful distribution of cognitive work across brains, physical and symbolic resources in the surroundings, and other people available in the situation. The situative perspective on learning and cognition has been developed into a framework that now incorporates and goes beyond the cognitive perspective. It "... conceptualises knowledge as distributed across people and artefacts, and the focus is on understanding activity and changes in activity systems in which knowledge is contributed and used in joint actions by the people and other resources that participate collaboratively" (Sawyer and Greeno 2009, p. 348). The key point here is that activities are achieved by a *system* that encompasses one or more people, but that does not consists solely on what each brings to the situation in terms of internal mental structures and personal dispositions.

The situative perspective as developed by Greeno and others in psychology and education owns a lot to Gibson's work on perception (Gibson 1986), which after his untimely death has been further developed into *ecological psychology* (Young 2004). The key tenet of this approach is the close coupling of perception and action, with a corresponding reduction of the role of memory and representation. The main argument against a representation-centred view of cognition is that such a strategy is evolutionarily unsustainable because of the costs associated with developing a brain that can provide the necessary resources. It is far cheaper to use the environment directly (direct perception) to provide the information required for effective action. Correspondingly, education should focus on "educating the senses" (Young 2004) because learning means becoming attuned to constraints and affordances of a situation (Greeno 1998).

The idea that higher order cognitive functions are achieved by the close coupling of brain, body, and environment (situation) underlies much of modern cognitive science, under headings such as distributed cognition (Hutchins 2010), grounded cognition (Barsalou 2010), or embodied cognition (Clark 2011). A common element of all of these variants is that they see a (often large) part of the cognitive work as being performed outside of the brain. The coupling does not, at least not exclusively,

take the form of reading information from the environment into the brain and doing all the inferencing in the mind/brain, but takes the form of "hybrid thinking" (Clark 2011, p. 50). A good example of this very tight coupling is found in the studies of Dehaene and colleagues on numeric reasoning; these studies demonstrate an intricate interplay between neural brain structures and externally provided notational systems (number signs) for arithmetic with larger numbers (Dehaene 1997). Further, the research on embodied cognition is full of examples documenting the importance of bodily resources (gesture, movement) for achieving cognitive tasks (Clark 2011).

For my topic – educational assessment and measurement – the tight coupling of brain, body and environment constitutes a huge challenge. As long as we focus assessment on the *learner* instead of on *learning* it is difficult to see how valid measurement can be undertaken. Keeping the focus on the learner means decomposing the system. But such a decomposition is in principle only possible when the system under study is made up of components that each of which acts primarily according to its own principles, not under the influence of other components – except in the rare case of well-defined input/output interfaces (Sawyer and Greeno 2009, p. 356). For many of the "competencies" we measure with the learner as the sole source, it is neither clear if the system that brings about the competent achievement is decomposable at all, nor, if it were, what its components are.

Not only is decomposition or decoupling difficult, it may miss the point: There is growing agreement amongst cognitive scientists that what makes cognition possible is the coordination of non-cognitive function – "cognition as coordinated non-cognition" (Barsalou et al. 2007). While it is an empirical question which of the higher cognitive functions – and that includes everything required at school – can be achieved by a person/brain solo, we have to start asking that question much more seriously and frequently. Not only that, from an educational perspective we will also have to ask what the 'right mix' is for person solo contributions and other resources. And this question will never have a final answer, because the learning environment changes all the time. It changes largely because we change it ourselves. As Clark expresses it, the resulting complexity is staggering:

> We do not just self-engineer better worlds to think in. We self-engineer ourselves to think and perform better in the worlds we find ourselves in. We self-engineer worlds in which to build better worlds to think in. We build better tools to think with and use these very tools to discover still better tools to think with. We tune the way we use these tools by building educational practices to ourselves to use our best cognitive tools better. We even tune the way we tune the way we use our best cognitive tools by devising environments that help build better environments for educating ourselves in the use of our own cognitive tools, e.g., environments geared toward teacher education and training (Clark 2011, p. 59).

Validity

The issue at stake here is validity, both construct validity – are we measuring right, and the right thing? – and consequential validity: does the assessment information improve the quality of decisions? With respect to construct validity concerns, the

danger is that the memory model of learning is accounting only for one aspect of learning, and that hence measurement methods based on this model will not represent the whole construct. With respect to consequential validity, the challenge is that we are likely to underestimate students' abilities systematically when we test only for memory aspects, and that we are thus wasting teaching/learning time. The consequence is also that, since the assessment is not sensitive to strengths and weaknesses of students' learning in a holistic sense, schools cannot develop students further in areas other than memory-based performance. This results in a waste of time at best, but can easily have downright negative effects, for instance when a quiz or an assignment that the students spends time working on and the teacher spends time assessing is not yielding information on progress and/or the causes of learning problems. In light of these important issues, it is surprising how little concern for validity goes into classroom assessment practices (Brookhart 2003; McMillan 2003).

Beyond Validity

Should validity be our only concern? What about the side-effects of measurement and assessment? For instance, there are emotional and motivational reactions to feedback, not all of them positive. Research into interest and identity development tells us that feedback is not always useful to students, even if it is of high quality (Hidi and Renninger 2006).

In general, concerns for validity need to be balanced with considerations for how assessment tasks (and learning tasks in general) will shape the relationship between the learner and the object of learning (subject matter content), and the learners' self-understanding (Moss et al. 2006). A specific assessment task may be perfectly valid, but one would nevertheless hesitate to employ it if would send a problematic signal to students. For instance, a history teacher may hesitate to use simple word association tasks as formative assessment because she might fear that this will lead students to interpret historical knowledge as having the form of a list of unrelated facts.

The relationship between students and learning and between students and disciplinary knowledge has been the subject of phenomenographic research (e.g., Hounsell et al. 1997; Marton and Säljö 1984). From it, we learn that what students learn – what they take away from reading a text or participating in a lesson, for instance – is strongly affected by their approach to learning (Marton and Säljö 1984). In a surface level approach, for instance when reading, students are essentially striving for committing as much as possible from the text to memory. In contrast, students who are learning from a text with a deep processing approach are after the meaning of the text: What does the author want to say, and why? These two approaches (or poles of a continuum) are in turn related to students' conception of learning. Based on interviews the following views of learning (from text) Marton and Säljö identified these conceptions: (1) A quantitative increase in

knowledge; (2) memorising; (3) the acquisition, for subsequent utilization, of facts, methods, etc.; (4) the abstraction of meaning; (5) an interpretative process aimed at understanding reality; (6) developing as a person. The boundary between a surface and deep approach to learning is demarcated by the difference between 1–3 and 4–6. Similar relations can be identified between aspects of learning such as effort investment and students' beliefs about the nature of knowledge, their epistemic beliefs (Chinn et al. 2011).

One of the main sources for students' beliefs about learning and knowledge is of course the school: What teachers (and other resources, such as textbooks, digital sources) say, the tasks they set, what counts as accountable work, all influence how students conceive of knowledge and learning. And from all of these, what matters most to students is *what* is assessed, and *how* it is assessed. If a teacher employs mainly memory recall types of tasks in her classroom assessments, a view of learning-as-memorising will be reinforced in most students. Over time, students view of knowledge and learning – their definition of what it is to 'learn' and 'know' – will be affected by how teachers (and tests) go about assessing their proficiencies. These beliefs in turn will affect what affordances students perceive in any given learning situation, how they position themselves *vis-a-vis* the content and their peers, and in consequence, what they learn.

The call for more authentic and performance-based assessment has been made frequently, but it is frustrating in this respect that even small attempts to make testing more authentic have so far not been sustained on any scale (Firestone and Schorr 2004, p. 10). In schools it becomes increasingly easy to capture students' performance, so that in principle the way is paved for authentic, performance-based formative assessment, and for making the resulting data available for pedagogical decision in (almost) real-time. However, current suggestions for data-driven decision making on the school and classroom levels are hampered, if not by the same limited perspective of learning that we have identified above, then by a limited view of the role of data as evidence for learning.

Letting Data Speak for Themselves: Data-Driven School Improvement

The idea of using system-level and school-level data to improve student learning as such is not new – see for instance the discussion on "measurement-driven instruction" in the US in the 1980s (Popham et al. 1985) – but is gaining a new quality today via the availability of data management solutions (Wayman et al. 2004) and the corresponding interest by commercial providers in selling those to schools and systems. While current educational data management is largely focussed on making available large-scale assessment data to school leaders and teachers system-wide (Mandinach and Honey 2008; Matters 2006), recent research is paving the way for capturing not only assessment data, but all kinds of data that are electronically available, such as attendance data and log files from virtual learning environments.

Advanced statistical and other methods, such as social network analysis, are being developed to utilise "Big Data" for research (Educational Data Mining, Yacef and Baker 2009) as well for providing information to guide pedagogical decision making (Learning Analytics, Ferguson 2012).

It would be worth a more in-depth analysis to document how the discourse on data for school improvement is couched in terms of *testing* data (e.g., Mandinach et al. 2008) and in terms of preparing teachers for using testing data (Means et al. 2011). Hopefully, methodological and technical advances, such as in database technologies, will lead to a more comprehensive view of data in the near future. However, for now I want to focus not so much on the types of data as on their use for educational decision-making.

With respect to data use, the state of affairs can be characterised by the opening sentence of (Howe 2009) "The rumours of positivism's death have been greatly exaggerated" (p. 428) While positivism may have been sufficiently discredited for basic research, it is still alive and kicking in evaluation research (and educational technology research), where the main question is "what works?". What is particularly worrying is the fact that the answers to this question are mostly still grounded in an *event view* of causality, a view that goes along with a simplistic linear view of effects. This (usually implicit) view of causality affects how teachers interpret data and observations from their students, how researchers interpret learning measurement data, and how policy makers interpret empirical data, such as from field trials.

The '*what works?*' question is essentially a causal question: Does an intervention, such as a new teaching method, result in expected effects? This kind of question can be raised on all levels of an educational system, from the classroom level, where a teacher needs to know if her teaching is successful, to the system level, where one might be interested in the effectiveness of certain programs, such as introducing digital whiteboards into schools. To simplify grossly, there are two kinds of answers to this question: (a) to show that it works, or (b) to demonstrate how it works. The problem is that (a) is not sufficient to establish causality, but that this is by far the most frequently used form to answer the *what works?* question.

The logic of the first kind of answer is grounded in an event ontology: If it can be shown that the outcome event O is always, or with high enough probability, realised when a triggering event T was present, and O is not brought about when T was not present, then one has a strong warrant for the claim that T causes O. The problem with this logic is that it holds only for closed systems, or *ceteris paribus* – all other things being equal. In open systems, regularity of events is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for causal processes to play out. The point has been decisively made in the philosophy of science (Bhaskar 1975; Harré and Madden 1975) and is now widely accepted for natural (Salmon 1998) as well as social sciences (Sayer 2000). The case has also been made for educational (House 1991) and psychological (Manicas and Secord 1983) research (arguably with less effect so far).

If the regularity of succession of events does not provide a sound grounding for causal claims, what does? The alternative to the regular succession model is the *generative model of causation*. This alternative has been developed in the philosophical

and methodological tradition of *Critical Realism* (or realism, for short, Archer et al. 1998) and adds a third element to the relation between triggering event and outcome: a *mechanism M*. The realists' "signature argument" (Pawson 2006) is that a causal explanation requires three elements: (1) A context *C* (encompassing what in the regular event sequence model is the triggering event, *T*), (2) a mechanism *M*, and (3) an outcome *O*. The mechanism, in turn, refers to causal powers within the objects or agents or structures under investigation. A 'mechanistic' explanation in this sense will describe how capacities interact with context elements to lead to outcomes. While this sounds on first encounter like only a small deviation from the regular event model of causation, the methodological implications are profound. For the social sciences, for example, Sayer has summarised the gist of them succinctly:

> Consequently, for realists, causation is not understood on the model of the regular success of events, and hence does not depend on finding them or searching for putative social laws. The conventional impulse to prove causation by gathering data on regularities, repeated occurrences, is therefore misguided: at best these might suggest where to look for candidates for causal mechanisms. What causes something to happen has nothing to do with the number of times we observe it happening. (Sayer 2000, p. 14)

The implications of this view are not only far-reaching for basic research – realism comes with ontological commitments as well, not only methodological ones, see in particular Harré and Madden (1975) – but also for evaluation and policy research (Pawson 2006; Pawson and Tilley 1997). For instance, the realist perspective calls into question many assumption of the meta-analytic approach to answer questions about '*what works?*' (Hedges and Olkin 1985). A statistically determined net effect size, gained from averaging over a number of studies, will tell us little about the existence of causal relations, mechanisms in patterns, no matter how large the effect size, and also not be proof for the absence of systematic causal relations no matter how small the effect size. Data on event regularities as such are indicative at best; data speak to causality only if and when they capture mechanisms.

Evaluation research grounded in a realist methodology reminds us that there is a fundamental difference between the "intervention" and the causal agent. To use a comparison with medicine and health sciences: In a randomised trial of a new drug, to a large extent the intervention – the drug – and the causal agent are identical: the drug is doing the causal work, if effective (and assuming largely compliant trial participants). In an anti-smoking campaign, however, the campaign itself is not the causal agent; people are the causal agents, the campaign is only a resource to them. If people are attentive to the campaign, interpret the message as intended by the campaign designers, find opportunities to act and act accordingly, only then will the campaign be effective. Educational interventions are much more like health campaigns or other social programs, such as for crime prevention, than they are like drugs.

Confusing the intervention-as-resource with the causal agent contributes to many problems in educational evaluation research. For instance, from the intervention-as-resource perspective, patterns of differences in effectiveness are what to look for, rather than being a source a disappointment – disappointment that a linear improvement across all participants and sites is not discernible. Hypotheses about

the causal mechanisms and their relation to context can prepare us for predicting such *patterns of outcomes*. And this is the case on the level of large-scale program evaluation as well as on the classroom level. Presenting data to teachers with the view that the data will help to identify what works in a school or classroom makes sense only if these data speak to mechanisms and contexts.

The upshot is that we should use data not as evidence for effects, but as evidence for mechanisms. From the perspective of scientific realism, it does not make much sense to employ measures of learning for a school to find out if educational computer games help to engage students from low SES background, or for a system to find out if digital whiteboards improve learning. Instead, data should be used to find out if a theoretically expected generative mechanism is at work that can bring about the intended learning or motivational effects, and how this mechanism is affected by context. A prerequisite for this research logic is, of course, that we develop theories and models that are generative and specific. (I hasten to add that structural equation models are not generative in the sense required here.) Turning the evaluation and assessment enterprise into a more theoretically informed affair would not only result in a better alignment with scientific practices in general (without loosing sight of the substantial differences between natural and social sciences, Bhaskar 2005), but would also be helpful in practical terms, for informing decisions and guiding actions.

Conclusions

I raised three issues in this chapter. The first is that using testing data for improving schools and teaching has largely failed, and we need to think of alternatives. The second is that we need to think harder about alternatives, because the alternative to formative classroom assessment as currently practiced is, like testing, based on an overly restricted view of learning. Third, I argue that testing, formative assessment, and even more recent approaches to performance-based and real-time diagnosis of learning are negatively affected by a widely shared but wrong view of the role of data for informing pedagogical and policy-level decision-making.

What are ways forward? For the first issue, I think the solution is quite straightforward: Restrict the use of testing data to purposes that they serve well, to system level monitoring and international comparisons for instance, but do not use them for the purpose of improving schools, teaching, and learning. While in the current political climate and with current management and governance philosophy it is unlikely that educational testing will be done away with, it should be reduced to the absolute minimum. Current attempts to pitch (and sell) scaled-down versions of standardized tests to schools as “formative assessments” or “interim assessments” (Bennett 2011) are a particularly bad idea.

Classroom assessment for learning (issue number 2) needs to be grounded in a *system* view of learning, such as the perspective of learning as situated. While there is a broad research base for this already, it is time that teachers become better

educated in the respective research base, and better prepared to diagnose and teach accordingly. A more holistic view of learning is also a prerequisite for better use of (computer) technologies in schools, which currently suffer from a fairly dramatic misunderstanding of the role of technology in cognitive practices. New assessment methods will need to be developed that can measure learning as a system property.

Not only do we need data on learning that is conceptualized more holistically than current testing and assessment methods provide, we also need to draw valid conclusions from these data (issue number 3) These two issues are related: Better theories and models of learning, when of the generative type, will provide hypotheses about (learning and other) mechanisms that are required for answering *what works?* questions. There is nothing as practical as a theory, and this holds in the classroom as well as at the system and policy levels. But not just any theory will do, and fallibility will not suffice; in addition, theory needs to be generative, productive, and connected (Deutsch 2011).

In conclusion, it may be wise keeping in mind that accountability by numbers is meant as a means for increasing 'objectivity', for reducing personal or institutional 'bias'. As such, it is essentially a form of establishing trust in situations where trust cannot easily be established by personal contact; it is a strategy that has historically been invented for and by large bureaucracies, and was later taken over by large business organisations (Desrosieres 1998; Porter 1995). While today's schools can be seen – and by many are seen – as mainly bureaucratic organisations, this is not the only future scenario for school development. A more attractive scenario might be the ones that see schools as "core social centres" or as "focused learning organisations" (OECD-CERI 2013). In these scenarios, schools would be organised as small communities comprising students, teachers, parents and local stakeholders. In such communities, trust is more directly established and the need for data can be determined locally and jointly, instead of being externally imposed.

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Chapter 5
Are These Testing Times, or Is It a Time to Test? Considering the Place of Tests in Students' Academic Development

Andrew J. Martin

Abstract Recent efforts to tie students' test results to teacher- and school-level consequences and accountability have led to testing times in the education sector. Whilst recognizing numerous concerns with accountability and high stakes testing, this chapter identifies potentially useful applications of testing. It argues that when designed for student-level feedback and intervention, testing is a vital basis for students' educational development – but not a basis for teacher- and school-level consequences and accountability. The chapter then looks at promising directions in the use of tests to assess students' academic development. It is suggested that a growth-oriented approach to student testing and assessment redresses limitations associated with accountability and high stakes assessment and can be a basis for effective educational practice.

Concerns with Current Testing Practices

Much of the debate and concern around tests and testing are tied to accountability policies and practices that seek to assess school and teacher effectiveness. Under such policies and practices, it is known that some students are excluded from testing because their performance may adversely impact the school performance (Harris 2011). Low achieving or low intake characteristic schools run the risk of losing 'good' teachers due to the various funding (and other) consequences of being in a 'low achieving school' (Harris 2011). Similarly, there can be drift of students to 'better' schools based on the league tables produced from test results, thus creating residualized schools and a growing gap between 'strong' and 'weak' schools (Lingard 2010; Nichols and Berliner 2007; Ravitch 2010). Accountability that is developed along traditional value-added (regression or bell curve) lines yields

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_5

a large number of schools that are deemed underperforming (because they fall below the regression line), even if they are making commendable educational progress (Martin 2011). Accountability and high stakes testing practices hold teachers and schools accountable for many things that they cannot control, ranging from home to peers to school funding (Harris 2011). Accountability and high stakes testing is often 'point-in-time' testing, failing to account for where students start their educational journey and inequalities associated with that (Harris 2011).

An over-emphasis on school-level and teacher-level accountability can also distract or diminish attention to student-level diagnostic intervention (Polesel et al. 2012). Further, the nature of national testing data may be unreliable as a school-level assessment device (Nichols and Berliner 2007; Wu 2010). Due to high stakes implications, drill on test items is emphasized more than the latent educational factors (e.g., literacy, numeracy) that these items are intended to indicate (Alexander 2010). Along similar lines, a narrow range of content tends to be assessed at the expense of measures relating to broader goals (Harris 2011; Paris 2000). In terms of teaching, an over-emphasis on high stakes testing can limit teachers to narrow modes of pedagogy that are overly didactic, uncreative and uninspiring (Au 2008; Lobascher 2011). Curriculum similarly runs the risk of narrowing (Au 2008; David 2011; Lobascher 2011; Nichols and Berliner 2007).

Problems can also arise when a national (or statewide) test is used for diagnostic feedback to students *and* as a way of assessing teacher and school effectiveness (with consequences for failing to meet established 'standards'). These two purposes are often at cross-purposes because students who underperform (for many valid reasons often unrelated to the teacher or school) threaten a positive assessment of teachers and the school. Under such approaches, student performance is emphasized over student development. When student performance is emphasized over student development, there is more interested in test items and less interest in literacy and numeracy more broadly. When the stakes are so high for teachers and schools, they also become disproportionately high for students, leading to numerous failure-related motivation dynamics including anxiety, fear of failure, and disengagement (Covington 1992; Martin and Marsh 2003; Paris and McEvoy 2000; Polesel et al. 2012; Yeh 2010).

These are just some of the concerns that are raised around accountability and high stakes testing practices, and these clearly pose a threat to students' educational development. In response to this, it is here proposed that for tests and testing to have educational validity for individual students, four criteria must be met. First, it must be established that tests and testing have potential to enhance student learning and achievement. Second, student development and academic growth must be demonstrated. Third, it must be established that valid forms of tests and testing can resolve most or all of the above concerns presented by accountability and high stakes testing. Fourth, for national and international testing to continue, it must be established that they can be implemented in a way to foster student educational development *and* provide valid information on the status of the nation's educational health.

Criterion 1: Tests and Student Learning and Achievement

Notwithstanding prevalent concerns with accountability and high stakes testing, tests do have the potential to enhance student learning and achievement. Whereas evidence linking school accountability and high stakes testing to student achievement is mixed (Hattie 2009), evidence linking student-focused testing, feedback and intervention with achievement is clearer. For example, the longer a test-and-feedback process is in place through the term/year, the more effective it becomes in assisting achievement (Kim 2005). Similarly, performance is increased with greater test frequency (Bangert-Drowns et al. 1991). There are also potential yields for retention and transfer. For example, repeated testing with feedback results in greater long-term retention than repeated, spaced study (Larsen et al. 2009). The benefits of test-enhanced learning extend to the transfer of knowledge to a variety of new learning tasks/domains (Butler 2010). Moreover, the structure and nature of tests can impact academic outcomes. For example, tests that require effortful retrieval of information (e.g., short-answer) promote better retention than tests that require recognition (e.g., multi-choice) (Larsen et al. 2008). Effortful retrieval of information (short-answer test) improves recall 1 month later, compared with no test (Butler and Roediger 2007). Based on such data, Butler and Roediger concluded, "We encourage educators to incorporate testing into their daily classroom routine: The amount of class time sacrificed for a quiz is small compared to gain in retention of material" (2007, p. 525).

There are a number of reasons why tests have the potential to enhance student learning and achievement. Tests make clear the learning intentions and make the success criteria more specific and transparent (Hattie 2009). Data from tests are very specific to pinpoint the teaching intervention needed to remediate or promote further learning (Fuchs and Fuchs 1986). Effortful recall (e.g., short-answer rather than multi-choice) binds material to cognitive structures that assist memory and comprehension (Larsen et al. 2008). More frequent testing can help lower test anxiety if tests can be normalized through this process (Leeming 2002). Finally, testing can help increase the regularity of study (Leeming 2002).

Importantly, according to Hattie (2009), many of the positive effects of testing are from the feedback they provide to teachers on student learning and student needs. Similarly, Gocmen (2003) found that the positive effects of testing were increased when accompanied by feedback. Feedback from teachers helps students to redress errors and confirm correct answers (Larsen et al. 2008). According to Hattie, "When teachers seek, or at least are open to, feedback from students as to what students know, what they understand, where they make errors, when they have misconceptions, when they are not engaged – then teaching and learning can be synchronized and powerful" (2009, p. 173). Further, student outcomes are "effective if there is feedback from the tests to teachers such that they modify their instruction to attend to the strengths and gaps in student performance" (Hattie 2009, p. 178).

Criterion 2: Demonstrating Student Development and Academic Growth

There is growing dissatisfaction with static or snapshot approaches to student development that tend to be the emphasis of accountability and high stakes testing (Anderman et al. 2010; Betebenner 2009; Harris 2011; Yeh 2010). This has led researchers to investigate alternative approaches to assessment. One such approach which may redress a number of the limitations in accountability and high stakes testing involves assessing students' academic progress across time (Anderman et al. 2010). Here, the emphasis shifts from static comparisons against cohort norms or benchmarks to an interest in growth across time (Betebenner 2009). In this chapter, three growth assessment approaches are described: Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs), Personal Best Growth Percentiles (PBGPs), and Individual Learning Expectations (ILEs) However, there are other growth models (see Anderman et al. 2010; Betebenner 2008, 2009; Briggs and Betebenner 2009; Yeh 2010 for descriptions).

One assessment approach attracting growing interest involves Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs). This involves estimating a student's growth and comparing this to the growth of students with a similar level of prior achievement. The SGP approach determines adequate growth for students at different achievement levels and then compares each student against the rate of growth for his or her achievement level. Thus, low-achieving students relative to the entire cohort may be recognized as academically successful if they make more than a term's growth relative to comparable students in their achievement band. Or, students achieving highly relative to the population may be underperforming if they make less than a term's growth relative to comparable students in their achievement band. Further information on SGPs, cognate approaches, their implementation in various education systems, and relevant software applications are presented in Anderman et al. (2010), Betebenner (2008, 2009), Briggs and Betebenner (2009), and Martin (2011).

However, there is one feature of SGP models that has shades of the problems associated with accountability and high stakes testing: the growth index is relativistic. Some students will outperform the average growth rate and others will not (Anderman et al. 2010). Thus, it could be the case that all students display commendable growth, but only about half of them can be recognized for this. A Personal Best Growth Percentile (PBGP) may redress this problem. A PBGP ascertains the rate of growth for each student and then assesses each student's subsequent growth against his/her own prior growth (Martin 2011). The PBGP emphasizes self-improvement across time, not improvement relative to other students' improvement. A useful approach to PBGPs can be seen in the growth maps provided by Betebenner (2009) that profile an individual student's prior growth against his/her current and projected growth.

Another approach to student growth assessment is through Individual Learning Expectations (ILEs) proposed by Slavin (1980). Although conducted some time ago, it represents one of the few educational efforts directly aimed at quantifying

students' academic gains and investigating the effect of these gains on their academic development. On a regular basis, students take a test on curriculum material. They receive 'plus points' based on the gains they make relative to their previous scores. Their minimum baseline is adjusted after each test result and so their progress is derived by comparing their most recent score with a running average of previous scores. The simplicity of the approach is compelling: "In actual practice, the ILE system was not difficult to use. Teachers simply had to find a class median each week, adjust scores, and then consult a chart that gave plus points and a new base score for any combination of an old base score and a student quiz score" (Slavin 1980, p. 521). Findings from a study using this assessment technique showed the treatment (growth) group gained by 19 percentile points whereas the control group gained by 10 percentile points (Slavin 1980).

Although offering new and exciting directions, growth assessment is not without its limitations (further detailed in Anderman et al. 2010; Betebenner 2008, 2009; Briggs and Betebenner 2009; Harris 2011; Martin 2011; Slavin 1980). Advocates of growth assessment models urge further investigation into their validity before rolling out on a large-scale; researchers have pointed to the need for valid growth assessment models to comprehensively adjust for a wide range of school and student characteristics; there are concerns that growth models do not adequately assess the growth of students at the bottom and top ends of the achievement continuum (though the Slavin 1980 intervention managed to address this); educators will need quality information and professional development on techniques and approaches to dealing with different rates of growth for different students at different levels of achievement; and, educators will need appropriate training to help them interpret and use growth data.

Criterion 3: Resolving Problems with Accountability and High Stakes Testing

A focus on student-level growth is proposed to redress a number of the problems associated with accountability and high stakes assessment. Because the focus is on students' rate of learning, rather than school or teacher value-added, this is the point of intervention that can most effectively capitalize on individual feedback. There is now no need to exclude students from testing because all students can make educationally commendable growth. Teachers and students are less inclined to move to 'better' schools because growth can happen in any school. Teachers' creativity and innovation are once again front-and-center as they seek to individualize and differentiate instruction to yield individual student-level growth. Under some growth approaches, it is not a requirement that half the students fall below a regression line. Growth approaches overcome the limitations of 'point-in-time' testing by assessing the educational journey. Finally, under growth assessment, there can be a focus on

the broader educational development of the child more than on narrow drill on test items. Following from this, with less emphasis on high stakes attached to student achievement, a broad curriculum can comfortably exist.

Criterion 4: Establishing the Educational Validity of National (and International) Testing

The present discussion is not to suggest we dispense with national testing of educational outcomes such as literacy and numeracy, or with international testing such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). National testing can be an ideal opportunity for student-level diagnostic assessment of important educational dimensions such as literacy and numeracy. Thus, instead of school-level assessment (and publication of school results), national testing is an opportunity for standardized assessment of educational needs that then gives rise to within-school educational intervention that can target relevant achievement domains. Tethering these tests to growth assessment for each student then provides feedback on how well that intervention succeeded. Thus, national test results are acted on by students, teachers, and parents/caregivers. Importantly, effective implementation of national tests for student-level intervention will require speedy reporting of results back to students, parents and teachers (Polesel et al. 2012).

One remaining question is the issue of how governments and departments can assess state and national educational performance. This could be addressed through an adapted application of national and international testing. For example, after national testing has occurred, education departments may select a non-identifiable stratified random sample of schools – or a random sample of students within a random sample of schools. A representative sample of this nature will then provide information on the 'educational health' of the nation. This then reduces (or eliminates) the high stakes nature of national testing – schools and students are not identified and so stakes are not so high that the problems associated with accountability and high stakes testing arise.

When national testing is conducted in this way, it can serve two purposes: diagnostic feedback to students and a non-identifiable and representative national snapshot. As described earlier, problems arise when a national or statewide test is used for diagnostic feedback to students and also as a way of assessing teacher and school effectiveness (with consequences for failing teachers and schools to meet 'standards'). For reasons described earlier, these two purposes are often at cross-purposes, and this may partly explain why the evidence on the educational effectiveness of accountability and high stakes testing is mixed (see Hattie 2009 for a review). However, when schools and teachers are not identified, the test can be much more firmly oriented to student development. The evidence summarized above (Criterion 1) describes some of the conditions and approaches to testing that can enhance student learning and achievement.

Conclusion

This discussion has explored some of the pitfalls of testing that can compromise student development and academic growth when overly focused on identifiable school- and teacher-level accountability. However, if implemented appropriately (see Criteria 1–4, above), the discussion also recognized the central place that tests, testing, and national assessment can have in student-level learning and national-level educational status. In their essence, value-added measures are rooted in student growth (Harris 2011), but the precise nature of value-added approaches may have a large impact on how that translates into student-level diagnosis, interpretation and intervention. This discussion has examined just some of the test-based value-added options available to educators, schools, and school systems.

Some will argue that without tying consequences to school- and teacher-level attainment, teachers will not be motivated to improve their teaching or improve their students. What we must not forget is that teachers are motivated to teach and instruct children and young people – that is why they chose that life course at university and why they continue to commit to a highly demanding and difficult line of work. Rather than serving as a device for sifting teachers (and schools), test results can be a concrete guide for teacher professional development, school initiatives on pedagogy, professional dialogue between teachers, micro-teaching and the like – all factors that improve the quality of teaching (Hattie 2009). Accordingly, tests and testing are not incompatible with improvements in teacher quality – in fact, quite the opposite. With careful consideration and positioning, tests and testing can be a part of efforts to help teachers better fulfill their calling and help students in their educational growth.

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Chapter 6
Evidence-Based Policy: Epistemologically Specious, Ideologically Unsound

Anthony Welch

All intellectual activity can be seen as terrorism against established canons, whether science, culture or sociology.
(Ulitskaya 2011: 178)

What matters is what works.
(New Labour, c. 1997)

the search for certainty is indeed literally a Kinderkrankheit.
(Feyerabend, letter to Lakatos, 27th. Dec. 1974)

Abstract Evidence-based policy is often presented as a simple solution to complex social problems. It is portrayed as an unimpeachable methodology, promising to deliver unarguable results. Beneath the shiny surface however, there is much that can and should be disputed. This chapter draws on current epistemological debates to argue that there is no single version of 'evidence' that renders it immune to scientific critique. Indeed, what counts as evidence is precisely under dispute, and there is no escape from debates about evidence. Secondly, ways in which 'evidence' is deployed by politicians and planners, can also be subjected to critique. At times, efforts to use 'evidence' as a means to impart a veneer of scientificity, are little more than a legitimation device, for political decisions that have already been taken, or for reasons of expediency. Examples from the field of education are given, that illustrate the argument.

From being an idea whose time has come, evidence-based policy has moved to become a major shibboleth of the current era. Ministers proclaim it (but never enact it); senior policy makers pronounce its virtues (while carefully managing outcomes), and researchers argue its merits (especially if the evidence is theirs).

In turn, as a number of analysts have pointed out, the trend towards evidence-based policy (hereafter EBP) is part of a wider transformation in society, including ways in which the social sciences are understood and utilized in the contemporary

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_6

world. Terming it the New Instrumentalism, it has also been characterized as the utilitarian turn by UK authors, in ways redolent of the Australian context. According to them, it:

> ... has been driven by the funders of social science. Government departments have come to be the dominant funders; the research charities – like the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Nuffield Foundation – have increasingly adopted an instrumental view of research, gearing it to their social priorities. And the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has been subjected to the demands of government science policy that views academic research as a means to economic and social development, much more than as a cultural end in itself. (Solesbury 2001: 4, see also Young et al. 2002)

A key signal that marked the increasing legitimacy of EBP came with the award of a £1.3 million, 3 year grant, by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in 1999 to the Evidence Network – the UK Centre for Evidence-Based Policy and Practice. Substituting the Australian Research Council (ARC) for the ESRC and names of equivalent philanthropic organisations for the UK's Rowntree and Nuffield foundations, much the same transformation has been evident in the Australian context over the past decade or more. In the USA, the Coalition for Evidence based Policy stands as another example (Coalition for Evidence Based Policy, nd) The OECD and the World Bank are proclaimed converts (OECD 2007). Most recently, the trend has begun spreading to Germany, Europe and China (Ionnidou 2007; Schaerer 2013; Rütten and Gelius 2012; Jiang et al. 2013). But it is argued below that there are at least two grounds for caution: one epistemological; the other based on the *realpolitik* of policy making. Before treating these two, a sketch of EBP is presented.

Evidence Based Policy

Even accomplishing this task, however, is not simple. An initial difficulty becomes evident when trying to outline EBP – there is no single definition that commands universal assent. Worse than that, the term is often presented as axiomatic, and needing no definition: something that, when stated, is enough to draw universal approbation. In this sense, it may even evoke the much earlier optimism of the Political Arithmetic school of the seventeenth century, whose early proponents, such as William Petty earnestly believed that the collection of 'facts' would vouchsafe the solution to intractable socio-political problems, such as the 'Irish question' (Petty 1690; Welch 2010). According to Petty's son, whose Foreword graced the famous third edition, *Political Arithmetic* demonstrated that "the Glory of the Prince, and the happiness and greatness of the People, are by the Ordinary Rules of Arithmetick, brought into a sort of Demonstration" (Petty 1690: 1). A similar faith inspired some of the later Enlighteners, and positivists such as St Simon and Comte, who argued that a mix of facts and scientific rationality would allow the nascent social sciences to develop to the same level of perfection that had already been achieved by the

natural sciences (Habermas 1968, 1971). Enlightenment faith in a priesthood of science is in some ways redolent of the current faith in knowledge management systems, whereby knowledge is just another resource (like finance or technology, or individuals), to be deployed in the pursuit of specified policy goals (Marston and Watts 2003). Despite the persistence of the idea that a relatively unproblematised idea of knowledge should drive policy development, the modern priesthood of specialists has seen trust in their expertise erode in recent years, amid growing pressure for citizen involvement in decisions that affect them (Solesbury 2001). Hard facts are no more likely to speak for themselves in the twenty-first century, than in the seventeenth and eighteenth.

In practice, the term EBP is used in two different ways, and refers to two rather different phenomena: the appraisal and review of relevant empirical findings; and particular modes of policy making (Marston and Watts 2003) (The correlate assumption that, in the past, policy-making was based on something other than evidence, is also worthy of some reflection). But the view that policy decisions should be evidence-based avoids problematizing evidence, largely assuming that a simple appeal to evidence suffices to overcome difficult debates on the nature and style of evidence. As is argued below, the notion of EBP confers legitimacy on decisions taken in its name, in much the same way that 'scientific', 'rational' or 'modern' functioned in earlier eras. In an era of often-overwhelming amounts of evidence however, preference is often given in practice to "statistics, policy evaluation and economic modelling" (Majone 1989; Marston and Watts 2003: 145). In an effective epistemological hierarchy, lay knowledge, garnered via community consultations, tends to be seen as a lower order form of evidence.

The gold standard of EBP, the randomized controlled trial, originated from the fields of medicine and health. This methodology classically involves comparing one group's use of a specific therapy or drug, with another group provided with a placebo. Clearly, however, transferability of this method into the realm of complex social policy is inherently problematic, since it potentially involves measures such as depriving one group of schooling, welfare or unemployment benefits, for example, in order to gauge their effects. Despite this, the philosophy persists, indeed was given explicit endorsement in policy debates surrounding the USA's *No Child Left Behind* legislation, which, in effect, significantly narrowed the range of methodologies that were deemed legitimate (Lather 2003; Blackmore 2007). As proponents proudly acknowledged,

> a central theme of our advocacy, consistent with the recommendation of a recent National Academy of Sciences report, is that evidence of effectiveness generally cannot be considered definitive without ultimate confirmation in well-conducted randomized controlled trials. (Coalition for Evidence Based Policy, n.d)

In effect, what results is a technocratic mode of research, and policy-making. Randomized trials have been deemed "the 'gold standard' with which to address the 'broken' state of educational research" (Lather 2006: 48).

EBP, Epistemological Critique and the Heretic's Heretic

As indicated above, a key critique of EBP hinges on its unproblematised epistemology, effectively privileging certain forms of research and knowledge over others. That no sustained defense of this decision is mounted, however, leaves it vulnerable to epistemological critiques; these reveal that in the current era of an abundance of information, a plenitude of forms of knowledge are equally available as a basis for making policy decisions. In what follows, it is argued that EBP provides a veneer of scientificity to results gathered in its name: while it purports to provide a "neutral and objective policy tool" (Marston and Watts 2003: 149), upon examination this is much less clear than is claimed. Its function as a neutralising device, purportedly providing objective evidence upon which to base solid policy decisions, is thus undermined.

What counts as evidence? The dominance of positivist epistemologies since the inception of the scientific revolution has licensed views such as those sketched above – that only evidence based on models of knowledge drawn from the natural sciences is objective, and hence that social science research should be shaped accordingly. While it is often held that we now inhabit a post-positivist intellectual universe, the pervasive persistence of views such as those seen above reveals that mainstream social science is still largely captive to positivist precepts. Inevitably, the world of policy is not immune; indeed the last decade has seen such views become more entrenched.

After several decades of proliferating feminist, post-modernist and post-structuralist accounts of knowledge and social science (Lather 2003, 2006; Lloyd 1997; Harding 1986, 1998; Butler 1993; Longino 1994; Keller 1985, 1992; Rose 1987; Foucault 1997–1999; Lyotard 1984) it is all-too-easy to overlook the decisive break with mainstream positivist epistemology that figures such as Kuhn, and more especially Feyerabend, represented (Kuhn 1962, 1977; Feyerabend 1978, 1982, 2011). It is this ground-breaking work that broke decisively with longstanding, objectivist accounts of knowledge, whether by the Logical Positivists of the 'Vienna Circle' for example, or those who purported to be its critics, but nonetheless clung to its core tenet of objectivism (Popper 1959, 1972; Lakatos and Musgrave 1970).

The work of Feyerabend in particular represented the most direct confrontation with key tenets of objectivist epistemology and the Western scientific tradition of inquiry. The heretic's heretic, his clarion call, trumpeted against the tower of objectivist science, was already evident in his early work:

> Experts and laymen, professionals and dilettanti, truth-freaks and liars – they are all invited to participate in the contest and to make their contribution to the enrichment of our culture. (Feyerabend 1978: 30, see also Feyerabend 2011: 36)

Here, in a nutshell, was the most radical, outspoken heresy: a more robust rebuttal of key tenets of mainstream philosophy of science could hardly be imagined. But in fact, he was no enemy of science, but rather showed how complex and exciting it was, in opposition to formal, rule-based accounts of scientific progress (Preston et al. 2000: xiii–xiv; Munévar 1991, 2000: 65–70). Feyerabend's iconoclastic,

combative style and often-provocative prose, masked a serious purpose, evident in his articulation of what he variously termed epistemological anarchism, or Dadaism (which of course, being Feyerabend, must also include its opposite, since to be a good Dadaist, one must also be an anti-Dadaist) For Feyerabend, a Dadaist "... not only has no programme, (he is) against all programmes" (Feyerabend 1978: 189). By these two terms, he intended to articulate a vision for science, or more broadly knowledge, that was open to all; neither subject to the strictures of specific scientific methodologies, or restricted to the priesthood of scientists: "Questions of reality are too important to be left to scientists" (Feyerabend 2011: 51). In doing so, he went further than Kuhn, whose version of a 'mature' science he criticised: "an esoteric, isolated and largely self-contained discipline" (Feyerabend 1974: 254). Indeed, his tilt against objectivist science was part of a wider "story about the rise of Western rationalism, and the entrenchment of a mythical, and yet oppressive, scientific world view" (Oberheim 2011: vii, see also Feyerabend 2011: 43).

Accepting Kuhn's critique of rationalist abstractions, which both felt pointed to the need to incorporate a more historical and anthropological dimension into explanations of scientific change, and also that incommensurability (and Kuhnian paradigms) often poses insuperable barriers to concepts of increasing verisimilitude – an argument that drew in part on Wittgenstein's language games – (Feyerabend 1978: 183-4n, 1974: 214 et seq., 1982: 66–70, 188; Oberheim 2006: 96, 113, 114), Feyerabend broke with Kuhn's acceptance of Popper's bifurcation into normal and revolutionary science, and also differed to a degree from Kuhn on incommensurability, and on pluralism versus monism (Hoyningen-Huene 2000: 104–106, 108–111; Oberheim 2011: ix)[1]. For Feyerabend, all talk of content increase, relativistic invariance, non-contradiction, and other such universalistic criteria of preference for one theory or another, is ultimately futile and chimerical: "... the validity, usefulness, adequacy of popular standards can be tested only by research that violates them". (Feyerabend 1982: 35). This was particularly the case during more disruptive, revolutionary periods of even relatively mature, streamlined scientific traditions. Simply put,

> ... there is no 'scientific method'; there is no single procedure, or set of rules that underlies every piece of research and guarantees that it is 'scientific', and therefore trustworthy. (Feyerabend 1982: 98, see also 2011: 112–113)

Even anarchism is no permanent standard, although a powerful medicine with which to heal epistemological fractures. Indeed, consistent with the premise of openness, he argued that epistemological anarchism could itself be supplanted in time, with a newer form of rationality, "both more enlightened and more liberal" (Feyerabend 1982: 127).

Thus was articulated a sustained critique of abstract rationality, particularly standards of 'excellence', posing as transcendental, objective criteria. For Feyerabend,

[1] Although there is some evidence that Feyerabend later reconciled with Kuhn on a number of points (Hoyningen Huene 2000: 113–114).

by contrast, those involved in making practical decisions must beware of using these standards "without any reference to their origin or to the wishes of those using them." (Feyerabend 1982: 22) Elevating reason to a mechanised code or formula whereby theories can be axiomatically be judged is, according to this critique, a simple error. Logic = Science = Rationality is incorrect, historically, empirically and axiologically. Attempting to specify standards or rules with which to evaluate evidence, without at the same time stipulating the origins of these rules, or the processes by which they were derived, is simply illegitimate. Ultimately, traditions are just that: they are neither good nor bad, but simply exist. This includes any particular mode of rationality, which is "itself a tradition or an aspect of a tradition . . . , neither good nor bad, it simply is" (Feyerabend 1982: 27, see also 1978, §14 and 15). The relativity of our own preferred traditions becomes apparent as soon as we compare them to others: what " . . . is propaganda for one observer (is) the essence of human discourse for another" (Feyerabend 1982: 28).

Given this diversity, it becomes impossible to specify in advance what principles should be adopted to judge particular events or structures:

> Standards, which are intellectual measuring instruments, may often have to be invented, to make sense of new historical situations, just as measuring instruments may have to be invented to make sense of new physical situations. (Feyerabend 1982: 29, see also 1978: 221–2)

The greater attribution of autonomy and decision making to the researcher, and less to the 'logic' of the discipline, constituted a radically new and much more open metascience: " . . . don't restrict your imagination by logic" (Feyerabend 2011: 131). At the same time, Feyerabend is no naïve epistemological anarchist, (that is, one who holds that, since absolute and context-dependent rules are always limited, that all rules or standards must be abandoned). By contrast, contextual accounts, such context dependent rules "are not to replace the absolute rules, they are to supplement them" (Feyerabend 1982: 32). An openness to change, embrace of pluralism, and respect for the other's standpoint, replaces the privileges of closed communities of 'experts':

> . . . in a free society, intellectuals are just one tradition. They have no special rights . . . Problems are not solved by specialists (though their advice will not be disregarded) but by the people concerned in accordance with the ideas they value and by procedures they regard as appropriate. (Feyerabend 1982: 9–10, 87)

Neither the growth of experts, nor the existence of canons that promise to deliver scientific rigour should inhibit the proliferation of methods, techniques, and explanations (Feyerabend 1978: 47; Munévar 2000: 65–70). Did this mean that Feyerabend laid himself open to the charge of relativism, as many have supposed? His later essays refute such suggestions: ".. not all ways of thinking have results and not all perceptions are trustworthy . . . ; some constructions find no point of attack . . . , and simply collapse" (Feyerabend 1989: 405).

Ultimately, Feyerabend's epistemological critique radically undermines the claims of EPB, or other similarly imperious frameworks, to single out a specific methodology, and deny the relevance or worth of others. All the more so, when,

almost inevitably, such candidates model themselves on technocratic modes of research (in this case RCT) that purport to deliver an objective basis for sound policy decisions, at the cost of ignoring other forms of evidence, that might well deliver more nuanced and deeper understandings of the views of groups affected by policy initiatives, and the impact of implementation. Feyerabend's account denies the singular , restrictive claims to objectivity and 'evidence' of proponents of EBP, (reminiscent of earlier claims to scientific rationality and objectivity by Enlighteners, Logical Empiricists, and others) and opens up space for competing research paradigms to demonstrate their worth (see also Lather 2006: 47). A science "... which insists on possessing the only correct method and the only acceptable results is ideology, and must be separated from the state" (Feyerabend 1978: 308). It also re-asserts the primary role of ethics in decision-making, a position with profound implications for the social sciences, and for policy makers. Like ancient Greek philosophers, and key Renaissance thinkers, "...ethics is therefore, the basis of everything else" (Oberheim 2011: x, citing Feyerabend 1965: 219). And the re-insertion of values into educational research and the policy-making process is only a problem for those who cling to an objectivist epistemology:

> the problem of partisanship only arises for those who maintain a philosophically uninformed and intellectually naive view of educational research as a purely technical and methodical activity that can and should remain uncontaminated by politics, values and ideology: a view which those who criticise the partisan nature of educational research never explicitly defend, but to which they always implicitly subscribe. (Carr 2000: 439, see also Geelan 2001)

EBP and the Policy Process: When What Works Doesn't, and Why

The implications for the policy process of the above are clear – a restriction to a singular mode of (technocratic) research is restrictive and unlikely to lead to the progress of knowledge, or good policy outcomes. An embrace of wider and more diverse research traditions is more likely to lead to progress on both fronts: better, more comprehensive knowledge, and better policy.

How likely is this? How open is the policy process to diverse local conditions, reciprocity and negotiation, and to practical ethical dilemmas when framing policy (Hodgkinson 2000; Rogers 2003)? And how might the adoption of EBP assist? An appraisal of the changing policy process, and ways in which it actually works, does not inspire cause for confidence. Rather than an evidence-based praxis, that 'requires a reciprocity and an openness' (Rogers 2003: 85), EBP brackets out all forms of research that do not fit within its strict methodological canons, effectively restricting conversations to among the converted. Empirical, quantitatively-based methodologies (preferably in the form of randomized controlled trials) are the result, with qualitative based methodologies and evidence dismissed as insufficiently 'scientific' (Majone 1989; Mosteller and Boruch 2002; Wiseman 2010; Chatterji

2004; Whitty 2007; Lather 2006: 51). Research findings that are contextualized or embedded in specific cultures are much less likely to influence the policy process, no matter how rich and suggestive the research may be.

Moreover, the realities of the policy process mean that a strictly evidence-based approach, however epistemologically dubious, is unlikely to be followed. Indeed, the current context of policy making, in which both the process, and the conventions of the civil service have become increasingly politicized, makes this even less likely. In effect, even when quantitative evidence is presented that meets the canons of EBP, in the form of randomized field trials for example, it is by no means guaranteed to influence the policy process, which is shaped more by wider social and political agendas. A current example, discussed in more detail below, is the contemporary international obsession with tests of pupil 'achievement' such as PISA and TIMMS, and their state and national equivalents, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress in the USA, and NAPLAN in Australia, and the various state-based tests that pupils undertake in their states (Texas, Pennsylvania, Georgia, California etc), that act as proxies for quality, but are at best a snapshot, and often abused in practice (CNN 2013). In the US system, for example, schools that could not show adequate yearly progress (AYP), including some of the leading schools within the state system, missed out on federal funding (Wiseman 2010: 9).

While such forms of evidence are often cited as a means to promote equality in education, as with, paradigmatically, the massive American Coleman Report of the 1960s (Coleman 1966), or the Karmel Report (1973) in Australia some years later, in practice the 'evidence' is often more complex and messier than either politicians or policy makers prefer. This is no mere idle question, since the outcomes of policies in education help create winners and losers, as decisions related to Karmel and Coleman made clear.

But it is also important to clarify how the policy process has itself changed in recent years. When seen in context, this reveals that the trend towards a reliance on EBP is part of a wider re-orientation of policy-making and policy makers, towards a more technocratic form, in which decisions tend to be implemented in the most efficient and economically lean manner, rather than systematically engaging with ethical principles. In Australia, it was argued by prominent critics that 'reality has been turned upside down' (Pusey 1991: 10). The notion of the 'social good' became increasingly marginalised: it has become a 'buried discourse' (Pusey 1991: 166), replaced by an economistic rhetoric of individual rights, ideologies of 'efficiency', and 'choice'. Interestingly, well before EPB came to prominence, Pusey pointed to the neutralising effects of this transition:

> What wins is a kind of "dephenomenalising" abstraction that tries to neutralise the social contexts of program goals in every area, whether it be education, industry support, public health or water resource management. (Pusey 1991: 11)

Effectively, what Pusey was charting and critiquing was the increasing domination of social policy and social theory, by the language and logic of economics – hence his term economic rationalism. What was critical to the analysis, was its technocratic character, whereby goals were simply adopted, and then implemented in the most efficient manner; without reference to discussions about ends or values.

Pusey's major study of the federal civil service revealed a major transition, from one of nation-building, to an ethos of economism. As part of this process, senior civil servants, now far more likely to be highly-trained economists, took on this new logic, subjecting policies from any arena (education, health, welfare) to the technocratic calculus of purportedly objective and scientific forms of economics/econometrics.

Others such as Anna Yeatman reinforced these effects on the civil service, charged with policy implementation. Now, she argued 'The public sector is not about the delivery of public values but about the management of scarce resources' (Yeatman 1993: 3, see also Yeatman 1990). In practice, this meant doing more with less, in a context where public resources are being redirected away from social welfare toward the prime requirement of enhancing economic competitiveness. 'So the first consequence is to turn public servants into economic managers working inside a permanent depression mentality' (Yeatman 1993: 4). The rise of this ideology re-shaped senior civil servants into 'bean counters', despite their traditional commitment to their policy portfolio and relevant client groups. Technical measures of performance (TQM, Balanced Scorecard) measured them against other department heads in the efficient, unquestioning achievement of pre-set agendas. This rise of a technocratic managerialist ethos among senior service appointments, eerily presaging important aspects of the current logic of EBP, has now been acknowledged by senior civil servants themselves, who often point to a culture of performativity, and politicisation among the senior echelons, often termed the Senior Executive Service (SES). Briefly, the increasing resort to performance pay, and short-term contracts tied to specific performance criteria, is eroding the independence of such senior civil servants, who under the traditional Westminster system were expected to give frank advice to Ministers, 'without fear or favour'. The introduction of short-term contracts tied to performance pay, and managerialism, since approximately the mid 1980s, tied senior civil servants more and more to the demands of the political cycle, compromising their independence, and subjecting them to their political 'masters' (Podger 2007). The erosion of their independence has been deepened by the development of special policy units and hire of political appointees, within the Minister's own department, separate from the SES.

The coalescence of these trends has undoubtedly distorted and constricted the policy process. Neither economism, nor politicization, nor managerialism encourage openness to diverse modes of knowledge and research. The rise of a technocratic ethos does, however, lend itself well to the EBP approach.

Testing the Evidence: NAPLAN and High-Stakes Testing Regimes

What has been argued thus far is that EBP is on weak ground epistemologically, while the re-shaping of the context within which policy is done makes it less accommodating of diverse forms of knowledge and evidence. Given this, what does

it tell us about how evidence is used, in the development of contemporary policy? The following sketch of the *Realpolitik* surrounding the introduction of high-stakes National Assessment Programme, Numeracy and Literacy (NAPLAN) regime nationwide in Australia reveals highly selective use of evidence of any kind; much less the specific RCT form licensed by EBP.

The rationale for introducing NAPLAN sprang from a concern that Australia's comparative ranking on international standardized tests of pupil performance, such as the Program for International Student Achievement (PISA) and (TIMMS) was eroding, particularly relative to several key, East Asian neighbours, notably Korea, Singapore, and most recently, China (NY Times 2010a)[2]. Faced with much the same results, Britain, France, Germany and the USA expressed very similar concerns; indeed Michael Gove, the UK's Minister for Education, promised to "explicitly borrow from these education tiger nations," (NY Times 2010a).

The international context is critical here, indeed the fact that the then federal Minister for Education in Australia, (and subsequent Prime Minister) Julia Gillard had been impressed enough with the purported results of a similar high-stakes testing regime in New York, proved a significant element in the push to introduce a similar regimen into Australia. Under NAPLAN, all pupils in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across the country were to sit a standardized achievement test, results of which were to be made public at the My School website (www.myschool.edu.au).

Having an enthusiastic, reform-minded Minister can be a good thing. Much can be accomplished, at times, even in the face of obstacles. This proved to be the case in this instance, even in the face of considerable evidence from overseas, and Australia, that the introduction of high-stakes, standardized tests into schools could distort the educational mission significantly. In one sense, this should have been no surprise, at least to anyone with a sense of history. The standardized tests which were imported into the various Australian colonies, stemmed from Britain's *Payment by Results* scheme, introduced in the 1860s. Introduced in part to stem middle class concerns about the rising costs of educating the working classes, its rationale was made clear by its proponent: 'If it is not cheap it shall be efficient; if it is not efficient it shall be cheap' (Maclure 1973: 79–80). The effects of this 'efficiency' were soon being reported by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs): teaching only what was to be tested, cramming rather than teaching, cheating by both teachers and pupils (sometimes in collaboration), arbitrary punishments of students who failed to do well on the tests. This was hardly a surprise, given that teacher remuneration was tied to test results. Overall, a greater instrumentalism, a narrowing of the curriculum, and a failure to engage with class or ethnic difference were major outcomes of the scheme.

Its introduction to Australia produced similar effects. Since teachers' prospects of promotion were now directly tied to their pupils' test results, a major effect of the scheme was to encourage 'rote learning and the use of mechanical modes of instruction' (Turney 1969: 230), while inspectors changed from mentors to assessors:

[2]PISA results released in late 2010 included China's participation for the first time. The Chinese sample was restricted to pupils from schools in Shanghai.

'The work of the inspector largely became one of mechanical examining and his reports became mainly based on statistical analysis of results' (Turney 1969: 231). Dominated by the 'Standards', teachers taught mechanically, and restricted content to what was to be tested. Understanding was much less important, and reports were common of pupils being able to reproduce an item of which they had little or no understanding: spelling 'pachyderm' correctly, for example, without realizing it was an elephant. In the colony of Victoria, the introduction of Payment by Results was summarized as leading to 'the encouragement [of] … memorization rather than reasoning, [of] formal, mechanical teaching methods, and … keeping the curriculum narrow' (Barcan 1980: 107; see also Rodwell 1992; Welch 2013: 198–202).

Faced with such strong evidence of the effects of introducing standardized tests into Australian schools, any sensible Minister would have paused. But if historical evidence were not enough, substantial contemporary evidence from both the UK and the USA was equally troubling (Troman 2008). In both, the introduction of standardized high stakes tests had led to perverse outcomes: reports of teachers and administrators cheating, in order to improve test scores (and in some cases their salaries); the mushrooming of commercial organisations whose 'business' was to boost test scores (but not necessarily pupil understanding); a narrowing of the curriculum to exclude everything not tested; reduced teacher autonomy, highly stressed teachers and pupils, and the reproduction of social class and ethnic differences (Au 2008; Nichols and Berliner 2007: 156–7; Yarker 2008; Watanabe 2007; David 2011; El Paso Times 2012; CNN 2013; Welch et al. 2013; Troman 2008; House of Representatives 2012).

No Child Left Behind, as the relevant legislation was termed in the USA, in fact left significant numbers behind, especially in areas of poverty and with high concentrations of new migrants, often of non-English speaking background. But the high-stakes testing regime penalized schools that could not demonstrate specified levels of annual improvement (in the case of specific local schemes in the USA, 5 % per annum). So, in just a single state, for example, a school principal faced with an improvement of 4.9 % (just under the threshold), locked herself in her office and shot herself in the head, while most recently 35 teachers and administrators, including the former Schools Superintendent who had gained national recognition in 2009 for apparently reversing poor results in Atlanta's school system, were indicted on charges of racketeering and corruption, that had been going on for a decade (Nichols and Berliner 2007: 156; CNN 2013; NPR 2013).

A much more evidence-based approach was manifested in the reversal of the eminent American historian of education, Diane Ravitch. Initially a fervent supporter of choice and testing, and a conservative who had, *inter alia*, spent time as Assistant Secretary and head of the federal Office of Educational Research and Improvement under the George H.W. Bush Administration, and had joined the Hoover Institution's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education, Ravitch was persuaded by the evidence that, as the sub-title to her book on the subject explained, 'testing and choice are undermining education' (Ravitch 2010a). Describing this as a 'wrenching transformation in my perspective on school reform', she referenced the great economist John Maynard Keynes' response to a similar challenge: "When

the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do, sir?" (Ravitch 2010a: 1–2). Without once referencing Callahan, she pointed to the "false analogies between business and education", and acknowledged that high-stakes testing had become "... not just a measure, but an end in itself" (Ravitch 2010b: 11–12, see also Ravitch 2010b, The Australian 2011). In this new era, school reform was characterized as accountability, high-stakes testing, data-driven decision making, choice, charter schools, privatization, deregulation, merit pay, and competition among schools. Whatever could not be measured did not count (Ravitch 2010a: 21).

Faced with this changed context, the response by educators was predictable. Just as teachers had done in the nineteenth century, as a response to the 'Standards' around which Payment by Results hinged, American teachers, principals and administrators responded in foreseeable ways to much the same regime in the late twentieth century, and early twenty-first:

> Knowing that their students would be tested and that the results would be used to evaluate which schools would be rewarded, educators began teaching to the tests, at the expense of sound curriculum. (NY Times 2010b)

Indeed, upon closer examination, many of the much-touted improvements to pupil performance, in key curriculum areas such as mathematics and reading, were explained by changes in testing procedures, and in any case, such gains largely dissipated by the time those students reached high school (Civic Committee 2009; NY Times 2010b). The Chicago-based study by the Civic Committee of its Commercial Club, for example, found that most pupils who passed the 8th grade test only did so because the level had been so weakened, and that they had "little chance to succeed in high school or to be ready for college" (Civic Committee 2009). Stripped of the pro-test rhetoric, and of attempts to mask actual performance by changes to assessment, the reality was brutal:

> Roughly half of CPS[3] students drop out before graduation or fail to graduate with their class. Of those who are left to take the PSAE[4] test in the second semester of 11th grade, over 70 % fail to meet State standards. The ACT[5] test results show the percentages of 11th graders who meet "college readiness" benchmarks (as established by ACT) in math and science are tiny: 16 % in math, and 9 % in science; and most of these are in Chicago's few "selective enrollment" high schools. When one looks at the non-selective enrollment high schools – those which serve the neighborhoods of Chicago – the percent- ages of 11th graders ready for college are even lower: 6.4 % in math, and 2.3 % in science. In many high schools, not one 11th grader is on track to succeed in a college-level math or science course. (Civic Committee 2009: 1)

Much the same was found in numerous other states. The combination of evidence, both historical and contemporary, was damning; no politician or policy maker could ignore the effects, or fail to heed the lessons.

Or could they? In the US, and the UK, each administration remains as committed as ever to the use of standardized tests, notwithstanding the evidence (OFQAL 2012;

[3]Chicago Public School.

[4]Prairie State Achievement Test.

[5]American College Test.

Telegraph 2012a, b; Thomas 2011). In Australia, exactly the same was true: notwithstanding substantial evidence of the perverse effects caused by the introduction of the standardized high-stakes NAPLAN test, the decision to push ahead was never in doubt. These perverse effects included the following:

- South Australia made students in Years 2, 4 and 6 sit 'NAPLAN style' tests.
- The Northern Territory published online NAPLAN practice tests
- Some private schools now demand individual NAPLAN results upon enrolment.
- Some parents move house to access high-demand state schools such as Balwyn High (Melbourne), Lindfield Public or Mosman High (Sydney), with high NAPLAN ratings
- A test support industry has mushroomed, including consultants who promise to lift a school's test rating, and books and online packages that promise to boost pupil performance (Comber 2012)
- Pupil, parent and teacher stress has risen
- Teacher professional autonomy is reduced. (Welch 2013: 203; Dulfer et al. 2012; The Conversation 2012a, b)

Conclusion: The Evidence for EBP

The evidence for EBP is lacking. Upon closer examination of the two pillars that support EBP, neither the epistemological, nor the policy process, have been found to support the edifice. The argument developed above showed that a much more open, comprehensive and reciprocal form of epistemology is more likely to produce results, than the narrow canon licensed by EBP. Based on a spurious objectivism, the attempted restriction to RCT is both unwarranted, and unhelpful. Secondly, even if warranted forms of evidence are produced, the realities of the policy process mean that it is only one element in a much more complex exercise; and by no means necessarily the most important.

Ultimately, this brings us back to the wider sets of changes and society alluded to above, and the role of the social sciences, including educational research (Geelan 2001). Ultimately, if those in control of which knowledge is legitimate are those who govern, and if current versions of legitimate evidence in educational policy hinge exclusively on EBP, "then perhaps educators should be thinking about challenging what they take for granted to make changes and improvements to the way education policy making occurs ..." (Wiseman 2010: 19). The alternative is that social science becomes complicit in a form of purportedly non-partisan and objective, but in reality technocratic, social engineering, as a model for policy making.

> the problem of partisanship only arises for those who maintain a philosophically uninformed and intellectually naive view of educational research as a purely technical and methodical activity that can and should remain uncontaminated by politics, values and ideology: a view which those who criticise the partisan nature of educational research never explicitly defend but to which they always implicitly subscribe. (Carr 2000: 439)

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Chapter 7
Neglecting the Evidence: Are We Expecting Too Much from Quality Teaching?

Margaret Vickers

Abstract Internationally, "quality teaching" and its close relatives "authentic pedagogy" and "productive pedagogy" have been enthusiastically embraced by policy-makers in education. In Australia "quality teaching" has emerged as a central strategy for boosting the nation's scholastic performance. This chapter argues that over the past six years State and Commonwealth education ministers have tended to focus quite selectively on research findings that speak to the positive outcomes associated with quality teaching, while neglecting the complexity of this field of research and the role that other factors (such as peer influences, parental involvement, or socio-geographical factors) may play. Drawing on findings from the author's current research into student engagement in low socio-economic areas the chapter argues that the phenomenon of 'residualisation' in particular, whereby disadvantage is concentrated in certain public schools as a result of 'school choice', has quite powerful effects on the engagement and achievement of low SES students. Such evidence has, it is argued, been tacitly excluded from governments' policy arguments.

Anthony Welch's chapter in this volume provides a compelling critique of the limitations of the strategy known as 'evidence-based' policy making. As he points out, many politicians and senior civil servants have fervently embraced the evidence-based approach, despite the contradictions and ambiguities this approach entails. In essence, advocates of this approach propose that research-based evidence should be the major if not the sole driver of key policy decisions. On the face of it, the evidence-based approach harks back to an era in which positivist science was considered capable of assembling useful facts about social issues leading to truths that could provide a reliable foundation for policy. As Welch explains, at this point in our intellectual history, claims that one can establish the truth of the matter in this way are now considered to be epistemologically suspect. What is worse, however, is that it in many cases the evidence-based solutions proposed by politicians rest on

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_7

a very selective application of the available research that is relevant to the policies under consideration. In particular, where there are research findings that might lead to solutions which are not politically expedient, it is all too easy for this evidence to be neglected or overlooked.

Arguments initially advanced in 2008 by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in relation to the role of teacher quality provide a clear example of this process. Quality teaching emerged as a central strategy for achieving the outcomes endorsed under the federally-negotiated National Education Agreement. These outcomes included improving overall levels of literacy and numeracy, ensuring that all children are engaged in and benefit from learning, and boosting our performance so that Australian students' might once again 'excel by international standards' and regain positions at the top of the PISA test scales (COAG 2012, p. 4). The State and Commonwealth education ministers who comprised COAG appeared to focus quite selectively on research findings that spoke to the positive outcomes associated with quality teaching, while neglecting complexity of this field of research and the role that other factors (such as peer influences, parental involvement, or socio-geographical factors) may play. Somewhat simplistically, COAG summarised the benefits expected to flow from the implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Teacher Quality as follows:

> Teacher quality is the single greatest in-school influence on student engagement and results. Improving and maintaining the quality of the teaching workforce will be fundamental to any overall improvements in Australian schooling. The reforms aim to sustain and improve teacher quality as a platform for improving student outcomes. (COAG 2008, p. 3)

Through COAG, State and Commonwealth education ministers were asked by the Labor government (2007–2013) to agree on common policies and related sets of outcomes which were to be implemented through National Partnership Agreements across all jurisdictions. There were six such agreements; each took the form of a financial contract between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories and each was tied to specific performance indicators (COAG 2012). Teacher quality featured strongly in these agreements as a goal in its own right, as well as a key strategy for achieving other key outcomes. For example, the National Partnership Agreement on Low Socio-economic Status School Communities was designed to support reform activities in low-SES schools. According to the COAG home page (coag.gov.au/schools_and_education, accessed 20/8/2012), incentives to attract high-performing principals and teachers were central to the proposed reforms. Tailored learning opportunities for students and flexible school arrangements were also endorsed in this communiqué, but as discussed later in this chapter, research that draws attention to topics such as student engagement and peer-group dynamics, the mean socio-economic status of the school community, or the influence of parents on student motivation was essentially absent from these policy documents.

The emphasis the National Agreements placed on improving teacher quality had widespread implications. Through the teacher quality agreement, jurisdictions were to gain incentive payments as they implemented the national accreditation scheme

for initial teacher education programs, and as they endorsed and implemented a nationally consistent teacher registration process. They were to gain additional payments as they achieved the target outcomes defined under these policies (COAG 2012). Education Ministers across the jurisdictions at the time endorsed the *National Professional Standards for Teachers.* Attempts were made to develop a National Partnership Agreement titled 'Rewards for Great Teachers' (COAG home page). This involved what was clearly a controversial process for identifying what COAG referred to as 'the best teachers in Australia'. The goal of this partnership was to provide additional remuneration for these teachers through a reward payment scheme (COAG home page).

The next section of this chapter provides a brief overview of recent literature that interrogates the difficulties involved in measuring teaching quality and identifying who quality teachers are. This literature also suggests that there are contextual factors that may limit the effectiveness of quality teachers, with the implication that high-quality teachers do not always achieve the same outstanding results from one year to the next.

How Effective Are Quality Teachers?

In 2009 John Hattie published a formidable book which reported the results of over 800 meta-analyses of research on factors influencing student achievement. In his introduction he explained that he was not attempting to explain 'what works', but rather that he aimed to "... provide high levels of explanation for the many influences on student achievement as well as to compare these influences in a meaningful way" (Hattie 2009, p. 4). His book provides a complex and nuanced account of the ways in which students contribute to or sabotage their own achievements, the effects that teachers have on student learning, the influence of different teaching strategies, and the influence of school principals and parents. While these all contribute substantially to student outcomes, Hattie found that teacher quality accounted for 30 % of the overall variance in student performance. He also reported that 50 % of the variance related to student-related factors, and although this is more substantial than the teacher effect, its implications have been neglected in current policy discussions. Rather, it is Hattie's findings in relation to teacher effects that are routinely used to justify teacher quality as a single-shot policy solution for improving student outcomes. The teacher quality mantra is evident in several of the foundational COAG documents and most recently in the NSW Education Minister's discussion paper which blandly summarised this complex field by stating that "Hattie ... conducted a synthesis of numerous studies ... and found that teacher quality was the greatest variable" (NSW 2012, p. 3).

While a focus on better teachers sounds deceptively simple, policies to improve teaching quality through bonus pay schemes are proving to be rather messy. Lawrence Ingvarson is well known for his contributions to research and policy

debates on teacher quality in Australia. In 2011, he expressed his concern that any system that attempts to link teacher pay to performance must be based on a well-developed approach to professional standards covering the full range of things good teachers know and do in their specialist area of teaching. Complex measures of teaching quality like this are difficult and expensive to implement. Consequently, there is a danger that the government's Reward Payments Scheme might simply fall back to what is easiest to measure, that is, value-added estimates of a teachers' work based on National Assessment of Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) scores. Ingvarson (2011) warned against this, pointing out that there are several sources of error which are almost unavoidable if the value-added approach is adopted.

Attempts to assess teacher quality through value-added estimates have already been employed in the United States and the research evidence emerging from this indicates that while there are some measurable teacher effects, these appear to be quite unstable over time. Koedel and Betts (2007) for example, found that just over one third of the teachers whose results were in the top one-fifth remained in the top one-fifth in the subsequent year. In another study, Kane and Staiger (2008) argued that teachers who appear to be exemplary may have been assigned by their principals to classes that include a greater proportion of highly engaged or better behaved students. To test the possibility that the outcomes attributed to teachers who had been classified as exemplary may have actually resulted from features of the classes to which they had been assigned, these researchers turned to a random-assignment experiment. In the Los Angeles school district, 88 schools participated in an experiment in which the best teachers were randomly assigned to classes in order to estimate teacher effects on student test scores. The results indicated that the value-adding effect that had been attributed to exemplary teachers faded by 50 % each year over the 2 years in which the study was conducted (Kane and Staiger 2008).

As already noted, Hattie (2003, 2009) found that students' attitudes and behaviours accounted for 50 % of the variance in student achievements. Thus, it seems that what students think and believe and do has a greater influence on their achievements than teacher practices, i.e., what teachers do to them and with them. Of course the two are not independent, as each student's valuation of his or her achievements and sense of belonging as affected by the interactions with his or her teachers (Eccles and Roeser 2011; Rosenfeld et al. 2000). However, Hattie's findings suggest that if students' attitudes and behaviours could be influenced by reformed institutional policies, this could contribute quite significantly to improvements in student outcomes. In this short chapter it is impossible to review all the possible ways in which public policy might be used to influence students' engagement with learning and their learning strategies. One example has been chosen here: the effects of peer affiliation. It is proposed as an element that might broaden the agenda and illustrate what might be done if an evidence-based approach was actually used to drive policy reforms, rather than being used selectively in a way that is subservient to other political agendas.

Peer Affiliations and Their Effects on Student Engagement

A number of recent studies have found that adolescents' social ties tend to link them to other students who hold similar academic values. High-achievers are likely to belong to academically supportive groups, while the least engaged are likely to reinforce each other's tendencies toward disengagement and dropping out of school (Kim et al. 2011). These dynamics have observable effects on student achievement and school completion rates. As Lamb et al. (2004) reported, other things being equal, in schools where the student intakes are predominantly from families of high socio-economic status (SES), retention rates to year 12 are substantially higher than in schools where the mean SES is low.

In a series of US studies, student peer affiliations were actually manipulated at the institutional level in order to ascertain what effects this might have on student motivation and engagement (Crosnoe et al. 2003; Frank et al. 2008). These researchers identified capable but poorly motivated students who were tracked into lower-level classes, and arranged for them to be transferred to higher-level classes. It was found that when these students were connected with engaged, high-performing peers, their academic engagement and achievements tended to increase substantially. Positive effects of group membership on student engagement have also been reported in relation to naturally-occurring peer groups. In a US study of a cohort of 340 sixth graders, Kindermann (2007) found that student peer groups were homogeneous in terms of their members' levels of engagement, and that even when members changed groups homogeneity remained fairly intact. A central question for Kindermann's study related to the nature of changes in engagement over time: which students show increases in their level of engagement during the school year, and which students show declining engagement? After controlling for factors that might contribute to changes in engagement such as teacher and parent involvement, gender, and achievement levels, it was found that students who were members of more engaged groups sustained their levels of engagement, while those who belonged to less engaged groups became less engaged over time. Interestingly, this result applied more strongly to some cases than others. Specifically, peer effects on engagement were stronger for children who were below the median level, and were quite substantial for students whose engagement scores changed by one standard deviation or more on the engagement scale.

Currently, the author of this paper is leading a research project designed to identify what might be involved in re-engaging students who, during Years 7, 8 and 9, had expressed themselves as being very negative about school. Known as the *Staying On* research project, it is being conducted in nine low-SES high schools across three regions of NSW. Surveys used in this research included several measures of student engagement that were completed by 1,966 students who were in Years 7, 8 and 9 during the first wave of the study. Since the goal of the project was to better understand students who are disengaging from school, students

whose responses during the first wave of the survey indicated that they planned on leaving before Year 12 were selected for interview. Of these students 115 were interviewed in wave 1 and the interviews were repeated each year until they left school. A substantial proportion of those in the oldest group left school at the end of Year 10, but most of those in the Year 7 and Year 8 cohorts were retained throughout the study. Overall, 57 students were interviewed consistently over 3 years. The surveys were repeated each year for 3 years with minor sample loss. Although analyses of these data are still at a preliminary stage, the results that are emerging suggest that approximately one-third of the least-engaged students do turn around over 3 years, and that affiliation with peers who care about doing well at school plays a critically important role in this process. Evidence leading to this conclusion is emerging from both statistical modelling and from the narratives over time extracted from the interview data.

Through both the US studies referred to above and the results emerging from the *Staying On* study it seems evident that a young person's engagement with school can be boosted by connecting him or her with others who are positively engaged. Yet this becomes ever more difficult to achieve in public schools that are residualised as a result of the substantial and continuing increase in the proportion of students who now attend non-Government schools. Residualisation is never mentioned as a 'problem' contributing to Australia's declining position on the PISA league table. This is an astonishing omission since the scale of the change in enrolment shares is substantial, especially in relation to the non-Catholic private sector. In 1970 this sector accounted for only 4 % of the overall enrolment share, but by 2010 the non-Catholic private sector was enrolling 14 % of all students (DEEWR 2011). In just the past decade the proportion of students attending either Catholic or non-Catholic Schools increased by 6 % and 14 % respectively, while the rate of growth in Government school enrolments was less than 2 % (ABS 2011).

Analyses conducted over a 25-year period using Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth data conducted by Rothman (2002) provide important data about trends in literacy and numeracy performance over time. Over the first two decades recorded in his study, from 1975 to 1995, Rothman found that performance gaps between children from professional families relative to those from labouring families declined. This suggests that between 1975 and 1995, the negative effects of attending a "disadvantaged" school were whittled away. In 1975, students in schools where most parents came from professional backgrounds had no particular advantage over average schools, while students in schools where most parents were production workers were at a relative disadvantage. However, in 1995, this situation was reversed: students in schools that drew a large proportion of their enrolments from the professional classes had started to gain higher scores on reading comprehension and mathematics tests than students in average schools. This effect was statistically significant for the first time in 1995 but became much more substantial between 1995 and 1998.

Current PISA results indicate that Australia's global ranking on these tests is declining (Thomson 2011). Current PISA results indicate that on average,

Australian students continue to perform reasonably well in comparison with those from other countries. However, within Australia the gap between our top students and our low achievers is unacceptably large and is growing. Furthermore, it appears that this gap is reducing our overall standing on PISA (Thomson 2011). Rothman's longitudinal research (discussed above) provides data that may explain why this performance gap has been increasing and why our position on the PISA league table is falling. As long as we fail to level up the tail, our overall standing cannot improve. Eliminating this 'long tail' of under-achievement will only be possible if Government schools are able to do better. Yet the changing enrolment share has substantially increased the extent to which educationally disadvantaged students are concentrated in Government schools. Watson and Ryan (2010) found that almost 60 % of the decline in Government school enrolments between 1975 and 2006 involved students in the top half of the socio-economic distribution moving into the non-Government sector. Many schools in regions of low SES have lost their most talented students to the newly created selective schools or to non-Government schools that have expanded their enrolments (Vinson et al. 2002; Ryan and Watson 2004). This can only exacerbate the difficulties schools in low SES areas face as they seek to build student engagement and raise student achievements (Vickers 2004).

Conclusion

As Welch's critique of evidence-based policy suggests, politicians are inclined to use research evidence in ways that fit with their broader political agendas. In so doing they simplify research findings, using them selectively to draw attention away from policy solutions they would find inexpedient. Hattie's (2003, 2009) research has been cited as the basis for numerous policy releases and discussion papers that focus public attention on quality teaching. However, these releases do not reveal the full story emerging from Hattie's work. It would appear that policy makers are neglecting the evidence Hattie produced in relation to students' attitudes, engagement, and behaviours; specifically, that student-related factors accounted for an even larger proportion of the variance in student achievements than did teacher-related factors. This chapter has argued that student engagement can be boosted by connecting less engaged students with more engaged peers. Public schools that have lost the majority of their most engaged students to the private sector are, therefore, in a difficult place. Yet despite the relevance of these findings, evidence about the likely effects of residualising public schools has been tacitly excluded from the Government's policy arguments. It would appear, then, that research evidence in the hands of politicians tends to be subservient to political processes. Attention is focused on targets such as teacher performance, which can be safely manipulated, but drawn away from policies that might provide equally effective but rather less expedient solutions.

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Chapter 8
Public Diversity; Private Disadvantage: Schooling and Ethnicity

Carol Reid

Abstract When the New South Wales (NSW) Government extended the compulsory schooling age from 15 to 17 years in 2010, there was little warning and no additional resources for schools. Scant consideration was given to the complex contexts that exist in the some of the most disadvantaged areas of Sydney and other centres around the state. This chapter reports on a project that sought to understand the impact of the change on ethnically diverse high schools in south-western Sydney. Findings suggest a particular policy disjuncture is having a profound impact on schools of high minority ethnic diversity, particularly in low socioeconomic contexts: any advantages gained by extending the years of schooling have been mitigated by other policies that encourage increasing public diversity. This is because the latter set of policies has exacerbated the private disadvantage of some ethnic groups in some schools, particularly those who are unwanted by other schools or whose parents are unable to exercise choice due to income, first language status, or minimal social capital.

The chapter draws on the voices of principals, teachers, parents and students from high schools in south-western Sydney to highlight the deeply counterproductive practices surrounding these issues. The concluding comments are concerned with the extent to which the 'ethnicity' of students, rather than the policy disjuncture this research has revealed, will be seen as the problem.

Introduction

There is strong support for increasing the years of compulsory schooling (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development 1983) despite some claims that it merely covers up youth unemployment. This is clearly an important issue in Australia where youth unemployment in June 2012 was 21.6 % (ABS 2012). Until 2010 students in NSW could choose to leave school at 15 years of age with or without any formal qualification from high school, and without work. The aim

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_8

of increasing the compulsory years of schooling was to provide new pathways, work experience and diverse curriculum experiences to set young people up for a productive life and for entry to the labour market. So in NSW students can no longer leave school without a qualification or a combination of work and further education and training, or a minimum of 25 h of assured work unless they are 17 years of age.

Arguments for increasing the years of compulsory schooling include better health outcomes, higher income and more equal distribution of incomes (Angrist and Krueger 1991; Brunello et al. 2009; Card 1999; Oreopoulos 2007). Completion of secondary schooling or further training is a priority for both the Australian Government (DEEWR 2009) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Ainley 1998; Ainley et al. 1997; Sweet 2000, p. 2). There is evidence that in first world countries the years of compulsory schooling are lengthening and are part of the process of globalisation achieved through various forms of policy borrowing. Lingard (2010) argues that these increasingly globalised approaches to education are inextricably entangled with neoliberal thought, and notes that features of Australian education policy, including standardised testing, national curriculum, and increased federal involvement in a sector traditionally managed by the states, demonstrate "a hybrid mix of the neo-liberal with social democratic aspirations" (p. 129) Staying on longer at school can be added to this list. This chapter takes the heretical view that it is wrong to prolong schooling by increasing the minimum compulsory school leaving age.

There are a number of heresies that accompany increasing the compulsory schooling age. Heresy Number One is that staying on longer is not necessarily better for students that, despite widespread public and political support for this initiative, the prospect of staying on longer, for many students, does not equate with better outcomes. As others have noted (Billett et al. 2010; Connell 2011), those who would most benefit from these changes are in schools where "the cost of providing high levels of support may fall most heavily on the school that needs to address disadvantage most strongly, as it may be available for other schools gratuitously through families' social and cultural capital" (Billett et al. 2010, p. 484). This is revealed in schools residualized by policies of school choice: they are not able to offer the wide range of subjects necessary to engage students who do not want to be there, nor can they provide the richness and diversity of experiences that the policy promises.

Heresy Number Two is that parent choice is not necessarily better. As Connell (2011, p. 59 and see this volume) has argued, parents have been recast as consumers and now find themselves having to read the 'market indicators' and make decisions about the kinds of options available for their children. Some do this quite well; some want nothing to do with it, while others just make a choice and hope for the best. Others have no 'real' choice at all. Research on school choice among middle class parents (Campbell et al. 2009) found that choice worked best for those with compliant or academically capable children. Money and social networks helped as well.

Choice intersects with the new compulsory schooling age and reveals the ways in which the private disadvantage of minority ethnic groups emerges through inequalities related to parents' cultural capital (educational background) and social capital (resources grounded in durable exchange-based networks of persons) and how these are related to economic capital (Bourdieu 1984). In turn, these fields of capitals – especially when they are relatively lacking with regard to schooling – play a key role in determining educational and employment futures for students.

Heresy Number Three is that more autonomy for school principals is not necessarily better. Where schools receive high levels of additional funding or resources and have not been residualized, principals can and do make changes. However, this autonomy is contingent upon harnessing all possible sources of additional funding ***and*** utilizing networks in the community. In a sense, this autonomy is not really autonomy at all, because without these additional resources principals would have their agency considerably constrained.

Heresy Number Four is that schools cannot always provide ladders of opportunity; the new compulsory schooling age in some instances simply reproduces intergenerational disadvantage. The problem here is that opportunities are scarce. In some communities the infrastructure required to take advantage of opportunities is absent. For example, transport is non-existent or minimal, severely curtailing student capacity to attend alternative education and training or work experience. In other situations the local technical colleges and training providers do not want students who do not have the Year 12 qualification or who do not have a level of maturity to deal with a more adult learning environment. Loss of funding in schools if students do go to these providers then becomes another problem, given competition for scarce resources. In other cases, work experience is not available beyond retail work and even then there is not enough to go around. The ideal of schools and communities and local organisations working together to provide this ladder of opportunity just is not always possible.

Heresy Number Five: class is not dead. The link between class and schooling outcomes continues to be debated but the research reported in this chapter reveals the continuation of the significant link between socio-economic circumstances and schooling outcomes. The discussion in this paper demonstrates the multiple ways in which class shapes schools, local communities, and student options.

Heresy Number Six is that education is not above politics. It is very clear that political decisions – about funding or where trade centres will be constructed; which schools will have selective streams and which will not; where specialist schools will be set up; which schools will be wound down through constructing competition in the next suburb, or rebranded to encourage migration across suburbs – all point to political decision-making that sits outside the radar of most students and their families. Yet these decisions fundamentally shape schooling outcomes and the school to work transition for many students in areas such as south-western Sydney.

While this chapter cannot take up all these themes in detail, it is important to raise them in the context because these are heresies that play out in complex and interactive ways in the school contexts in the study reported here. In many cases

they create multiple constraints that contribute to the production and reproduction of inequalities despite the fact that the agency of principals, teachers, parents and students fight to overcome these constraints.

The Study

The study discussed in this chapter, *a sociological analysis of ethnicity and compulsory schooling,* was funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Project grant. It was carried out in the south-western region of Sydney, New South Wales (NSW), where the age of compulsory education was increased from 15 to 17 years in 2010. In NSW, the Year 12 completion rate of 71.1 % remains below the national average of 75.3 % (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006) Sydney is Australia's most ethnically diverse city, and South West Sydney (SWS) has the most diverse school community. SWS has one of the lowest school retention rates, the lowest socio-economic status (SES) and high ethnic diversity. The aim of the study was to identify the pressures emerging from the policy to increase the school leaving age and to identify effective strategies that enable school retention strategies to 'work' in a socio-economically constrained environment and among ethnically diverse communities.

In the study ethnicity is used as a marker that everyone shares: it is not just attached to minorities. This approach makes possible a nuanced analysis of the relationship between ethnicity, education, privilege and inequalities. Alternatively hidden and/or reified, and at times socially deterministic in usage, ethnicity is a useful concept, even though it is potentially narrowing when examined independently of other social relations. For this reason, class and gender and their relationship to ethnicity and education are important to understand: these social relations are strongly implicated in the ways in which ethnicity is shaped and the way in which ethnicity becomes associated with particular patterns of inequality. Religion too complicates the way in which educational outcomes can be understood. Therefore, to avoid categoricalism (Connell 1987), that is, ethnicity as a 'self-contained' category, leaving social life being taken for granted, the analysis follows Miles (1993). In this approach, ethnicity and/or race are not there to be 'read off' the body but emerge in particular contexts. The salience of ethnicity is then connected to political, economic and social processes that are as important as the cultural in shaping educational outcomes, particularly in low socio-economic contexts.

Using Bourdieu's (eg. 1984) theoretical frame the analysis focussed on the extent to which institutional, social and cultural capital emerge as constraints in the negotiation of changed social conditions in the lives of students, their families, and the school communities. The themes emerged from a process that involved coding transcripts and writing up case studies focussed on the issues emerging in each school to enable a contextually bound narrative to emerge. NviVo was used to assist in the process of integrating the voices of participants.

In addition to school staff, students and parents across 21 high schools, a number of other key stakeholders were interviewed as the study progressed and as the issues

moved beyond the school gates. These included TAFE, welfare and social work agency personnel, case management service providers, and NSWDEC spell out and Board of Studies personnel. Some demographic data were gleaned from MySchool[1] and school-based websites.

While theoretical saturation appeared to have been reached with less than 21 schools from the point of view that no new information about the original questions was forthcoming, from a social justice perspective it is critical that interpretive accounts take into account cultural complexity (Charmaz 2005, pp. 527–528). For this reason the study continued to try to capture low SES, high LBOTE, single sex girls' schools. While many of the participating schools reported that single sex girls' schools 'had no problems' there are subtleties in the way in which the policy is playing out across all contexts. From a more postmodernist position, these silences were self-consciously revealed in the field (Brady 2005, p. 981) from personal saturation in contexts. So while there are strong themes presented here there are others that require further exploration and these are notably around gender. As one teacher asked:

> . . . but how is it, that in terms of the same family, the parents struggle to get the boys academically moving. How is it that the girls can go and do it?

Place is fundamental to the differences among and between schools in this study so the discussion related to ethnicity, gender, and class is based on data from four geographically dispersed high schools (two boy's high schools and two comprehensive co-educational high schools) At the time of writing, the single sex girls' schools' data are yet to be analysed. The schools are chosen because they represent a range of contexts including: (1) predominantly language backgrounds other than English; (2) predominantly Anglo-Australian and a minority of indigenous students; (3) traditional comprehensive working class – employed parents, demographically mixed; and (4) inner and outer suburban. The schools are not described fully as it is important to maintain anonymity but so as not to lose contextual specificity the schools are given pseudonyms and the descriptions given by principals and/or teachers are used.

Valley High School

Valley HS, a comprehensive co-educational school, is situated in a new suburban subdivision and draws students from older semi-rural communities. The school receives no additional funding from federal or state governments. The principal describes the school as having cross section of families in terms of education and financial resources. The school is also quite ethnically diverse although mainly second and third generation immigrants.

[1] http://www.myschool.edu.au/

An aspect of the new compulsory schooling age policy is that opportunities to combine workplace experience with continuing education for less academic students are critical. Valley HS seems to be able to accommodate these options.

> For our school here, we find, because of the demographics, that there's a lot of work available within the families – family businesses, that sort of thing; extended family, that type of thing; electricians, builders – all that type of thing. I don't have a sense that this is like a second prize or anything like that for the kids who do this.

The speaker here presents an apparent example of the 'ideal' school community: mixed demographically and socio-economically, and with access to opportunities. A perfect fit for the new compulsory schooling age policy perhaps? However, when talking with mothers the pressure to find work experience for their children requires not only networks but also information about what is out there and good deal of judgement about whether or not there is any future in particular directions. As one mother said:

> Unfortunately I wasn't coming to P&C meetings . . . I know that's a great forum to get a lot of information but it's probably – that's my fault, I'm not saying it's anyone else's problem – but then any information really wasn't filtering home.

Timely information is important, particularly when it comes to finding work experience and juggling in-school patterns with workplace rhythms. One said:

> By the time you think of it [workplace experience] the term's rolled over, another term's rolled over and then they've got exams and the opportunity's gone. Employers that you might approach, they can't take on a work experience person at a critical time. They would have maybe – when it's a bit of a down time for them – but you've all got to co-ordinate and that's really hard.

Working out the *kinds* of experiences that might lead to eventual careers is also hit and miss. This large group of mothers talked about how they self-educated by researching 'what's out there' but they fear the world is different, that jobs are changing and that their technologically dependent children are part of this shift. Another said:

> I was reading something recently that said most of the jobs in the future will, particularly in the next 10 years . . . they're not even invented yet. The top 10 jobs in say five or 10 years time haven't even been thought of yet and they're technological jobs, a lot of them.

There are good school-community relations and embedded networks of support here but parents are not finding choices involved in the new compulsory schooling age a simple matter. There is a wide curriculum aimed at supporting students in academic and non-academic streams. The school is well-equipped and has a vibrant community and in many ways reaps the benefits of successful second and third generation immigrant parents who are supportive and pro-active. Here, mothers are still largely at home to provide this kind of support yet find themselves repositioned as market negotiators and planners under the neo-liberal policy of choice (Connell 2011, pp. 52–53). This was clearly not their preference and as one mother said, commenting on her relationship to the school, "I give them the bones for them to put the meat on".

While parents at Valley HS support the school strongly and the new compulsory school leaving age, they do not necessarily find the degree to which they have to be involved easy. The above comment, from a second generation Italian mother (self-identified) was followed by a supportive comment to teachers as professionals 'who knew their job' to make the best decisions for her children because she did not feel able to make those choices.

Changing parent subjectivities in this community reveals how neo-liberal processes call for constant adaptations and reorientations. As Ball (2012) has argued, neoliberalism 'morphs and adapts, taking on local characteristics from the geographies of existing political economic circumstances and institutional frameworks' (p. 30) When comparing the concerns of this school community with others, it is possible to reveal the multiple ways in which neo-liberalism insinuates itself into communities and 'materialises' in new forms (ibid).

Green Ridge High School

Green Ridge HS, is a comprehensive co-educational school situated in a semi-rural area. It has a trade training centre attached to the school and a community with a strong history of employment in the trades. Demographically, it is predominantly Anglo-Saxon/Celtic (98 %) with a growing Indigenous student body and it does not receive any additional funding other than a small amount of subsidy for Indigenous students. The school is socio-economically mixed with some high income earners but increasing numbers of single-parent families and families on welfare due to urban migration.

A strong tradition and focus on the trades in the local area and little competition from private or selective schools has led to a large school population. This means the school can offer a diverse curriculum. The school provides school-based apprenticeships in Year 10 and the recent ending of the School Certificate in Year 10 means they can encourage even more students to take up these apprenticeships. Social capital is also critical, as Susanne indicates:

> In terms of aspiration, there seems to be what we call 'the networks'. So you've actually got the people that they can have apprenticeships with . . . because what happens out here – there's a lot of – . . . football. So that's where all the networks come from, all of those trades people are the people who either coach or their kids go and play football. That's where the networks start.

Clearly, this is a solid working class community where traditional trades are part its fabric. However, the community is undergoing change wrought by the impact of globalising processes. For example, the trade centre is attached to the school for political reasons: the shortage of skills required in the labour market. These are targeted areas – metals fabrication, engineering and hospitality: two of these with a long term history in the area. As a NSWDEC spokesperson said, trade centres are located in particular places because 'the program is dependent upon strong relationships between local industry and employers'.

Despite this advantage, the changing demographics wrought by urban migration are putting the school under strain. The rapidly increasing number of students means that not all young people are able to access opportunities. One Aboriginal mother (self-identified) says the autonomy required worries her:

> I worry about the work experience thing because you've got to find your own place to go now rather than, when I went to school, the schools liaised with all the businesses and got placements for everybody. But now having to do it yourself, I don't think he's going to be able to do it. We've got no idea where he could go.

One of the reasons for this difficulty is that the networks are so heavily masculinised. When asked about the football networks, given her son plays football, she said

> Especially with single parent families; they haven't got the male network there, you know . . . 'my mate could put him on or something like that'. We haven't got that.

Parental involvement in schooling relies on forms of cultural and social capital that are available to all, particularly minority groups. This is a community where social networks are well-established. They are built through the establishment of a trade training centre and a curriculum that targets labour market shortages as well as strengths of school staff. They provide school-based apprenticeship courses to avoid public transport problems. But there are very strong gendered dimensions to these strategies and hidden ethnic privilege that reproduces the largely Anglo male opportunities, while assigning girls to low-level retail work. In this context too, Indigenous students are becoming 'problems' as the population increases, despite having traditionally been consistently employed members of the community.

Eastern Central Boys High School

At Eastern CBHS the population is 97 % Language Backgrounds Other Than English (LBOTE) (most born in Australia) comprising Pacific Islander students, refugee students from North Africa, West Africa and Central Africa; Arabic speaking students from both the Middle East and Africa and smaller groups of Asian, Indian, Bangladeshi and Afghani students. The school receives a range of funds from federal and state sources; it is low SES and impacted by a range of alternative choices in the local area – public and private.

The school has restructured to focus on key areas of welfare, curriculum and professional development but there are a number of challenges for the staff, the students and parents. Students who are not going on to university are described by one teacher as '*non participants in their own education'*. Teachers are concerned about 'dodgy' practices by employers when students choose to work part time in the hope that they will gain an apprenticeship. Concerns over insurance if an injury occurs is a factor; so too is the potential for the boys to lose both ways – not enough time for school work and being dumped by employers once they are older. Staff also voiced concern about the ways in which the new compulsory schooling age

had resulted in parents' expectations becoming much higher with little likelihood of the result of success given the academic capacities of many students.

However, as a father points out, his son, who is in Year 11, also has higher expectations:

> Now I ask him, I say 'what are you going to do – I want to get you a new toolbox' . . . because he wants to get the marks and . . . let's say I ask if he wants to become, for example, a concreter like me . . . but he [wants to] become something higher than [a concreter] . . . that's what they're thinking of now. Back at Year 10 or Year 9, they're not thinking this.

The continuous need to improve the self to feel adequate is part of the performativity inherent in neo-liberal institutional practices (Ball 2012, p. 31). The students at this school had little understanding of the options available and the potential pathways. According to the teachers, a factor that contributes to this lack of understanding is communication issues with TAFE but also between TAFE and schools. Despite being in the same government department there is little in common in how they are organised. One teacher and said:

> TAFE people don't understand our type of environment. So they'll speak to them [parents and students] as if they're over on the North Shore but not over in Western Sydney . . .

Parents say they have to navigate TAFE for their sons. Language barriers also prevent enrolment in TAFE according to another teacher:

> Yeah, well you'd think it would be pretty cool if they had an interpreter over there, considering maybe 40 or 50 per cent of the people we send over there would speak Arabic.

In this community, the school has great difficulty in sourcing TAFE courses for students and work experience options are thin on the ground. However, the role of the school in providing the necessary cultural and social capital that is not available in families and social networks is paramount for parents. As one teacher said:

> . . . for many children here . . . they're probably far better educated than their parents so the parents don't consider themselves in a position where they can oversee what kind of work they need to do or whether they are up to the level that they need to be performing at.

The tensions at this school are palpable. Teachers, parents and students struggle to make sense of the changes and the options. Parents and students said they would like 'more practical stuff'. Limited resources as well as performance indicators connected to additional funding pressure staff. More students requiring subjects that are not academic in orientation means smaller classes for those that do want to take subjects that are relevant to university matriculation are not viable.

At Eastern Central BHS ethnicity emerges as a problem in the narratives of teachers as they explain the parental responses and their lack of social and cultural capital. This has the effect of concealing the policy disjuncture brought about by the contradictions of school choice, standardized test league tables and the new compulsory schooling age. Schools like ECBHS have multiple layers of disadvantage to work through and in these contexts a policy that extends the time young men have to be at school without any recognition of the limitations to such policies risks the association of capacity with ethnicity.

Station Boys HS

Station BHS, a low SES boy's school receives a combination of federal and state government funding support. Demographically the school is 94 % LBOTE with 85 % new arrivals. The school has been seriously residualized through policies of school choice with many local students choosing to go elsewhere at the end of primary schooling. Selective schools, single sex girls' schools, choice to go to schools outside of the area; all of these are some of the reasons for the marked residualization of this school. The impact on staff morale and the constraints on curriculum diversification are profound. The school ends up with students who are often at the lower levels of academic achievement and who have 'risk management' plans.

The staff grapple with ways to respond to the students at the school. There is a misunderstanding about VET courses; that these are somehow equated with the 'unqualified village plumber back home'. Convincing parents that these are the best options for their sons is not easy. As a teacher said:

> When you talk about different pathways, they have their unrealistic view that 'we don't want our kids to do life skills'.

For parents, the design of education with multiple pathways, flexibility of timetabling and variability of options creates confusion, raises issues of safety and duty of care. Different pathways also create confusion about the curriculum. A mother said:

> My son, first one, wants to go to the university. The study here is not good. I wanted to buy the teacher to help him. But he gives him different [work] between what he's studying with the private teacher and what he's studying here.

To keep their children in the market for future work is critical to many of these parents who do not work themselves. In discussing the possible alternatives, such as work experience or future work prospects using local networks a father said:

> You have to find somebody and then who's this somebody? You go to this place, no, this place, no, this place, no, so where are you going to go? You're going to end up in the park . . . so if the kids did something in the future they're going to end up in prison. But who created the problem in the beginning? Then the government will say oh it's the parents' fault. Come on!

One of the problems for parents is that the students are not enjoying staying on. Contributing to student disengagement is that Station BHS can't offer a very wide curriculum. They are too small in number due to the impact of school choice and religious-based gender segregation in schooling choice that they don't have enough students to form higher level classes or enough staff to offer the breadth of curriculum to support less academically inclined students.

Teachers say that it isn't just students who absent themselves but that some parents actively subvert the system. Despite a punitive system of fines for non-attendance and the requirement that 25 h work or work and training go hand in hand a male teacher said:

> See I've got about 10 students who are still on our rolls, in Year 11 alone, and they're not attending. They've shown up in our records that they're at school – and I've made several phone calls, at least four or five for those parents and they tell me they're at work. But they won't provide me with the paperwork.

At times it isn't possible to provide this paperwork. The jobs and/or apprenticeships may be with relatives who are not licensed. This didn't matter before but the new compulsory schooling age policy will not release students unless the employer is licensed and the student goes to TAFE. The 'black economy' of tilers, plumbers and electricians has virtually been wiped out. Others have sons working part time, which is not enough hours to exempt them from schooling under the new policy. Part time work can also lead to disengagement. As one teacher said:

> I've had conversations with some of the boys in year 11, last year particularly, who were working almost every night in bakeries and things like that and coming to school completely dazed. It wasn't until I had conversations with them about what's going on that this came out. I said, look, you have to stop that. You can't do school and work; you have to choose one or the other. You've chosen to be at school, or you have to be at school, that's where your focus has to be.

Station BHS is a clear example of the way in which competing policy agendas frame the lives of the most disadvantaged. The school does not have access to the networks that can make the new policy work as there are not enough opportunities available through the agencies they have access to given the high demand. The staffing levels required to provide the kinds of choices they would like to offer in the curriculum are not available. Many students have had their chance of work taken away from them because part time work doesn't count unless combined with a training option. Many of these young men are cut adrift, caught between home/school/work with no clear pathway. The private disadvantage of the ethnic minority groups at this school stands in stark contrast to the neo-liberal ideology of the market where public diversity is touted as the panacea for inequalities.

The 'X' Factor: Parents, Choice and Power

Right wing opinion piece writer Paul Sheehan recently commented that parents were the 'x' factor in student outcomes (Sheehan 2012). The shift from teachers to parents as the source of inequitable outcomes in education is not surprising other than how long this 'truism' has taken to surface in the debate surrounding class, ethnicity and schooling. Named as the 'elephant in the room' Sheehan lists all the 'Others' that make up the poor parents: Aboriginal, non-English-speaking and Pacific Islander- and he uses the voices of teachers to do it for him. However, this simplistic explanation about parent's interest in education is not matched by the evidence and just serves to conceal differences in what matters to them (Connell 2011, p. 62) and the options available to them.

The analysis of the complexities in implementing the new compulsory schooling age in NSW reveal that a policy disjuncture is occurring across schools in this

region of Sydney. In particular, the policy disjuncture – school choice alongside the potential for new pathways brought about by the new compulsory schooling age – shows that public high schools operate in very different contexts and can be residualized for several reasons. It is the impact of this disjuncture that reveals patterns of inequality, when, for example, low student numbers affect the range of subjects a school can offer, while inequalities in the level of social and cultural capital in the form of community networks restrict work experience options and work readiness programs for some ethnic groups. Political decisions too, play a role in deciding where trade schools will be located and where public schools will be set up that compete directly with other public schools for students.

The distributional outcomes of this policy are highlighted here because, as Ball (2006) suggests, placing the onus on parents to understand the education market and its reforms when they may be disadvantaged themselves through limited or different educational, cultural and linguistic capital, risks producing and reproducing social inequality. The challenges posed by the new school leaving age for many students, schools, families and communities in south-western Sydney furthermore, highlight a need for policies to directly address low levels of economic, social and cultural capital.

In response to the recent Gonski report (December, 2011) the Australian government affirmed its commitment to educational policies that supports school choice for a diverse range of schools, allowing 'parents to choose the school that is right for their child' (Garrett 2012). Parental choice is part of the neoliberal ideal whereby decisions are cast back onto families under the guise of empowering parents. This approach shifts the blame from government to individual families if something goes wrong; it gives space to commentators to attack parents who make the wrong decision; it ignores that Australian society and education is not a level playing field; and it makes any assertion about the bases for inequitable outcomes heresies.

Conclusion

In this study, the concern has been that minority ethnicity emerges as explanation for student outcomes rather than a policy disjuncture. Indeed, the idea of increased choices – selecting schools, new pathways in the compulsory schooling agenda, diversified curricula – are features of public diversity that can increase private disadvantage for ethnically diverse minority groups in low socio-economic contexts.

There are many other consequences of the new compulsory schooling age (Reid and Young 2012). This chapter has argued that compulsory schooling is not good for everyone because real choice is non-existent for those that need it most. The consequence for ethnic minority students and their families is the association of their failure with their cultural background or ethnicity rather than the policy disjuncture shaping their educational experiences and options. Parents also do not always want choices about pathways and curriculum because they believe teachers know best

and the labour market changes are difficult to read. Tapping into social networks for work experience requires certain kinds of capital and much of this is gendered. Some parents are financially dependent on their children doing part time work while others see little point in prolonging schooling when it does not offer any further chance of alternative pathways and is in fact blocking present opportunities. Institutional structures, such as those dividing TAFE and schooling, do not facilitate new pathways while the year 12 matriculation examination is now seen as the gold standard producing a range of unrealistic expectations and narrowing choice.

The other heresies raised in this chapter need final comment. Heresy Three, more autonomy is not better for all principals, is evident in the constraints on schools that go beyond extra funds to the cultural and social capital available in the local community and the impact of residualization within the school. Heresy Four, schools are not ladders of opportunity when there is no transport to get to work experience or further training, when there are no alternative curriculums, and when life at home is so bad that school is just an escape. Heresy Five, class is not dead: it is a social relationship that permeates not just economic aspects of family, school and community life, but also access to networks that provide opportunities. It impacts on whose voice is heard and it intersects with ethnicity in this study in particular with the most recent and most dispossessed arrivals. Finally, Heresy Six, education is not above politics. In this chapter it has been important to reveal this heresy by attending to differences in the 'contexts of practice and the distributional outcomes of policy' (Ball 2006, p. 43). Unless the causes of disadvantage are recognised and addressed, the inequitable opportunities for males from ethnic minority groups in particular have the potential to feed into wider discourses pathologizing their outcomes, particularly in terms of education and pathways to work and future employment.

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Chapter 9
Building New Social Movements: The Politics of Responsibility and Accountability in School-Community Relationships

Kelly Freebody

Abstract This chapter provides both a response to Reid's chapter "Public diversity; private disadvantage: schooling and ethnicity" and an extension of the discussion to explore the relationship between schools and the communities they serve. Particularly focused on schools in low socio-economic contexts, the chapter will reflect on issues of diversity and disadvantage by drawing on data from a research project investigating the importance of teachers researching their communities. Drawing on this data and the heretical discussions presented by Reid, this chapter will challenge generally accepted notions of parental involvement in schools, schools' understandings of, and attitudes towards the communities they serve, and the extent to which policies and movements, such as school choice, shape current school-community relationships.

This response to Reid's chapter *Public diversity; private disadvantage: schooling and ethnicity* has three aims. First and foremost, it provides a reaction to Reid's thought-provoking argument regarding a policy disjuncture in Australian schools. This policy disjuncture, argued by Reid, is brought about by the contradictions of an increased compulsory school age and neoliberal discourses of school 'choice', resulting in patterns of inequality and restricted options for those without access to governing social and cultural capital. Although much of Reid's discussion was focused on the school leaving age and its effects on schools in disadvantaged communities, I explore the ways in which this policy disjuncture affects the work of schools and teachers more generally, and the ways in which Reid's discussions align with recent work in school-community relationships (e.g., Freebody et al. 2011a). Second, this response presents a discussion regarding the position of education, and schools more specifically, in wider social movements that place local citizens and their needs at the centre of change. To do this, I draw on the heretical propositions Reid presented in her chapter and on the work of critical educational theorist

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_9

Jean Anyon (2005). The overall purpose is to present a productive and positive way of viewing the relationship between schools, disadvantaged communities, and politics. Finally, in this response I present my own personal 'heresy' to challenge the education community. A heresy that invites us, as a community of educators (teachers, teacher trainers and school leaders, and others) to explore our own, sometimes uncomfortable, relationships with the systems in which we work.

Reid draws on the current government policies in Australia that increase the compulsory schooling age to illustrate a disjuncture between the needs of schools, communities, teachers and students and the current education policies and politics of school choice, principal autonomy, and funding. Her six heresies include:

1. that longer schooling is not necessarily better;
2. that more choice for parents is not necessarily better;
3. that greater school autonomy is not necessarily better;
4. that schools do not always provide ladders of opportunity;
5. that class is not dead; and
6. that education is not above politics.

These heretical statements have important implications for school-community relationships, responsibility, accountability, and the uncomfortable relationships between educa*tors* and educa*tion*.

Once such issue is that of education and the market place – Reid's second heresy that "parent choice is not necessarily better" draws on the work of Ball (2006), discussing his proposition that "placing the onus on parents to understand the education market and its reforms when they may be disadvantaged themselves through limited or different educational, cultural and linguistic capital, risks producing and reproducing social inequality". This points directly to a mechanism by which, when it comes to social inequality, schools have the potential to be part of the problem rather than the solution.

For those of us who came to understand education and its relationship to society through the work of Australian sociologist Connell and colleagues over the past three decades, the growing divide between the educated 'haves and have nots' is not new, not surprising, and disturbingly, not accidental. I remember reading the seminal text *Making the Difference* as an idealistic undergraduate teacher and being shocked by the authors' perception of the Australian education system:

> The simplest, and not the silliest, answer to the question 'why educational inequality?' is that the schools are designed to produce it. They are set up to 'sort and sift', to give elite training to the children of the rich, to prepare others for the assembly line, and to legitimate the results. That is why we have a testing programme, selective promotion of upper levels of education, privileged private schools, and so on. (Connell et al. 1982, p. 189)

Unfortunately, as someone who has worked in school and university education for over a decade, this sentiment no longer shocks me. Instead, I wonder if writing this today, the authors would have added individualisation, hyper-credentialising (Demerath et al. 2010) school choice (Campbell et al. 2009), and now an increase in compulsory schooling (Reid, this volume) to that list. Since writing these words, much of Connell and her colleagues' work has discussed the increasing class divide

in education and our normalisation of advantage in policy and general educational discourse (Connell et al. 1992). These ideas feed into what Reid referred to in her chapter as a policy disjuncture, "political decision-making that sits outside the radar of most students and their families". This disjuncture is around not just the practical issues of the school leaving age or school choice, but the more pervasive, entrenched issues of schooling, ethnicity, social class and social justice.

Although this disjuncture is at the centre of both Reid's chapter and my response, the intention of this discussion is to be positive and productive. Within teacher education, particularly as it relates to social justice and schooling, there is often a focus on what has gone wrong, rather than how it can be made right. This is potentially because the problems are too complex to find an easy, teachable, programmable, assessable solution. Or perhaps the term 'solution' is too closely tied in our minds to politics and policies. In Australian education it certainly seems to be getting harder to separate those two things. Therefore, rather than a 'solution', in this response I wish to present and idea; what Anyon (2005) refers to as a "radical possibility".

New Social Movements – Community and School Movement Building

Concern over the ability of schools to provide students with opportunities in communities where opportunities are scarce and the "infrastructure required to take advantage of opportunities is absent" comprises Reid's fourth Heresy. This concern acknowledges that 'educational opportunities' do not exist in a vacuum. Employment, transport, housing, entertainment, education, and other services are vital for communities to thrive. 'New social movements' (Anyon 2005) refer to community movement building that places school-community relationships as central change-makers. These movements acknowledge that schools and teachers often have access to a broad cross section of the community – children, parents, business, local community, local government and services, and so on. Teachers also have the ability to talk to and about both the local community and the broader bureaucracy. Within these movements there is a focus on improving communities, with schools and communities becoming advocates for each other, and together working towards more inclusive educational opportunities for young people.

This model of school-community engagement acknowledges that often factors limiting and distorting the relationships between schools and communities emanate from sources outside of both the school and the community. So, along with enhancing the educational experience of students, schools and communities that advocate for one another have the opportunity to reveal and challenge the external practices and policies that intensify disadvantage and exclusion. It is through the notion of relationship-as-alliance (Anyon 2005) that both schools and communities can move against forces that act against their interests.

Recent research exploring school-community relationships (Freebody et al. 2011a) found that for these new social movements to take place, educators need to become researchers of their communities; to explore and understand the political and cultural resources that can be called upon to help address the school's and community's problems, and to acknowledge that communities are not homogeneous or stable (Freebody et al. 2011b). Schools participating in the research found that researching their communities led to greater understanding of the needs of their students and their families, as well as a recognition that "community is broader than just parents, students and teachers: local businesses, places of worship, sporting clubs are all part of the wider concept of community" (Freebody et al. 2011a, p. 45). This broader view of community engagement is central to these new social movements, within which educational policies need to move beyond the school and educational bureaucracy and "must join the world of communities, families, and students; it must advocate for them and emerge from their urgent realities" (Anyon 2005, p. 199).

The idea of community building through school-community relationships may not seem like a heresy at all. In fact, many people working in education would probably agree with this sentiment. However, its enactments would challenge many ingrained perspectives and practices regarding school-community relationships in the current education system. As Reid pointed out in her sixth heresy – "education is not above politics"–notions of community building and reciprocal relationships between schools and communities do not always align with political decisions and popular public perceptions of education. Specifically, the idea of new social movements challenge:

- The way educators currently view who is serving whom in school-community relationships;
- How educators 'manage' these relationships;
- Who is responsible and accountable for this 'management'.

Who Is Serving Whom in School-Community Relationships

Discussions about school community relationships commonly position the community as servicing the school; for example as providing services which teachers can use, "allowing" parents to help, and so on. Central to Reid's 'Heresy no 2', however, is contemporary education policy discourses around parents and their 'freedom' to choose their child's school. One might think that this would drastically change current discourses around school-community relationships, however it actually appears to provide only a slight shift, and only for some people. Ball (2010) and others have shown that schools in the educational 'marketplace' promote their ability to serve *individual* students, rather than emphasising broader community obligations In any case, as Reid points out, this marketplace is small, with many families not in a position to make a meaningful choice. Those who *are* in a position

to choose, however, are potentially seen as more valuable to schools in terms of their forms of capital, and their ability to attract, in turn more of the 'right' kind of students. Thus we once again find ourselves focusing on ways community and families can be of service to (some) schools.

How We 'Manage' the Relationship, and Who Is Responsible

Questions about management and responsibility in school-community relationships become increasingly important as policy reforms in Australia and around the world focus more directly on the need for schools to develop strong links with local communities and for curriculum to be responsive to local knowledge and cultural practices. The introduction of policy that directs the ways schools interact with local communities leads to the question of responsibility. As they enact these policies, should schools orient to their responsibility to the school itself, to the local community, to the 'social movement', the students, or the parents? Or, does the 'mandated' nature of such policies require schools to acknowledge their responsibility to governments and funding bodies, both to demonstrate compliance and to justify their funding?

When policy becomes involved, and it becomes policy to engage with the community in a particular, regulated way, then a particular set of reasons for, and ways of, enacting such involvement arises. Regulation also calls into question educators' ability to advocate for a community in the way Anyon (2005) envisioned. When funding is determined by a schools' ability to meet large policy objectives, schools are necessarily placed in a difficult position if these generic policy initiatives do not adequately serve the needs of the local community, or if it unclear how they might meet these needs.

Who Is Responsible for Managing the Relationship?

This line of inquiry can be broadened to ask who is responsible for social disadvantage and its effects on schooling more broadly? In her chapter, Reid discusses the newspaper columnist Sheehan's (2012) assertion, and the public perception it reflects, that there is a "shift from teachers to parents as the source of inequitable outcomes in education", and how often this re-allocation has taken to surfacing in the debate surrounding class, ethnicity and schooling. This perception has implications for public understandings of responsibility and accountability in schools. The placing of responsibility on parents can be seen in public discourse, often clothed as a 'right' or a gesture of 'respect' for parents' choices (e.g., Garrett 2011). However it is arguable that the responsibility placed on parents does not actually shift accountability away from teachers, but rather serves mainly to deflect attention away from policy strategies that may leave inequitable outcomes in place,

or indeed intensify them. There is an increasingly powerful discourse that it is the quality of individual teachers' work that has the greatest influence on student outcomes. This discourse calls on a particular form of evidence to counteract any potential debate, and is expressed in words that rely on particularly careful interpretations. For example Australia's 'Smarter Schools National Partnership' policies (DEEWR n.d.) regarding teacher quality claim that 'quality' teaching has the ability to overcome disadvantage, and draw on educational psychologist Hattie's work to insist that "Teacher quality is the single greatest in-school influence on student engagement and outcomes" (Hattie 2003, cited in NSW National Partnerships n.d.). Research into schooling and social justice has consistently established that the greatest influence on student outcomes is socio-economic disadvantage, (Connell 1993; Lamb and Teese 2005; Masters and Forster 1997). The inclusion of the wording 'in-school' in the government's reasoning for the focus on teacher quality in recent policy statements (e.g., DEEWR n.d.) requires that the reader take it that social disadvantage, including class, ethnicity, and home language, are variables that are not relevant to the 'in-school' setting, a notion that might leave many teachers, at best, perplexed.

A recent analysis of the Australian federal National Partnerships policy and state Priority Schools Programs policies regarding education funding for social disadvantage (Krumin-Strauss 2011) found that the reports enshrined three 'solutions' to the problem of social disadvantage: teacher quality; transparency and accountability in school planning; and partnerships with parents and communities. There are two reasons this list is relevant to the current discussion. First, these solutions do not necessarily correspond rationally or obviously to how the two policy documents defined disadvantage. The issue of disadvantage was defined through understandings of access to community resources, cultural and linguistic difference, and wealth. Second, according to policy analyst Bacchi (2009), the ways in which solutions are presented in policy strongly presuppose a particular version of the 'key problem'. This placement of responsibility onto teachers and principals to solve problems of educational inequities indicates that the problem in disadvantaged schools is the lack of quality teachers and high performing principals (Krumin-Strauss 2011). This discourse was explicit in recent interviews with the current Australian Prime Minister discussing a national education review (Gonski 2011). Although most of the review focused on school funding, the Prime Minister's media responses were focused on the necessity for new measures to improve the quality of school teachers (e.g., Cullen 2012).

For some readers a discussion about how social movements (Anyon 2005) might have the ability to call into question our current views regarding school-community relationships may not seem heretical. My intention, however, is to expand on elements of Reid's heretical discussions around policies, politics, choice and opportunity, and to challenge contemporary 'ways of knowing' and managing education practice. Finally, I present one further 'heresy' about how effectively we as a community of educators manage the space between what we believe about schools and schooling, and how we act as educators. Put more bluntly, I assert

that sometimes our community does not effectively manage the space between our beliefs about what we do, and what we are actually able to do, in our professional practice. The heresy here is that we function, very effectively, within a system that does not necessarily align with our beliefs. Or, probably more fairly but also more damagingly, we function within a system that often uses our beliefs about what we do to manage politically popular but not necessarily educationally sound outcomes.

This is by no means a groundbreaking claim. Educators have often struggled with the differences between the good of the system and the good of the student (Illich 1971; Connell et al. 1982), As Anyon stated, "Governments and Corporate elites depend on education to deflect the pain inflicted by the economy" (2005, p. 199). Teachers potentially need to ask ourselves to what extent we participate in this deflection – to ask why we do it before we ask how well we do it. It is a difficult question for many, particularly when helping the young people in our classrooms requires a bit of deflection.

In the education community in Australia there is a popular divisive discourse: 'Us' the educators (teachers, teacher trainers, school leaders, etc.) – here because we believe in the importance of what we do, the value of education for a more socially just world, and 'Them' the system – the political, bureaucratic machinery through which the environments in which we work are controlled. It is obviously much more complex, and that very complexity enhances the durability of the oppositionality, so it is important to remain thoughtful, and perhaps a bit uncomfortable, about the place of that work and its inherent contradictions in a highly politicised and tightly bound education 'system'. Rather than make us depressed, this thoughtfulness must lead to a deeper attention to our work as advocates and change agents, and perhaps a renewed zest for the subversive possibilities of 'a good education'.

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Chapter 10
Does the New Doxa of Integrationism Make Multicultural Education a Contemporary Heresy?

Georgina Tsolidis

Abstract Contemporary understandings of integrationism as the bulwark of social cohesion have been particularly influential, including in Europe. This has both reflected and promulgated a backlash against multiculturalism, which has come to represent a threat subsequent to the events of September 11th, 2001. Cultural difference is taken to be dangerous and multiculturalism with its strong association with such difference is understood to challenge social cohesion. There is a certain irony in this, given the common academic depictions of multiculturalism as conservative. Thus integrationism has become the new doxa, while multiculturalism is decried by conservatives and reformists alike. Multiculturalism, even a liberal rendition, has become a heresy and in this context it behooves us to revisit what is involved. By doing so we can perhaps reflect on the current state of affairs and consider the place of cultural difference in how Australianness is constituted in public discourses, including those related to education policy and curriculum.

Introduction

In 2005, there was a series of clashes near the beaches of Cronulla in Sydney, involving young people identified in the media as either 'Australian' or of 'Middle Eastern appearance'. The then Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, Peter Costello, made a series of public statements linking the riots to immigration and the suitability of some minorities to settle in Australia. He argued that 'confused, mushy, misguided multiculturalism' was to blame for a soft approach that enabled 'second-generation immigrants' to develop values that were not compatible with those accepted in Australia. He argued that immigrants and their children needed to adopt Australian values or be repatriated (Gordon and Topsfield 2006). In 2010, German Chancellor Angela Merkel pronounced multiculturalism a failure and stated that the onus was on minorities to integrate into their 'host' societies (Weaver 2010). In 2011, David

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_10

Cameron in his first speech as British Prime Minister, criticised state-sponsored multiculturalism (News.com 2011). Former French President Nicholas Sarkozy made similar comments in a public debate, quoted as stating:

> If you come to France, you accept to melt into a single community, which is the national community, and if you do not want to accept that, you cannot be welcome in France. (Daily Mail 2011)

Cameron coupled his attack on multiculturalism with reference to extremist Muslims. In Germany, some on the political right had argued that such groups lowered the collective national intelligence (Weaver 2010). In Australia, those on the extreme right supported participation in the Cronulla riots as a form of defense against immigrant groups who, they argued, threatened an Australian way of life by attacking 'our women' and drug related gang violence (Fightdemback 2005).

These statements by Costello, Merkel, Sarkozy and Cameron illustrate several pertinent issues. Firstly, that some minorities are depicted as a threat to a preferred way of life associated with the mainstream. Over recent years this threat has been linked to Muslim groups in particular through 'culture clash' and 'war on terror' discourses. This is an association with real consequences for people (Allen and Nielsen 2002). Secondly, the comments illustrate that minorities continue to be constructed as not belonging, regardless of their place of birth or length of residency in the country of settlement. This is most obvious in the way Costello marks some groups as 'second-generation' and as 'immigrants' simultaneously, stating clearly that even if you are born in a country you remain vulnerable to repatriation. Similarly, Merkel and Cameron are referring to communities with well-established histories in the UK and Germany. Thirdly, these comments position multiculturalism as a threat to social cohesion rather than a policy that builds unity. And fourthly, multiculturalism is juxtaposed to integration, which is advocated as a preferred policy.

Australian multiculturalism is strongly associated with the Whitlam Labor Government that came to power in 1972 and ushered in a reform agenda that had been heralded by a range of social movements, including those advocating ethnic rights. Multiculturalism was consolidated by the Fraser Liberal Government in the early 1980s and continued to receive bipartisan support until the election in 1995 of the Howard Liberal Government. From that point, there was a marked shift away from multiculturalism, illustrated by the comments referred to above of Costello, Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer within the Howard Government. Up until then, while there was debate about multiculturalism, this occurred under a broad banner of common understandings of it as worthwhile and important to how Australia defined itself as a nation: that is, as a country that was successful at being culturally diverse. A succession of Liberal and Labor Governments provided different emphases and it was through funding priorities and practice that variations in the way multiculturalism was understood became most obvious.

This chapter provides a qualified defence of multiculturalism. Terms such as multiculturalism and integrationism are not absolute; instead these terms are relative, their meaning and their value shifting in response to time, place and

context. Multiculturalism and integration represent different policy emphases. This difference has arguably been obfuscated because the current discourses of xenophobia juxtapose integration and expulsion. In this binary, it is integration that appears progressive. However, historically, integration has been understood as conservative relative to multiculturalism – one step removed from explicitly assimilationist policy. In that context, the debates were about whether multicultural policy held any real radical potential. In the current climate when the debates are about whether or not to admit 'queue jumping' asylum seekers and the potential threat of cultural difference, mounting a defence of multiculturalism, given its possible symbolic worth, may be necessary and useful strategically. In part this is because, whilst not perfect, particularly in its most conservative incarnations when it was linked to notions of tolerance and forbearance (Hage 2003), multiculturalism provided a discursive space within which cultural difference could be acknowledged positively. In its less conservative guises multiculturalism provided some rich opportunities to work creatively around related issues, including through schooling. By contrast, integration problematises difference and in so doing feeds off and consolidates xenophobic tendencies. In short, multiculturalism is a contested term that provides room to move in positive directions. Integration on the other hand, creates difference as a problem and seeks to solve it through its advocacy of sameness.

In this chapter, debates about the merit of multiculturalism relative to other settlement policies will be explored with reference to education, which through the work of the Schools Commission, was a critical plank of the Australian Government's reformist agenda of the 1970s. The Schools Commission advocated reform around issues of gender, ethnicity and most notably class. The table was turned so that students who did not succeed were not blamed, but instead the system was invited to consider how it disadvantaged such students. Contemporary discourses of integration and their manifestation through education are a reversion to the framework that the Schools Commission challenged. Once more the onus is on minorities to become Australian in order to succeed, in a climate where Australianness is being reinscribed in increasingly narrow ways. This follows similar trends in other countries where there has been a backlash against multiculturalism. There is a need for schooling to address cultural difference in positive ways rather than hope that minority students' needs will somehow evaporate through a policy shift towards integrationism.

The Place of Cultural Difference in Australian Schools

School-based research conducted in the 1980s, 1990s and in early 2000s (Tsolidis 1986, 2001, 2006; Tsolidis and Pollard 2009, 2010) illustrates that over these decades cultural difference has been lived by students and understood by teachers in similar ways. Students, regardless of their birthplace and parentage, have continued to be defined by their appearance and their names, which in turn has precipitated assumed understandings of who they are, the values upheld by their families

and communities and their educational aspirations and potential. Additionally, the way students have been understood may not have been responsive to how they represented themselves.

A young man who attended a secondary school in Brisbane, interviewed in the 1990s commented: 'I feel like a marked man, when they [teachers] see the name, they will only give an average mark' (Tsolidis 2001: 94). He and his parents were born in Australia but according to him and his peers, they were marked by their Greek surnames. A minority within their school, they stated that their teachers dismissed them as being 'too much trouble', including because they asked for too much help with their homework.

Turkish girls interviewed in Melbourne in the 1980s and 1990s described how they were perceived within their schools. The girls interviewed in the 1980s did not wear head-scarves and attended a single-sex school with a reputation for being progressive. They had set up a club called 'The Young Turks' in response to what they claimed was the alienation they experienced. The Turkish girls interviewed in the 1990s attended a co-educational school that had a strong engagement with the local Turkish community. The uniform had been altered to accommodate those who wished to conform to Muslim dress codes. In both schools, Turkish girls described how teachers underestimated their aspirations and their capabilities. In the co-educational school, the girls stated that there were teachers who referred to them as 'nappy heads' and 'dumb' (Tsolidis 2001: 93). A teacher at the first of these two schools stated:

> Turkish girls are the worst off because of Islam, peasant backgrounds and because they are newly-arrived. Other girls are not as restricted because they are more assimilated. (Tsolidis 1986: 80)

Another teacher at the same school commented:

> Daughters are seen as potential doctors by parents. They need to be told their kids aren't good enough without insulting them (*ibid*).

At a different Melbourne single-sex girls school a group of Vietnamese girls commented that the school did not respect them or their families and this was illustrated by the inadequate amount of information the school provided their parents. Two girls stated respectively:

> My parents don't really know about the school. They have approached the school and the staff have been very impolite. There have not been enough letters. The teachers are racist. (Tsolidis 2001: 91)
>
> Some of the teachers are not friendly to everyone, some teachers treat Australians better. . . . The teachers should be more understanding. Teachers don't always help us when we have problems. Some of them are racist (*ibid*).

Schooling remains a powerful element in young peoples' identification. This is not to say that identity is only attributed. Young people are seen in particular ways, within parameters given and taken, they create and perform complex and often playful identities. This is evident in the following comment made by a Year 9 boy who attended a co-educational school in Melbourne:

> The wogs are generally kind of gangster types, that's the way I see it. And I don't know too much about them so I can't say too much. The thing that surprised me about them is that they don't have to be European. Most of the time you think of wogs as Greeks or Italians but the group of wogs in my year level though mostly Greek and Italian like most wogs, it has a presence of other very different ethnicities, for example Chinese, there's one guy I know from Iran I think. (Tsolidis 2006)

Describing the same group of students another boy in Year 12 at the same school commented:

> Also it's a comfort thing, like minorities will often sit together because of shared experience – it's another group – and with that comes certain mindsets or you know things like – cultural idiosyncrasies that lead them towards certain things like a lot of minorities often turn to the R&B hip hop group, because it expresses what they kind of – the message of solidarity and the minority holding out against this larger force (*ibid*).

Terms like 'wog' have taken on new meaning (Tsolidis and Pollard 2009). Initially used to deride migrants it is now associated with a music style itself associated with African-Americans. Yet it remains about a 'minority holding out against this larger force'. In schools that work creatively with cultural difference, students can be confident experimenting with their identification. In a climate where racism is not prevalent, students can project personas of their own choosing regardless of how they look or their heritage (Tsolidis and Pollard 2010). These may or may not build on who they are imagined to be. Within schools that are hostile, their identification can be strident, consolidating rather than breaking down narrow renditions of what it means to be 'Asian' or a 'wog'. In other words, the need to 'hold out against this larger force' will depend on how hostile or racist this force is.

This young man's comment about defence against something bigger strikes at the heart of debates about cultural difference. These debates have commonly been about how social cohesion is maintained in a culturally diverse society and whether in order to do so, minorities are required to camouflage what it is about them that makes the majority feel uncomfortable or threatened. This is not about stifling change or implying that diasporic identities remain impervious to cultural fluidity. Instead it's about racism and unequal power relations that trigger uneven imperatives for these flows to move in particular directions.

Assimilation – Integration – Multiculturalism

Australia adopted multiculturalism as a policy in the 1970s. Subsequent debate has been as much about what it is, as it has been about how it should be implemented. For some, like Costello quoted above, it is 'mushy and misguided' because it does not enforce battle-lines between 'us' and 'them'. For others it is 'mushy' because it does not take a strong enough stand on structural inequality and instead resorts to a celebration of cultural fripperies such as dance and food (Jakubowicz and Castles 1986; Jakubowicz 2002; Jayasuriya 2008). As a consequence it can be difficult to discern what is being supported and what is being condemned when multiculturalism is being debated.

Australia experienced rapid demographic changes subsequent to World War II due to its aggressive immigration policies. The so-called White Australia Policy and the establishment through it, of a hierarchy of preferred migrants, have been widely canvassed, including more recently through the mass media (de Lepervanche and Bottomley 1988; Castles et al. 1988; Tsolidis 2001; SBS 2011). The further away from an idealised British type the less desirable migrants became. Contrasted to the British and refugees from the Baltic states, those from Mediterranean countries (primarily Italy, Greece and the former Yugoslavia) were the least desirable. Alongside immigration policies, settlement policies were developed to manage the cultural diversity that was seen as challenging the complacency surrounding Australia's status as a British bastion in the Asia-Pacific region. 'Australian' was firmly constituted as white, Christian and British and immigrants who were less so, needed to assimilate in order to distract from their perceived threat to the Australian way of life. In the following decades there was increasing concern about the possibility that so-called migrant ghettos were developing in working class areas where migrants settled. Migrants settled close to industry where work and cheap housing was available and chain migration exacerbated the sense that some areas were becoming Italian or Greek, for example. The inkling that the disadvantage associated with immigration was going to be reproductive, fueled concern within migrant communities. While migrants anticipated that they would be involved in low-paid factory work because they were 'straight off the boat', they had different aspirations for their children. By and large, migrants had high aspirations for their children and needed to feel confident that these were not being sabotaged by sub-standard education. This concern was shared by teachers who were faced with minimal support in classrooms, increasingly filled by students for whom English was not a first language. These concerns were acknowledged by the conservative national government of the time, which in the 1960s, introduced the policy of integration. This was an attempt to facilitate successful assimilation through the introduction of specific support, most notable, the funding of English language teachers in schools with large populations of migrant students. It wasn't until 1972, with the election of the first Labor Government in 25 years, that policies that can be associated with multiculturalism were introduced. These can be distinguished from the explicitly assimilationist policies that characterised the immediate post war period. Nonetheless, the nature of and rationale for such policies continue to be debated and these policies and the debates that surround them, form an important backdrop for an examination of the contemporary rejuvenation of integrationism.

Education Policy

Education policy has echoed the various settlement policies that accompanied post World War Two immigration. Relative to explicitly assimilationist and integrationist policies, multicultural education policy seemed progressive. Its emphasis was on English as a Second Language and mother-tongue maintenance for minority

students and second language acquisition for mainstream students and various forms of cultural awareness and anti-racist programmes for all students. In this way, it was envisioned that minorities would maintain the cultures of their forebears as well as access opportunities within mainstream Australian society and that all students would learn about interculturalism. What follows is a review of critical policies associated with multicultural education.

The Schools Commission

The newly-elected Labor Government instigated a number of policy directions that reflected the social movements that had characterised the 1960s and 1970s. Providing more opportunities and human rights for working class people, women, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities was a stated priority. There was a strongly-held belief that education could spearhead such social reform. For this reason, the Schools Commission was formed and asked to recommend on funding priorities and strategies. The Karmel Report was issued in 1973 and through it the Commission argued that ethnic minority students needed specialised assistance. This was detailed in the first *Schools Commission Triennium Report* (1975).

The Commission argued that schools were responsible for helping minority students maintain their first language and culture, whilst simultaneously acquiring those skills necessary for full participation in Australian society. This sentiment was framed as a ' ... dual cultural identity within a framework of Australian allegiance....' (Schools Commission 1975: 88). English language competence was highlighted. Specialist language teachers would provide withdrawal classes for newly-arrived, non-English speaking students and assist with the professional development of their colleagues. This was a language across the curriculum approach that would benefit all students who had literacy problems. The Schools Commission also argued that schools needed to acquaint all students with the multicultural nature of Australian society, a dual strategy that reinforced minority students' cultural backgrounds and acquainted all students with cultural diversity. This represented a significant shift away from the compensatory models that had been promulgated previously.

The Galbally Report

In 1977 the Fraser Liberal (conservative) Government appointed a committee chaired by Frank Galbally to review services available to ethnic minority communities. The Galbally Report was issued in 1978 and provided an extensive review of both government and non-government services related to education, health and the law in order to assess how appropriate these were for ethnic minorities. Equal opportunity and access, cultural maintenance and tolerance were stressed

over structural factors that contributed to inequality. Social cohesion was linked to pluralism and respect for cultural difference.

As an outcome of the review, the Multicultural Education Program was established and allocated $5 million to assist with the development of a multicultural curriculum. This would support the rights of ethnic minorities to maintain their cultural identity and all students to acquire knowledge of Australia's multicultural character. Initiatives related to the teaching of community languages and cultures, bilingual approaches, multicultural programs, related teacher professional development, relevant materials development, parent and community involvement and research.

In 1983, the newly-elected Hawke Labor Government, through its Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Susan Ryan, appointed the first national advisory body for multicultural education to provide a rationale for related policy. *Education in and for a Multicultural Society: Issues and Strategies for Policy Maki*ng (NACCME) was published in 1987. In 1986 this Government introduced a range of savage budget cuts, which have been linked to the demise of multicultural policy (Galligan and Roberts 2003). In 1988 the policy emphasis moved from settlement policies to immigration with the publication of the FitzGerald Report (1988).

The election of the neo-conservative Howard Government in 1996 brought with it the first rupture to the hitherto bipartisan support for multiculturalism. Howard emphasised national unity through adherence to core Australian values. In 1997 he launched *Multicultural Australia: the Way Forward*. Cultural identity could be maintained '. . . within carefully defined limits'; social justice was linked to equality of opportunity; and economic efficiency was elaborated as the utilisation of people's skills regardless of their backgrounds (National Multicultural Advisory Council 1997).

A revamped National Multicultural Advisory Council was formed and in 1999 published *Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness* (National Multicultural Advisory Council). Multiculturalism was linked to citizenship, which was a commitment to Australian values, including democratic traditions, tolerance and respect for freedom and equal opportunity. This emphasis was reflected by the recommendation that civics education be developed in schools through the Discovering Democracy program, which would be the responsibility of the Education, Training and Youth Affairs Portfolio. The shift from multiculturalism to citizenship was formalised in 2007 when the Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism was renamed the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Subsequent to the election of the Labor Party in 2007, the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council presented the new multicultural policy *Australia's People*. Its recommendations centered on accountability measures for services to minority communities and funding for various arts and sporting programmes. Multiculturalism was also linked to an anti-racism strategy whereby key Government bodies working with community based groups, would build awareness, including by developing education materials.

The projected role assigned to education has been responsive to the way multiculturalism has been nuanced by various governments. The teaching of English has

been a core component, although there have been differences between the methods advocated; for example, bilingual approaches relative to compensatory withdrawal methods. The teaching of languages other than English has also been a priority however the particular languages given priority and the pedagogies advocated have shifted over time. Perhaps the most notable shifts have occurred in relation to curriculum intended to build social cohesion. In the case of this curriculum, it is easier to identify fundamental differences between how the nation and the social are conceived and therefore the work such curriculum is expected to carry out. In relation to this point, it is worthwhile considering debates about multiculturalism as a concept, distinct from its formulation as policy.

Citizenship as a Form of Integration

There has been a shift away from state-sponsored multiculturalism in most western countries including those with a traditional association with liberal pluralism such as the Netherlands and Sweden. Like Canada, Australia has a strong association with multiculturalism that has marked its national character (Kymlika 2010). This shift has been attributed to macroeconomic issues that move the onus of responsibility to the individual rather than the state. Instead of the nation and state managing diversity, any failure to participate fully in civic life is seen as a consequence of an individual's unwillingness to integrate rather than structural impediments. The state is only responsible for envisioning the 'what' that individuals are expected to become a part of (Mitchell 2003).

This argument is well illustrated in Australia through the emphasis on civics – the citizenship test and the various curriculum frameworks that manufacture a state sponsored sense of Australia. The right to citizenship is important, particularly in contrast to nations like Germany, where this has been denied to so-called guest workers. However, citizenship is presented through discourses of rights and responsibilities – the individual's right to join the nation if the individual is responsible enough to integrate. An equation that trades rights and responsibilities is an important way of reading the place of cultural difference in the national imaginary. Becoming a citizen of a nation that imagines itself as multicultural, at even a rudimentary level, is arguably different to becoming a citizen of a nation that defines itself in relation to famous cricketers, a jingoistic obsession with war (Tsolidis 2010, 2011) and a nostalgia for the White Australian Policy enacted through draconian measures against asylum seekers.

Curriculum – Setting a National Agenda

Schooling is a significant institution that contributes to the social magma – the flow of meanings that conjure a sense of the 'we'. Castoriadis (1997) links this to education and argues that the normative role of pedagogy or *paideia* is a contradictory one.

On the one hand, pedagogy aims to develop the learner's self-activity or capacity for independent learning and reflexivity. This becomes the primary goal and anything else taught along the way simply facilitates this aim. On the other hand, education is also about inducting the individual into existing institutional practices such as language, family and values. Paradoxically, this instruction is about how to conform. Castoriadis argues that institutions are fabrications of a collective imaginary and as such are how the collectivity represents itself. Nonetheless, once conjured, these institutions take on the sense of being pre-given, fixed and self-perpetuating. Rather than maintain their power through coercion they are powerful because individuals participate in their fabrication. Pedagogy is instrumental to this fabrication, and because of this, it has the paradoxical task of producing autonomous subjects, who nonetheless internalise existing institutions. In order for a subject to be autonomous, they need to be independent and reflective thinkers. This is necessary to address what Castoriadis describes as the impossibility of politics, that is, democracy's dependence on democratic individuals and vice versa. He argues that it is the task of pedagogy to protect democracy by creating autonomous thinkers who can function internal to institutions.

The cultural politics of education are manifest in debates about the formal curriculum and its relationship particularly to state administered assessment and entry into higher education. For the first time, a national curriculum is being introduced in Australia. This curriculum framework will require all students, up until Year 10, to study in the same broad areas while giving teachers some flexibility of interpretation. A number of subjects have been developed under the stewardship of expert committees, including English, Science, Mathematics, History, the Arts and Civics and Citizenship. The National Curriculum Framework makes apparent a range of priorities and provides glimpses into the national imaginary being created. The sense that such a curriculum functions to narrate the nation is echoed in the comments of the architects of the history curriculum who state:

> History is the study of the past. It provides knowledge, understanding and appreciation of previous events, people, practices and ideas. It orders them, renders them intelligible and discerns patterns of continuity and change. It provides the means whereby individual and collective identities are formed and sustained. It enriches the present and illuminates the future. (NCB 2009a: 4)

This is a social magma about the past, present and future that situates individuals into an Australian collectivity. The National Curriculum designates particular learning areas but also priorities which need to be integrated across the curriculum. These are referred to as 'dimensions' and are the Indigenous, Asia and sustainability dimensions (NCB 2009b). This curriculum could have been shaped as readily in response to a host of alternative dimensions.

Decisions about which subjects have been selected and within these, which storylines or dimensions have been given priority have not been without controversy. This has been evident through the teaching of history and serves as a credible example of how curriculum narrates the nation. The important role of history in shaping the national imaginary was made evident through the so-called history wars.

These involved leading academics and politicians, including the then Prime Minister John Howard, in debates about the colonial settlement of Australia, its impact on the indigenous population and contemporary understandings and representations of these events. Core differences on these issues have bled into debates about the way Australianness is understood more broadly.

In 2004, Stuart Macintyre who has been instrumental to the development of history within the National Curriculum published the second edition of the book he co-authored with Anna Clarke entitled *The History Wars*. In it they make the following statement:

> This isn't simply a debate over contrasting historical approaches, or contested historical terms. It is also a struggle over common ground. Education is a national concern – it is everyone's business. Pedagogical as well as political beliefs about what students should know frame the debate over school history. (Macintyre and Clarke 2003: 172–173)

This is a statement about the role education plays in creating and sustaining a collective view of who we are and where we have come from as a nation. Shaping such a collective view is a political exercise as much as anything else. The history wars attest to how this process is complicated *vis-à-vis* indigenous perspectives and our ability to tell a coherent and uncontested narrative about Australia's colonisation. In a similar vein issues of perspective also arise with reference to migration and cultural difference. The National Curriculum makes scant reference to the place of these issues in the national imaginary. In Year 10, students study Australia and the world after 1901. The document provides this exposition:

> This unit will provide an overview of the period along with depth studies which might include: Australia's involvement in World War I, post-war migration to Australia, the civil rights movement in the United States or apartheid in South Africa compared with Indigenous rights in Australia, the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the influence of globalised American culture on Australia and elsewhere, decolonisation of the Asia-Pacific and the growth of environmentalism. (NCB 2009a: 11)

This approach takes us a long way away from the potential of providing multicultural perspectives across the curriculum, advocated by those working in multicultural education (NACCME 1987).

Integrationism as the New Doxa?

Hartman and Gerteis (2005) make the observation that multiculturalism is commonly defined in relation to what it is not; that is, in contradistinction to monoculturalism. In this equation, monoculturalism is associated with social cohesion and multiculturalism with the disunity that is the product of racial and ethnic groups remaining distinct. They state that this conceptualisation leads to a linear schema that situates assimilation at one end and multiculturalism at the other. Instead they argue that the opposition between unity and difference is false and that unity requires an appreciation of difference. This is not an uncommon view and builds on the work

of Alexander (2001) who argues that multiculturalism is a form of unity that does not rely on those entering a society losing their identity in order to fit in. Instead, all forms of difference (eg. race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality) become markers of civility and in so doing lose their negative connotations. This allows identification with difference that shifts the mainstream conception of it as problematic.

Such a politics of recognition has been criticised for an inadequate engagement with equality through economic redistribution and social restructuring. In response, critical multiculturalism is an attempt to fold identity issues into a broad left agenda for change. Sleeter and McLaren (1995), who are strongly associated with critical multiculturalism, argue that liberal multiculturalism emphasises sameness, while left-liberal multiculturalism places the emphasis on difference. They argue that the opposition between difference and sameness is false and instead make a case for a praxis, informed by a poststructuralist logic, that entails reconstructing hegemonic arrangements that 'organize social life into patterns of domination and subordination' (1995: 49). This needs to be done on the basis of an understanding that does not link difference to essentialism. Instead difference is relational and underpinned by shifting and unequal power relations.

A strident backlash against multiculturalism took place in the 1990s and was evident in the USA, the UK, Europe and Australia. This piggy-backed onto the so-called war against terror, the events of September 11th and the bombings in Spain and London. In the USA, there were shifts in legislation that resulted in bilingual education being banned in some states, including California, and severely reduced funding for English language programmes. In Australia, the political shift away from multiculturalism was led by the Howard Government with a number of critical signposts, including the dismantling of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Tampa controversy, the introduction of a citizenship test, the mooting of a ban on the wearing of the veil by school girls and inflammatory comments subsequent to the Cronulla riots made by senior political leaders. Globally the move away from multiculturalism has continued with a renewed emphasis on concepts such as integration and interculturalism. Through its *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* (2008) the Council of Europe put forward the argument on behalf of its 47 member states, that this type of dialogue will ensure that different identities will nonetheless be bound by 'equal dignity and shared values' (p. 19). The White Paper stresses notions of 'pluralism' and 'tolerance' and gives a seemingly naïve take on the process that will mediate which values become shared. A European identity is being manufactured that consolidates a hegemonic stance on its constitution.

Simultaneously, leftist critiques of multiculturalism have continued. Zizek argues that the political spectrum in Europe has divided between a broad populist movement against 'foreigners' that has extreme Right groups on its periphery, and a liberal middle class that is complicit in the process that has mainstreamed an anti-immigration stance. It is the liberal middle class that Zizek accuses of wanting a 'decaffeinated Other' – a culturally different that has no impact because it remains outside their immediate orbit (Zizek 2010). For Zizek, multiculturalism remains a hegemonic ideology – an illusion with a power of its own – a power that results from it being an illusionary marker for civility.

The current debate about integrationism is backlit by the assumption that we are in a post-multicultural age. Currently, the debate assumes that liberal multiculturalism is the only multiculturalism and in itself this is a type of hegemony. However, multiculturalism has a strong association with the ethnic rights movement and linked to it, a range of progressive outcomes (Zangalis 2009). In the state of Victoria, Australia, the ethnic rights movement took shape in industries such as the car industry, which employed mainly migrant workers. Sometimes violent strikes made evident the poor working conditions of people who were not necessarily well served by their unions. Communities established their own welfare agencies because mainstream services were not culturally and linguistically appropriate. Within schools there was agitation for appropriate services including interpreters for parents, the teaching of English as a Second Language and community languages. Communities also spearheaded ethnic broadcasting because they wanted culturally and linguistically relevant radio and television. We need to consider multicultural policy as a response to the ethnic rights movement. And while this may be about containment through liberal frameworks of managing difference, to allow such frameworks to define multiculturalism is to do a disservice to those who introduced and struggled for something else. The discursive terrain has shifted. By accepting that we are now mediating the meaning of 'integration' we are risking losing some of the more exciting elements of multiculturalism. Within schools these elements have provided opportunities for students to experiment comfortably with their identification because they don't feel they have to 'hold out against a larger force' in the form of a curriculum that silences diasporic ways of being. I remain skeptical that 'integration' offers us a similar opportunity, particularly in the current climate where xenophobia and neo-nationalism are on the rise.

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Chapter 11
Multicultural Education: Contemporary Heresy or Simply Another Doxa

Megan Watkins

Abstract In response to Georgina Tsolidis, this paper considers whether multicultural education is itself a doxa. While acknowledging a post 9/11 backlash against multiculturalism and the emergence of a discourse around social cohesion within the public sphere, it questions whether this is simply a return to integrationism or more a reaction against the tired and perhaps outmoded identity politics that, from the 1980s, has increasingly framed multiculturalism as public policy. It explores how multiculturalism is performed in schools often fashioning culture or ethnic diversity as a form of exoticism through pedagogies of difference that, while well meaning, tend more towards exclusion than inclusion. Drawing on recent research in schools, it reveals how such forms of multicultural education may promote a kind of unreflective civility that, while providing a gloss of acceptance, often yields little more than a superficial community harmony that when tested reveals its fragility. The heresy inherent in this response is its questioning of the current doxa of multicultural education. It calls for a rethinking of policy and practice to encourage an ethics around difference that avoids essentialising that difference in the process and equips students with the tools for effective social participation to deal with the cultural complexity of the world in which they live.

Georgina Tsolidis' comprehensive and provocative paper makes an important contribution to current debates concerning multiculturalism and multicultural education. Against the rabid critiques of multiculturalism in Australia during John Howard's prime ministership (1996–2007), combined with calls post-9/11 for a stronger emphasis on social cohesion, she provides a qualified defence of multiculturalism. Tsolidis champions its initial aim during the Whitlam years (1972–1975) to address the social inequalities faced by migrants but also prizes the work of multicultural education undertaken by successive governments in supporting students with a language background other than English (LBOTE), combating racism and encouraging an ethos of social inclusion. From Tsolidis's perspective, however, much of what multicultural education has achieved is under

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_11

threat from a new *doxa* of integrationism which she construes as an updated form of assimilation designed to minimise difference and promote adherence to the cultural dominance of Anglo-Australia. In light of this, she suggests multicultural education could be considered a contemporary heresy. While sympathetic to many of Tsolidis's arguments, I want to suggest that a simple defence of multiculturalism and multicultural education is inadequate and that both might be better served by a self-reflexive critique of the identity politics that have framed each as public policy and practice. In response to Tsolidis and her focus on policy, I place a stronger emphasis on how multiculturalism is performed in schools, sites where culture or ethnic diversity is often fashioned as a form of exoticism through pedagogies of difference that, while well meaning, tend more towards exclusion than inclusion. My own research with Greg Noble into issues around cultural practices and learning (Watkins and Noble 2013), provides examples of this and is discussed here to demonstrate that, rather than a contemporary heresy, multicultural education may be little more than another doxa.

Culture as Difference

Discipline and Diversity: Cultural Practices and Dispositions of Learning was an Australian Research Council (ARC) Project (2005–2008) that investigated the differential achievement of primary school-aged students from Chinese, Pasifika and Anglo Australian backgrounds[1] in a range of schools in metropolitan Sydney. In particular, it examined certain habits of learning and whether these were a product of ethnicity or a complex set of factors related to family background and socio-economic status manifest in specific school- and home-based practices. In interviews with teachers and observation of a number of multicultural education programs operating in these schools, there was very much a tendency to essentialise students' ethnicity, or rather the perceived ethnicity of the Chinese and Pasifika background students. The generally high academic performance of Chinese students and the relatively poor results of many of those from Pasifika backgrounds were often viewed as a function of their ethnicity. It was not uncommon to hear comments such as the following by one teacher about her Pasifika students: '... they are not, by nature, they are not students. Some people are students and some people are not, and Islander kids tend not to be students'. Similarly, another teacher

[1]Terms of identification are often problematic as they do not adequately reflect the complex nature of students' ancestral backgrounds. The terms used in this study were arrived at for various reasons. 'Chinese' was a term of self-identification used by the parents of students investigated in this study. 'Anglo' is a term of identification that groups together long-time Australians of English speaking backgrounds. Some parents also chose this as their label of ethnic identification. Pasifika is a collective term used to refer to students whose parents identified as Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islander, Maori or Tokelauan and was the term favoured by the NSW Department of Education and Training which was the research partner in this ARC Project.

remarked, 'Islander students simply have a complete lack of discipline'. On the other hand, in trying to account for the high academic achievement of many of the students of Chinese background, one teacher, herself Chinese, felt their emphasis on education 'goes deep down to the root, to the Chinese culture, right from 2000 BC … deep down from Confucius upward'. In relation to the Anglo students, however, no such link was made between ethnicity and academic performance. Rather, explanations regarding ability and behaviour related to their individual, family or class background and so 'Anglo' tended to operate as an ethnically neutral category. Ethnicity was conceived as 'Other' and this seemed to frame many teachers' approaches to teaching and learning. Interestingly, many of LBOTE students involved in this study were born in Australia or their individual heritage and migration histories suggested more complex forms of cultural identification than simply 'Chinese' or the collective label of 'Pasifika'.

While there were teachers who acknowledged inconsistencies in the patterning of behaviour related to ethnicity and academic performance, or that it involved a range of cultural processes not reducible to simple generalisations about ethnicity, they still used them. The issue here is not simply that these perceptions are problematic, but that they reveal quite a bit about the way in which multiculturalism is conceived and how multicultural education is understood and practised in schools. While, as Tsolidis's chapter explains, there are various perspectives on multiculturalism and ongoing debate about its current utility within the public sphere, it still operates as a normative discourse in which ethnicity is generally essentialised and culture conceived in terms of difference. Rather than a heresy, multicultural education seems to operate as a doxa: in Felski's terms, 'a doxa of difference' that can mark students, such as those from Chinese and Pasifika backgrounds, as Other and so separate from the cultural mainstream of Anglo Australia (Felski 1997). As Brubaker (2002, p. 175) argue, however,

> 'ethnicity, race and nationhood exist only in and through our perceptions, interpretations, categorisations and identifications. They are not things in the world but perspectives on the world. These include ethnicised ways of seeing (and ignoring) of construing (and misconstruing) of remembering (and forgetting). They include ethnically-oriented frames, schemas and narratives . . . '.

Multiculturalism, which began as a progressive attempt to acknowledge and value cultural difference, in practice now often gives legitimacy to these 'ethnicised ways of seeing' which can be problematic. This is not to reject multiculturalism or to disagree with the substantive arguments of Tsolidis's chapter, but to attempt to reorient debates regarding multicultural education and to rethink the ways in which culture is often understood.

As Tsolidis explains, multicultural education involves a range of programs; ESL, community languages, multicultural perspectives in the curriculum, anti-racism, community liaison and so on, and draws on diverse rationales: cultural maintenance, social justice, community harmony and cultural awareness, but what seems emblematic of multicultural education and multiculturalism more broadly is this focus on culture as difference – a static and indeed primordial difference. Even

with its embryonic formation during the Whitlam Government (1973–1975) where there was a clear focus on addressing the structural inequality that many migrants faced, compared to the benign multiculturalism of celebrating diversity that came to characterise the Fraser Government (1975–1983) – and is still very much with us today – 'culture' within multiculturalism tends to be understood as discrete and bounded, linked to distinct ethnic communities. It is a view of culture that ignores the fact that people exist at the intersection of multiple social processes. Reducing culture to a single innate essence not only loses this complexity but runs counter to multiculturalism's goal of inclusion, serving more to exclude than include. But this seems one of the contradictions inherent in multiculturalism. An emphasis on cultural maintenance, one of the key rationales of multicultural education, may at some point begin to work against social inclusion. Rather than being seen as a form of cultural homogenisation or the absorption of minority cultures within the Anglo mainstream, integrationism could in fact be reconceived as inclusionary encompassing a heterogeneous mix of differences; though perhaps this thought is itself heretical!

The implication in Tsolidis's chapter is that integrationism is primarily a force exerted from above; a top-down imperative to promote social cohesion and neutralise difference. But integration, as opposed to integrationism, also occurs from the bottom up as a function of the everyday hybridisation of culture and identity to which intergenerational change, cultural adaptation and intermarriage have contributed. This is something multicultural education has difficulty coming to terms with and which Tsolidis seems to acknowledge and found evident in her own school-based research during the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s. She recounts, for example, the experience of a young Australian man of Greek heritage who considered himself 'a marked man' as he felt he only received average marks from his teachers due to his 'Greekness'. Tsolidis also refers to similar discrimination against a number of Turkish girls, whose adherence to wearing the hijab, together with other markers of cultural difference were little accepted by their teachers. It goes without saying that these forms of discrimination are deplorable but in what way was multicultural education complicit in engendering these teachers' responses? In both instances it was these students' ethnic difference that was singled out which, in a sense, is what multicultural education licenses. Of course, difference here is denigrated rather than celebrated but these responses stem from a similar essentialising of ethnicity that privileges cultural difference over human affinity. This is not to suggest that difference should not be acknowledged but it is the way in which it is done that presents a problem wherein reductive notions of identity are juxtaposed against a cultural dominant, itself supposedly hermetically intact.

Tsolidis feels this model of cultural pluralism is under threat by a form of integration intent on absorbing and minimising difference. Perhaps a distinction needs to be made, however, between integrationism as Tsolidis conceives it and a kind of pragmatic, everyday form of integration where, rather than assimilation to the mainstream, a kind of 'mutual intermingling' (Ang 2001, p. 159) is foregrounded, promoting an ethics around difference that does not essentialise that difference in the process. Indeed, Tsolidis refers to the importance of students being

able to 'project personas of their own choosing regardless of how they look or their heritage'. This, she sees, as dependent upon the eradication of racism. The problem remains, however, that multicultural education may inadvertently engender the racism it seeks to eradicate. While it may be the case that minorities feel they have to camouflage their difference, it could also be argued that multicultural education actually promotes its overt and, at times, unwelcome display, with many LBOTE students resistant to the type of pigeonholing in which schools engage. Cultural identification needs to be understood as a far more fluid process with multiculturalism being about the right, as Hage (2011) explains, 'to oscillate and not just about the right to belong to this or that ethnic culture and how to belong to it'.

Rethinking Multiculturalism

While I have to disagree with Tsolidis's take on multiculturalism as a contemporary heresy, there can be no doubt that it has faced considerable backlash, especially since 2001 with heightened anxiety around immigration and social cohesion. During Prime Minister John Howard's time in office, in particular, it seemed every effort was made to minimise the significance of multiculturalism, evident in two actions which bookend his prime ministership – his abolition of the Office of Multicultural Affairs shortly after taking office and the renaming of the Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in his final year – a name subsequent federal governments have retained. So too, in Western Europe, there has been a questioning of the success of policies of multiculturalism and concerns raised about their perceived effects of social fragmentation; hence a renewed focus on policies of integrationism in an attempt to promote social cohesion and community harmony (Triandafyllidou et al. 2012). While similar critiques are evident in Australia, post-Howard they seem more the preserve of shock jocks and conservative commentators. This does not mean they should be ignored but, against the policy shift in Europe and the United Kingdom, the Australian Government has actually restated its commitment to multiculturalism in a new multicultural policy (Australian Government 2011). Together with this, numerous studies within Australia demonstrate considerable support for cultural diversity (Ang et al. 2006; Dunn et al. 2004). It is not my intent here to paint a too rosy picture or to suggest Australia is somewhat removed from the more vociferous critiques of multiculturalism that have surfaced elsewhere. Quite the contrary, the Australian Government's ongoing reluctance to accept and resettle refugees is testament to that. But, these critiques of multiculturalism and the insertion of references to social cohesion in policy documents, as in the new Multicultural Policy and sections of the Australian National Curriculum statements (see Watkins 2011 for further discussion of this point), do not suggest a national mood swing against multiculturalism or that integrationism is now the dominant discourse around cultural diversity in Australia. Rather, as mentioned, these critiques may indicate

that we need to look a little more closely at current perceptions of multiculturalism and whether or not we need to re-envisage our multicultural future more in terms of an emphasis on cultural flow and hybridity than cultural stasis and the recognition of distinct ethnic communities. Perhaps multiculturalism does have something to answer for. Both it and multicultural education may need to be rethought.

While a form of cultural hybridity may be a more accurate reflection of the lived reality of many, more bounded notions of culture and ethnicity simply 'can't be written off as mere rubbish' (Baumann 1999, p. 86). To many, they provide a powerful sense of belonging and self-identification. Similarly, a focus on clearly defined ethnicities has proved useful from an advocacy perspective because collective demands provide powerful political leverage in lobbying for community rights. Such action can be characterised in terms of what Spivak (1990) calls strategic essentialism; the creation of a collective identity seen as necessary in achieving social justice for marginalised groups. Yet, it also has the potential to create artificial divisions between communities that in reality are rarely so defined, together with forms of identity that may act more, as Ang (2001, p. 11) describes, like a 'potential prison house'. Such forms of identification were not only evident in the teachers' comments referred to earlier but were also found in more recent research in schools as part of Rethinking Multiculturalism/Reassessing Multicultural Education (RMRME), an ARC project (2011–2013) investigating approaches to multicultural education in New South Wales schools and how these link to broader understandings of multiculturalism and the role of education in promoting social inclusion (see http://www.multiculturaleducation.edu.au/). Here, we found instances of programs in schools in which fixed and bounded understandings of the ethnicity of students contributed to the promotion of what can be termed 'schooled identities'. This involved, a process where, despite various and ongoing forms of socio-cultural experience that are constitutive of a student's identity, it was a narrow conception of their ethnicity that was foregrounded, often providing a rationale for their academic performance and behaviour at school (Noble and Watkins 2014).

In a discussion with one group of high school students, for example, about their attitude to programs designed to promote cultural maintenance the comments of a boy named Gary proved particularly poignant. While of Tongan background, Gary strongly identified as Australian. He had been encouraged, however, to participate in the Kapa Haka dance group at this school – Haka being traditional Polynesian ceremonial dances often, though not exclusively, performed by men. Gary explained that one of the things he liked about the group was that he got to experience his 'own culture'. When the comment was made that it was interesting he had to come to school for this to happen, he responded 'Yeah, because, yeah my family are like, not really traditionally Tongan. We tend to blend with the Australian … yeah it is kind of weird' (Noble and Watkins 2014). What was foregrounded by the school, therefore, was Gary's Tongan heritage, something they felt obliged to maintain in promoting an ethos of multiculturalism but which for Gary was an aspect of his culture that was quite remote, a part of his past, or that of his parents', that had little connection with his everyday reality as a school student in Western Sydney

(Noble and Watkins 2014). This is not to say there is no value in honouring these traditions, but it raises questions as to whether it is the role of the school to ensure their continued maintenance, particularly with students whose forms of identification are far more varied then how schools generally perceive them.

The schemas of difference that operate here not only serve to pigeonhole students and associate them with imagined traditions; but a focus on multiculturalism as a celebration of difference has little relevance for those who don't see themselves as different, or don't wish to be perceived this way (Noble and Watkins 2014). This is also a celebration of a particular kind of difference; one that is linked to a view of ethnicity as bounded and essentialised rather than the cultural hybridity probably more reflective of the student population and Australia as a whole. Importantly, it is also a difference that sets Anglo students apart – multiculturalism is for others not them. Such a view was evident in the comments of a young Anglo girl in one of the primary schools involved in the RMRME study. In a multicultural education program focusing on inclusive curriculum, this school, in the outer western suburbs of Sydney with an ethnically diverse population of Pasifika, Croatian, African, Indian and Aboriginal students, had set their Year 3 students (aged 8–9 years) the task of compiling individual digital photo stories about their cultural backgrounds highlighting country of birth, customs, food, etc. This particular student of Anglo background, however, was unsure if she could complete the task. This was not because she had difficulties with the new software the class was using but, as she said to her teacher, 'I don't have a culture Miss. I'm not different'. This school's attempt at inclusive curriculum was clearly not inclusive of *this* child, or at least she saw it that way, which attests to a view of multiculturalism as a discourse that has tended to exclude Anglo-Australians, particularly those who haven't embraced the cosmo-multiculturalism that Hage (1998) critiques. This is a world quite alien to this working class Anglo child in the backblocks of outer suburban Sydney who felt this multicultural assignment was something for her classmates who were different – but not her.

As Ang (2001, p. 98) argues 'multiculturalism has failed to provide "old" Australians with ways of re-imagining themselves as an integral part of the "new" Australia'. Yet, even this child who was born into the new Australia was having difficulty making the cultural shift and recognising herself – a product of old Australia – within the multicultural project that is contemporary Australia (Noble and Watkins 2014). But, to what extent is it inclusive of her classmates with the very notion that they are different setting them apart? Mirroring the broader policy of multiculturalism which gives recognition to a collection of distinct ethnic communities, multicultural education has tended to operate in a similar way. While I wouldn't necessarily agree with Malik (in Modood 2007, pp. 10–12) who in the UK has argued that 'multiculturalism has helped to segregate communities far more effectively than racism', the celebration of difference that multiculturalism promotes, and which multicultural education has embraced, poses a difficulty if the ultimate goal is social inclusion and encouraging a sense of national belonging.

Concluding Remarks

So, what does this mean for multiculturalism? Is it now an outmoded policy of little use given the hyperdiversity of migrant-based nations like Australia? While clearly there are problems, the term has a certain traction among the general population. Maybe it would be considered heretical to discard it! What is evident, however, is that many teachers lack the conceptual resources for dealing with the practicalities – the lived reality – of multiculturalism; what Baumann (1996) sees as the difference between its dominant and demotic discourses. Rather than focusing on difference, perhaps it is a sense of belonging that needs to be emphasised; not in terms of encouraging forms of recognition based on a view of identity as ethnically determined but with ethnicity – as Brubaker (2002) describes it 'without groups' – as part of a heterogeneous mix of factors that are constitutive of individual subjectivity and the nation's populace as a whole. In a way this was how Kylie, another one of the primary school students interviewed for RMRME, saw it when asked about how important she felt her quite diverse cultural background was to her: 'I think it makes a person but, like, I am Australian and all the other countries I'm from, (Malta and China) … I think it makes me but it is not the most important thing'. Culture is a relatively fluid phenomenon. There may be some uniformity in relation to certain customs, language and so forth which is identifiable as a form of 'cultural coherence' but as Modood (2007, p. 89) explains, this does not mean 'people of certain family, ethnic or geographical origins are always to be identified by their origins and indeed supposed to be behaviourally determined by them'. This has been a flaw of much multiculturalism and, so too, multicultural education. Perhaps multiculturalism could learn a thing or two from Kylie's classmate, a little girl of Korean background: 'Culture', Hanbi explained, was simply 'what you do'.

I don't think there is an assumption, as Tsolidis describes it, that we are in a 'post multicultural age', but Australia is now a very different place to when policies of multiculturalism were first introduced in the 1970s. Perhaps we need to rethink the goals of multiculturalism and to grapple more effectively with the cultural complexity that is now characteristic of schools and their broader communities. Debates about integrationism and social cohesion may be a way of alerting us to this fact, but they don't make multicultural education a contemporary heresy or integrationism the new doxa. Instead they should challenge us to conceive of a more robust multicultural education that fosters the kinds of critical skills and knowledges that are necessary for students and their teachers to unpack the 'doing' of culture in the increasingly transnational and globalised world in which we live.

Acknowledgements The empirical data drawn upon in this chapter is derived from two Australian Research Council Linkage Projects, *Discipline and Diversity: Cultural Practices and Dispositions of Learning* and *Rethinking Multiculturalism/Reassessing Multicultural Education.* Both of these projects were undertaken with the NSW Department of Education and Training (now the Department of Education and Communities) and the latter also with the NSW Institute of Teachers. I wish to acknowledge the generous support of each body and also the assistance of my co-investigator Greg Noble from the Institute for Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney.

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Chapter 12
Why Global Policies Fail Disengaged Young People at the Local Level

Susan Groundwater-Smith and Nicole Mockler

Abstract School retention rates appear to have an iconic status in the global world. This chapter discusses the failure of global educational governance as an economic remedy specifically in relation to the raising of the school leaving age in Australia. It argues that global policy-making for economic competitiveness not only "sidelines the social purposes of education" (Ball S, Curriculo sem Fronteiras 1(2):27–43, 2001) and is designed to exercise control over the education process but also fails to recognise the particularity of the local. To make the case two threads are pursued. The first is a critique of the research on the returns for schooling per se. We argue that the research evidence promoted by organisations such as the OECD is dogged by methodological and data problems. The second thread draws attention to the need to identify heterogeneity in returns, particularly with reference to those young people who are currently disengaged and reluctant learners. It will draw attention to the work of Dockery (Assessing the value of additional years of schooling for the non academically inclined. LSAY research reports. Longitudinal surveys of Australian youth research report #38. ACEReSearch, 2005) who has found compulsion is adverse for non-academically able children and if it is the national desire to provide an inclusive schooling for all, up to the age of 17 years, then pathways and pedagogical practices for those young people who are expressing resistance and alienation will need to both change and be appropriately resourced.

The Heresies:

1. *that global policies regarding school retention fail disengaged young people at the local level; and*
2. *that for some young, disengaged and marginalised students schools are not the solution; they are the problem.*

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_12

School retention rates appear to have an iconic status in the world of globalised education policy. In this chapter we discuss the failure of global educational governance as an economic, remedy specifically in relation to the raising of the school leaving age in Australia. We argue that global policy-making for economic competitiveness not only "sidelines the social purposes of education" (Ball 2001), and is designed to exercise control over the education process, but also fails to recognise the particularity of the local. To make the case two threads will be pursued: the first that the research on the returns for schooling per se, argued for by organisations such as the OECD is dogged by methodological and data problems that mean that robust results that can reliably inform education policy are unlikely to identify a common return to schooling; the second thread will then draw attention to the need to identify heterogeneity in returns, particularly with reference to those young people who are currently disengaged and reluctant learners. It will draw attention to the work of Dockery (2005) who has found compulsion is adverse for students who struggle in school, and, if it is the national desire to provide an inclusive schooling for all up to the age of 17 years, then pathways and pedagogical practices for those young people who are expressing resistance and alienation will need to both change and be appropriately resourced.

Schooling, Economics and Productivity – A Flawed Narrative

There is a narrative abroad that keeping young people in school or in work related training for longer periods of time will contribute to the economic benefit of both themselves as individuals and the nation. The historical roots of this perceived linkage between productivity and education, where education is viewed primarily as a means to individual and national prosperity, are relatively young in Australia, but in global policy terms date to the US National Defense Education Act of 1958, which sought to ensure future international competitiveness in the light of the 1957 'Sputnik crisis' (Zhao 2009, pp. 22ff.). As Zhao has highlighted, subsequent educational 'reform' in the US over the past half century has largely build on these principles of international competition and national prosperity, with subsequent policies (such as those which emanated from the *A Nation at Risk* report of 1984 and the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001) rearticulating and re-framing them for new historical contexts. Furthermore, in countries such as Australia and England, increasingly neoliberal approaches to education policy over the past two decades have seen the links between education, competition, markets and productivity ever-strengthened.

The narrative around school retention finds its principal author in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). On its homepage the OECD describes its formation and function thus:

> The OECD vocation has been to build strong economies in its member countries, improve efficiency, hone market systems, expand free trade and contribute to development in industrialised as well as developing countries.

> After more than four decades, the OECD is moving beyond a focus on its own countries and is setting its analytical sights on those countries – today nearly the whole world – that embrace the market economy. The Organisation is, for example, putting the benefit of its accumulated experience to the service of emerging market economies, particularly in the countries that are making their transition from centrally-planned to capitalist systems. And it is engaging in increasingly detailed policy dialogue with dynamic economies in Asia and Latin America.
>
> But its scope is changing in other ways too. The matrix is moving from consideration of each policy area within each member country to analysis of how various policy areas interact with each other, across countries and even beyond the OECD area. How social policy affects the way economies operate, for example. Or how globalisation will change the world's economies by opening new perspectives for growth, or perhaps trigger resistance manifested in protectionism.
>
> As it opens to many new contacts around the world, the OECD will broaden its scope, looking ahead to a post-industrial age in which it aims to tightly weave OECD economies into a yet more prosperous and increasingly knowledge-based world economy.

The OECD's mission, then, is to promote policies and practices that will contribute to a globalised world economy, including education policies, as espoused through its Directorate for Education. As the Secretary General put it "education is a priority for OECD Member countries and the OECD is playing an increasingly important role in this field. Society's most important investment is in the education of its people" (cited in Rizvi and Lingard 2010, p. 131). A major strategic direction has been in relation to developing procedures that will allow for international comparative testing, namely the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

In recent times, Lingard and Sellar (2013) have written of the growing role of the OECD in the production of globalised education policy discourses (Rizvi and Lingard 2010) and as a 'sculptor' (Woodward 2009) of global education policy. They argue that the OECD's influence is "linked to the 'economization' of education policy and what we might see as the simultaneous 'educationizing' of economic policy", drawing attention to the Organisation's recent work on skills as 'meta-policy', which "draws theories of human capital, lifelong learning and knowledge-based economies into an overarching policy narrative that presents education and training as a primary site of policy intervention to improve, simultaneously, both the well-being of individuals and the economic strength of nations" (p. 5).

The OECD's advocacy for student retention within school systems is a significant strand of this policy narrative. A preliminary examination of the OECD's *Economic Survey*, produced for each member country approximately every 18 months, highlights that over the past decade the school leaving age and associated skill attainment at school leaving and student retention have appeared as recurring themes, garnering mentions in reports on a range of countries including the United Kingdom (OECD 2005) and Australia (OECD 2008). Similarly, across the *Jobs for Youth Review*, conducted by the OECD from 2006 to 2010 and resulting in 16 member country reports, the issue of school retention and the raising of the minimum school leaving age emerged as a key theme (OECD 2010).

Essentially, the OECD has argued that keeping young people at school longer will be a means of developing and enhancing their core skills. While this often

comes with the qualification that schooling experiences need to be made correspondingly broader in this case to cope with added diversity, it fails to acknowledge that for some young people, for whom school may be anathema, this retention may in fact delay their opportunity to engage in skill acquisition. In its Australian *Jobs for Youth* report, (OECD 2009) it was argued:

> The economic downturn (in Australia) may also represent an opportunity to address one of the country's long-run challenges: improving human capital attainment, particularly at the lower end of the educational distribution. Australia is indeed characterised by a relatively low retention rate in education beyond age 16, as compared with many other OECD countries. Hence, too many youths still lack the basic skills needed to embark on a successful long-term career in the labour market. But one side-effect of the current economic slowdown is that it will probably result in more young people being *a priori* inclined to stay longer in education or undertake advanced studies rather than look for work.

Rizvi and Lingard (2010)[1] draw upon Bourdieu's thesis that policy makes a claim to the universal (the privilege of the state and the bureaucratic field) whereas the classroom is always specific, contingent and idiosyncratic, thus creating a significant epistemological gap between policy and practice. They remind us that policy proposals circulated by the OECD are largely couched in neo-liberal imaginary and that they:

> ...reduce the policy autonomy that nation-states possess to set their own policy priorities... While conventions are supposedly entered into voluntarily, there is often a great deal of pressure on countries to conform to particular ideologies. In recent years, almost all conventions have been framed in ways that make them consistent with market principles located within the social imaginary of neoliberalism (p. 39).

Neoliberalism with its emphasis upon efficiency and international competitiveness is a force perceived to contribute to the economic health and prosperity of the nation. It leads, inexorably, to state control of the ways in which educational enterprises may function, presumably to the benefit of the state. It is seen that what is good for the state is good for the state's citizens. Marginson has argued that:

> Neoliberalism has little warmth or generosity about it; it is considerably less attractive than the notion of equality of educational opportunity. Still, it has secured a blanketing presence in government and media discourse, and it has a superficial discursive fit with the desires for commodified consumption now central to daily life. It seems to cut off the potential for political and social alternatives at every turn (2006, p. 207).

Paradoxically, as Meredyth argued in the late 1990s, it can be claimed that a driver for neoliberalism in the field of education is towards small decentralized government and individual choice while simultaneously reinscribing new forms of regulation and control (Meredyth 1998). As Hodgson has noted in reporting his study on raising the school leaving age in Western Australia, "In short such reforms [as raising the school leaving age] herald new problematics for government and pose new agendas for management that ultimately require extensive forms of governing practices" (Hodgson 2011, p. 117).

[1]This section draws upon both the publication and also personal correspondence with Bob Lingard.

These neoliberal discourses have informed the narrative that posits that there are positive economic returns to be had from ensuring that young people stay in school through the mechanism of introducing a higher school leaving age.[2] A narrative that, when challenged, reveals itself to be seriously flawed.

What are the actual returns, and whom do they benefit? Trostel et al. (2002) in their examination of economic returns to schooling across 28 countries found that the average rate of return is 5 %, suggesting that education is a good investment and that there is a positive relationship between the education of a working individual and his or her subsequent earnings and productivity – a seductive argument. Similarly, Australian economists Leigh and Ryan (2008) have used a variety of estimation methods to conclude a 10 % rate of return on schooling in Australia. But should these returns to schooling be purely attributable to the years spent in school and do they sufficiently account for heterogeneity in the school population and a corresponding heterogeneity in returns? And do they take account of local contexts and conditions?

Dockery's compelling report (2005) seeks to assess the benefits of additional years of schooling for those Australian young people who may not be well suited to further education. He argues that policies around increased retention are based upon the superior outcomes for those completing schooling relative to those who leave early. Among his findings he suggested that the expected return to additional years of schooling is not constant but increases with the ability or academic inclination of the individual. "It seems dangerous to paint all young people with the same brush and surely there are some young people who are simply not well suited to the schooling environment, either in terms of their individual preferences or in terms of the benefits that they can expect to gain" (p. 39). He questions from a policy perspective:

> that there is sufficient empirical evidence to support mandated increases in the level of schooling ... Heterogeneity in the returns to schooling exist because individuals are heterogeneous. The objective of policy should be to ensure that there are *alternative pathways and institutional arrangements available to meet the varying needs, abilities and preferences of young people and to make available the information that they require to make informed decisions on what is optimal for them* (p. 42, emphasis added).

Dockery's findings are symptomatic of the difficulties and challenges that dog the literature on returns from schooling *per se* and the fact that if everyone completes the full complement of school years then it will lose its positional advantage. Seemingly, policies that suggest that it is possible to find international, global solutions may be chimerical. Using average results based upon returns to compulsory schooling implies that similar returns will apply to students who would otherwise have left

[2]Albeit voiced by the NSW Government as "From January 2010 this (raising the school leaving age from 15 to 17) means that all students in the state have to finish Year 10 and then continue in education and training, be in full time work, or a combination of education/training and employment until the age of 17". The policy is similarly described in WA (see Hodgson 2011, p. 116).

early. In their historical study Chib and Jacobi (2011) found this manifestly not to be so. Indeed, it may be argued that there are many other factors as well as ability contributing to good returns from further years of schooling such as: socio-economic status; parental expectations; sound material conditions for living (family employment, housing, freedom from drugs and alcohol); and students' perceptions of self-worth. Without investment in these factors compulsion may not provide the desired economic outcomes.

Economic outcomes, however, are far from the only ones that we would wish for from schooling, and so we turn now to arguments around the social returns from schooling.

Social Returns from Schooling

In his critique of policy making for the economic purposes of schooling Ball (2001) argues that there has been a "sidelining" of the social purposes of education. He sees that:

> The sense of what education is and is for, the nature of the social relationships of schooling, teacher-student, teacher-parent and student-student relationships, are all changed by the forces and micro-practices of the market and their realisation in specific localities and institutional settings. (xxxv)

The spaces for seriously attending to the social returns from schooling are progressively closed down; that is, unless the community decides to reactivate them and take cognisance of the local over the global; the social along with the economic; and inclusion and participation as a right for young people, in particular those who are disengaged and often marginalised.

Why Are Young People Disengaged?

Vickers, reporting on a longitudinal survey of Australian youth, indicates that the most common reason that students gave for early leaving, prior to the raising of the school leaving age, was directly related to their negative experiences of school often arising from poor relations with their teachers and their peers. Additionally, taking into account those who failed to thrive and regularly failed in their attainments, she finds that approximately one in three early leavers did not find school to be a happy or satisfying place:

> According to these findings, young people will not stay at school if they are having a miserable time, or failing academically or are in trouble with teachers. These students will leave school even if they are not able to find work, or do not have other education and training opportunities to go to (2007, p. 61).

So, now that they are compelled to stay at school for a longer period of time, have these reasons for disengagement changed, and how are systems seeking to make schools a more satisfying place for students to be?

If we look, first of all, at the ways over past years in which systems have viewed young people not worthy of engaging with the senior years of schooling and specifically with the competitive academic curriculum, that is seen as the dominant force for those years, we could be tempted in response to the first question to answer 'no'. Kitty te Riele (2006) notes that designating those young people who are unlikely to complete secondary education as being 'at risk' draws attention to what is wrong with them, rather than with their relationship with schooling. Aside from her insight (p. 132) that such young people, often unemployed, are characterised as unfit for employment (the 'supply' side of labour), rather than the problem being the lack of jobs (the 'demand' side of labour), she highlights the ways in which they are blamed for their own school failure. te Riele (2006, p. 135) reminds us of the fact that there are often "profoundly negative relationships (such) students can experience with some or most of their teachers" and lists these as passive learning, little choice in what they may study, how to study, not being listened to, an uninspiring and irrelevant curriculum, lack of flexibility and a paucity of services that are tailored to their needs. She makes the case for better targeting school systems and societal factors rather than the students themselves.

This view is echoed by Taylor (2002). Although writing of the years prior to the raising of the school leaving age, her discussion of the completion of schooling still stands. She makes the point that many young people see themselves as "not good at school", perhaps better explained as 'not good at doing school as defined by the school itself'. Furthermore, she found that those leaving school before the final years were contesting the stereotype of vulnerable young people expressed as:

> ... being marginalised as those who are too deviant or too inept to be able to see either the intrinsic worth or the instrumental value of completing secondary school, who are confining themselves to ongoing labour market understatus and vocational risk, and as those who lack maturity, commitment and motivation. (p. 525)

Instead, they saw themselves as having agency in terms of abandoning what they saw to be the barren wasteland of the school.

Social Inclusion – A Challenge for Systems

As it has been argued, the narrative associated with young people in the context of compelling them to remain at school revolves around the notion that it is the young people who need to be "fixed". As Hodgson (2011) notes

> A focus on the culture, organisation, curriculum and pedagogy of schools is marginal and in most cases missing from the official accounts about the policy, and yet there is an impressive literature that already examines this problem as entailing much more than the proclivities of the individual student and their family. (p. 127)

Furthermore, the development of the policy takes little account of the varying sites of schooling. It is as Dryzek (2002, p. 32) notes, a technocratic approach, based in means-ends instrumental rationality that fails to capture "the subtle influences such as material forces, discourses and ideologies that act as to condition the content of policy". Monolithic education systems, such as that found in New South Wales are greatly challenged by the variations and subtleties of social geography. Going to school in a remote country town such as Broken Hill or Quirindi is not much like going to school in Woollahra, an affluent metropolitan suburb. Being an adolescent in Tenterfield, a rural environment, is not much like being an adolescent in Punchbowl, an inner urban area.

Kemmis (2011) notes:

> The 'site' – e.g., a classroom in a school in its community – is always the existential and ontological given in education. It is the place where things happen – where people meet and engage with one another in practice. The site of practice is the phenomenological reality that always and necessarily escapes standardisation in curricula, standards, assessments and policies (personal correspondence).

Similarly, the social formation of those teachers who will manage the learning of these young people will vary by dint of their own histories and experiences. As Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) have argued, actions, and this includes pedagogic, curriculum and assessment practices, are socially shaped and formed.

> Every action, and especially every interaction that involves others, involves *social connections* and *relationships* that spread out around the actor towards previous or present social orders and arrangements. It involves relationships of *belonging* or *not belonging*, *inclusion* or *exclusion, solidarity* or *opposition/resistance, harmony* or *conflict, social integration* or *fragmentation.* It involves acting within or outside established or accepted *social orders,* it strengthens or erodes *solidarities,* it happens in accordance with, or against accepted and legitimate *social norms* (pp. 47–48, emphasis in original).

Kemmis & Grootenboer embed their case within a framework of practice architectures that acknowledge that practice settings in schools are shaped by meta-practices that are generated by systems and that they regulate, constrain or enable the work in those contexts. Most poignantly they point out that the meta-practices of the policy makers can "fail in the responsibility to students and the good for humankind ... We need informed and enlightened policy makers, administrators, curriculum developers and teacher educators not just ones who want to produce particular outcomes and effects that seem important at any historical moment" (p. 60).

School retention is the policy of this historical moment. It is argued for as an economic solution to current workforce conditions, not only in Australia, but globally. But, alternatively and importantly, the policy can be reconstructed as one of inclusion and social justice; one that has a regard for young people who are marginalised and disenchanted with schooling for one reason or another. McGregor et al. (2011) make a case for turning to the practices of the small number of alternative schools that cater for such young people and find ways of engaging them in the mainstream, such as having greater flexibility, supportive social environments and a pedagogy that is engaging and meaningful. They argue that a mainstream system that successfully re-engages the marginalised should have as its objective

"putting alternative schools out of existence". As it stands, many current mainstream practices do not offer solutions for these young people, but can actually contribute to and exacerbate the problems and challenges that they face.

There can be no question, however, that bringing about major systemic change that is designed to re-engage marginalised young people in schooling as a social rather than economic measure is a significant challenge. Taking account of Kemmis and Grootenboer's argument that the policy makers themselves are captives of their own histories of practice, and Reimann's (Chap. 4, this volume) compelling iceberg metaphor that demonstrates why conceptual change is so hard (i.e., that the experiences, values and epistemologies in the form of beliefs carry more weight than knowledge in the form of answers, problems and solutions), it is clear that systems are currently failing to develop adequate or appropriate responses. Clearly, young people for whom the system has already failed are unlikely to be re-engaged if little has changed, and little will change unless there is both a will and the resources required to bring about a major conceptualisation of the senior years of schooling that is inclusive and honours all who participate.

Gert Biesta in an interview with Philip Winter (2011, p. 4) reminded us that "we do not produce our students; we are there to teach them – just as we do not make our children they are born to us". We are there to teach them not only the skills needed for the economy, but to enable them to lead decent, dignified and satisfying lives within a community that recognises and respects them. If we do not wish to be endowed with a bitter legacy of young people, trapped in schools against their will, disengaged and resentful, there is no question that policies governing the senior years will need to change quickly with teachers, pedagogies and curricula that are adaptive and satisfying for all.

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Chapter 13
Education Policy 'At Risk'

Kitty te Riele

Abstract Governments worldwide consider the need to increase school retention and educational attainment to be so self-evident that both this need and its rationale have become a hegemonic discourse that is taken for granted. In their chapter Susan Groundwater-Smith and Nicole Mockler have raised key questions that challenge this discourse, contrasting the evidence for the economic versus social returns from schooling. These are valid and crucial arguments, which I will add to in this response. In relation to the first controversy – that global policies regarding school retention fail disengaged young people at the local level – by providing an historical analysis of school retention policy in Australia. This highlights the way economic purposes have pushed equity concerns aside over time. In relation to the second controversy – that for some young, disengaged and marginalised students schools are not the solution but may be the problem – by exploring non-linear pathways and alternative education. My argument is that rather than young people being 'at risk', education policy itself is 'at risk': of not enabling its own goals to be met, and of letting down the young Australians it should be supporting.

Introduction

Governments worldwide consider the need to increase school retention and educational attainment to be so self-evident that both this need and its rationale have become a hegemonic discourse that is taken for granted. In their chapter (in this volume) Susan Groundwater-Smith and Nicole Mockler have raised key questions that challenge this discourse, contrasting the evidence for the economic versus social returns from schooling. These are valid and crucial arguments. In this response, there is little purpose in repeating them, and no grounds for refuting them. Instead, I add to the arguments. In relation to the first controversy – that global policies regarding school retention fail disengaged young people at the local level – by providing an historical analysis of school retention policy in Australia.

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_13

This highlights the way economic purposes have pushed equity concerns aside over time (see also te Riele 2012). In relation to the second controversy – that for some young, disengaged and marginalised students schools are not the solution but may be the problem – by exploring non-linear pathways and alternative education. My argument is that rather than young people being 'at risk', education policy itself is 'at risk': of not enabling its own goals to be met, and of letting down the young Australians it should be supporting.

The Economic Purpose of Schooling

Across the developed world it is now axiomatic that more highly skilled people are needed in the contemporary knowledge based economy – and that therefore educational attainment at upper secondary and tertiary levels needs to be lifted (see Groundwater-Smith and Mockler's analysis of OECD policy). Under conditions of globalization and uncertainty, and influenced by OECD rhetoric, a policy consensus has developed relating educational attainment to economic purposes. As Groundwater-Smith and Mockler have already convincingly argued, this is too narrow a perspective on what schools are for.

School education serves many purposes, as is recognised in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008). It should enable all young people to be "successful learners" (MCEETYA 2008, p. 8) gaining the skills, knowledge and dispositions to enable young people to enter the world of work and to continue learning. In addition, schooling involves socialization, supporting young people to be "active and informed citizens" (MCEETYA 2008, p. 9), at local, national and increasingly also global levels. At its best, it also creates "confident and creative individuals" (MCEETYA 2008, p. 9) and opens windows into worlds and opportunities beyond a young person's close surroundings. Simply coercing more young people to stay in school will not, however, enable them to meet all these purposes.

A Brief History of Australian Attainment Policy

The history of policies for raising educational attainment in Australia highlights the increasing dominance of economic purposes to benefit society. The key policy documents are:

- *Participation and equity in Australian schools: The goal of full secondary education* (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1983);
- *In the National Interest* (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1987);
- *Young people's participation in post-compulsory education and training* (Australian Education Council Review Committee 1991), better known as the 'Finn Report'.

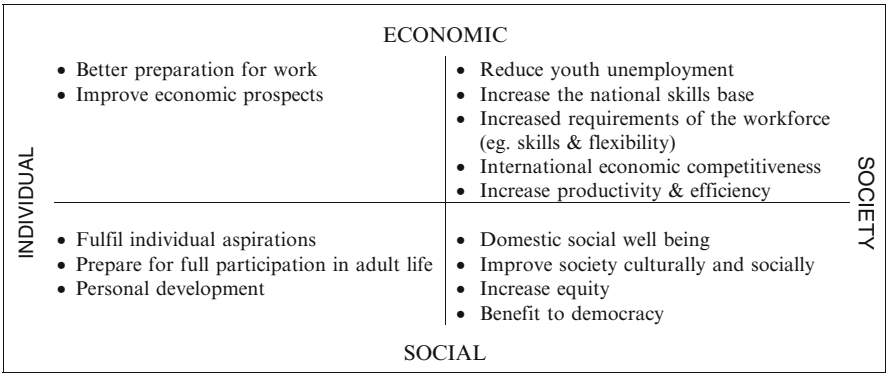

Fig. 13.1 Reasons for increasing retention, commonwealth policy documents

Across these three reports, a shift in the policy gaze from broad social concerns to economic concerns is strongly evident. In Fig. 13.1, I have plotted the policy rationales for increased retention to Year 12 along two dimensions: "individual versus society" and "economic versus social". These two dimensions together form four types of reasons given in Commonwealth documents for encouraging young people to complete post-compulsory education and training.

Social reasons are more common in the earlier policy documents (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1983; but also Commonwealth Schools Commission 1985; HRSCEET 1989; Quality of Education Review Committee 1985). In 1983 the Commonwealth Schools Commission was keen to point out that its objective "to encourage the majority of young people to complete the equivalent of a full secondary education" (p. 18) was not simply a reaction to youth labour market problems. Although enhancing young people's skills and knowledge was seen as necessary for Australia's economic well-being, the Commission emphasised that full secondary education was "intrinsically valuable" and a natural "further stage in the evolution of education in Australia" (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1983, p. 18). By 1987, the Commonwealth Schools Commission report *In the National Interest* was no longer satisfied with a 'majority' of young people completing full secondary education, but stated this was a long term goal for *all* Australians. Equity became a desirable side-effect rather than a purpose: "Gains in school retention are gains for equity" (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1987, p. 64).

The shift from equity and social concerns to economic concerns is even more evident in the Finn Report. The "economic" dimension – especially the "economic/society" quadrant – dominates, with social references seeming largely tokenistic. Referring to a shared belief among OECD countries, the Finn Report (Australian Education Council Review Committee 1991, p. 13) stated:

> ... international economic competitiveness, as well as domestic social well being, is increasingly dependent on a nation's ability to produce both a well trained, flexible work

> force and to develop enterprises which enable employees at all levels to contribute to their full potential. Australia will need to pay greater regard to the rapid developments in competitor nations if we are to maintain or improve our performance relative to best international practice.

Following the Finn Report, federal policy interest in increasing retention to Year 12 waned somewhat, until the Education Revolution announced by the 2007 Rudd Labour government. Its 2008 paper *Quality Education: The case for an Education Revolution in our Schools* (Rudd and Gillard 2008) led to the Council of Australian Governments (CoAG) *National partnership agreement on youth attainment and transition.*

Linear Pathways and Alternative Options

Through the CoAG forum, policies that tightened school completion and participation requirements (pioneered in Queensland and Western Australia) were extended nationwide. These formed the first major amendment to the school leaving age in almost half a century across Australia. The CoAG target aims to raise the Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment rate from 83.5 % in 2009 to 90 % by 2015 (CoAG 2009, p. 7). The relevant 'performance benchmark' (CoAG 2009, p. 14) clarifies this as "the proportion of young people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or a Certificate II or above". The 2009 CoAG attainment rate is higher (at 83.5 %) than the 2009 retention rate (76 %) for two reasons: it is calculated for an older age group (20–24, instead of those progressing directly from Year 7/8 who get to Year 12 at age 17 or 18), and it includes also the completion of 'equivalent'[1] vocational certificates by young people who have left school before Year 12.

Despite the possibilities that exists within the definition of the CoAG target for non-linearity (i.e. leaving education and returning later, gaining a qualification by age 24) and choice (between Year 12 or vocational equivalent), in effect the rhetoric has been more simplistically focussed on keeping young people in school. This is evident in the state of New South Wales, where the relevant legislation is referred to as "the new school leaving age". Moreover, coercive measures are used to implement the reform, such as eligibility restrictions for welfare benefits for income support for young people aged between 15 and 20 (recently extended to 21 year olds, DEEWR 2012a) who have not yet met the target and also for family tax benefits for their parents (CoAG 2009). In addition, the so-called "Helping Young Parents Measure" introduced in 10 local government areas in 2012 has placed demands on young parents to participate in mandated activities in order to achieve Year 12 or an equivalent qualification (DEEWR 2012b).

[1]For an analysis that demonstrates the limitations of this supposed 'equivalence' see Lim and Karmel (2011).

These reforms took place in the context of the Global Financial Crisis. While Australia escaped the worst impacts, young people have been hit hard. The proportion of 15–19 year olds not in full time education or full time work jumped from 13.4 to 16.5 % between 2008 and 2009 (FYA 2012). Despite an equal emphasis (at least rhetorically) on the social and economic benefits of education in the original Education Revolution document (Rudd and Gillard 2008) the key messages in the CoAG communication strategy (2009, pp. 24–25) focus almost entirely on economic outcomes:

Generic:

- Young people aged 15–24 should be engaged full-time in education, training or employment.
- Young people aged 15–20 without a Year 12 or equivalent qualification should be engaged full-time in education or training.
- Education and training pays off – people with higher qualifications tend to earn more over their lifetime.
- Completing Year 12 or an equivalent qualification gives young people the best possible foundation for success in the future.
- Young people without qualifications are at the greatest risk of long-term disadvantage, particularly in periods of economic downturn.

For young people aged 15–24:

- Your career options are endless – education and training will get you there.
- There is no better time than now to get qualified.

For parents:

- Finishing Year 12 or further study will provide the best opportunities for your children and there is assistance to help.

For employers:

- More young people are going to be qualified and have the skills you need.
- Provide training now for the workforce you will need for tomorrow.

In line with more general neoliberal trends, this shifts the discourse from the "economic/society" quadrant in Fig. 13.1, to the "economic/individual" quadrant. Despite the ostensible positive sound of this, these new educational attainment policies have complex and varied effects, placing increased pressures on young people already coping with challenging circumstances (te Riele 2012). Representing voices of young people who had left school early, a report by the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC 2012, p. 14) highlights that the "standard model of conventional schooling [. . .] was unappealing to all of the young people". This young woman sums it up (AYAC 2012, p. 15):

> School is not for everybody and making people stay in the situation when they're not going to like it is just, you know, it's ridiculous.

Crucially, although for these young people schooling is (as Groundwater-Smith and Mockler put it) the problem rather than the solution, that does not mean they are not interested in learning and achieving qualifications. Young people have received the message that credentials matter, as a young man in my research (te Riele and Crump 2003, p. 65) foresaw several years before the CoAG agreement:

> There is definitely a social division and it is increasing. You wonder how long the government is going to be able to uphold benefits. So you have just got to get ahead. Qualifications on paper make such a difference.

The broad social and personal benefits of education, however, are equally important to young people. Many have interests they want to pursue just as they want to gain a sense of self-worth from their educational achievements. While school may not be the right place and the right time for them, they are keen to learn and gain qualifications at a time and in a manner that works for them. As I have argued elsewhere (te Riele 2004) linear pathways through schooling, further study and into employment do not work for everyone. When life is challenging through experiences such as homelessness, ill-health, harassment and poverty (AYAC 2012; te Riele 2012; Wilson et al. 2011) school cannot be the highest priority. Once such challenges are addressed, young people are able to embrace education again – whether after weeks, months or years. Often this occurs in alternative education settings. Their more flexible structures (for example in relation to dress code and timetabling) and curricula (more personalised and hands-on) are signs of schooling aimed at fitting the students, rather than blaming students for not fitting in with default ways of doing school. In such contexts "young people frequently commented upon their renewed enthusiasm for learning" (Mills and McGregor 2010, p. 11). Moreover, these programs tend to recognise the broad range of beneficial outcomes from education, beyond instrumental economic ones. Myconos (2011, p. 41) points to the: "less tangible or quantifiable 'soft' skills attained by the students. These included increased confidence, changed expectations or aspirations and new outlooks".

Summing Up

To return to the controversies proposed by Groundwater-Smith and Mockler: first, that global policies regarding school retention fail disengaged young people at the local level. Their chapter highlights the global policy context in which Australian school attainment policies have been developed. Complementing that, I have traced the recent history of the current *National partnership agreement on youth attainment and transition.* Both the global and historical perspectives demonstrate how the prime motivators for raising educational attainment are economic, and pay little more than lip service to equity.

Second, that for some young disengaged and marginalised students schools are not the solution but may be the problem. There is abundant evidence

(e.g. see Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, Chap. 12, this volume) that many young people do not freely choose to 'drop out' from school but rather are 'pushed out' in subtle and overt, unintentional and deliberate ways by schooling practices and by the circumstances of their lives. My argument here as elsewhere is that non-linear pathways can be not only necessary but better than keeping young people in school – and that the alternative programs these young people turn to have the potential to inform more inclusive practices in mainstream schooling.

Prevailing policy orthodoxies underpinning the *National partnership agreement on youth attainment and transition* make this a policy 'at risk' of serving neither government objectives nor young people well. Broadening the discussion about what education is for is of vital importance if education is to fulfil the nationally agreed educational goals for young people. While the controversies proposed by Groundwater-Smith and Mockler do not seem so controversial to many of us, the continued dominance of economic purposes of education and policy preferences for linear pathways means we need to persist with making our counter-arguments for the benefit of all young Australians.

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Chapter 14
'Money Made Us': A Short History of Government Funds for Australian Schools

Geoffrey Sherington and John P. Hughes

Abstract The recent Australian Federal Government Gonski review of school funding raises the question of how governments have financed schools in Australia. Drawing on various sources of revenue, the early colonial governors funded various schools. By the beginning of colonial self government in the mid-nineteenth century the funding of the schools of the major Church denominations had become regarded as a form of entitlement. The latter emergence of government funded and government provided schools led to the secular Acts of the late nineteenth century removing government funds from Church schools. By the twentieth century the provision of schools was a prime function of State Governments. But the Second World War emphasised the 'fiscal imbalance' in the Constitution with the Commonwealth now claiming primacy in the collection of income tax which had become the prime source of revenue for all government activity. Over the past half a century the idea of entitlement in the provision of government funds for non-government schools has re-emerged in various forms such as 'state aid' and 'school choice'. The Gonski review is the latest development of this process which now involves both the Commonwealth and the States as well as between those who seek preferment in the allocation of funds and wider national concerns about educational disadvantage and school performance.

The recent Gonski review of school funding has become a major focus of attention providing new guidelines for the future of students and schools throughout Australia. The review was framed from a number of perspectives including the performance of students set against global benchmarks in literary and numeracy, as well as such issues as the quality of teachers. But the main emphasis was recommendations for new funding arrangements to mitigate the concentration of educational disadvantage linked to social disadvantage which is now seen as acting against both opportunities for affected individuals as well as the national interest in

With acknowledgement to Donald Horne (Horne 1976).

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_14

a globalised world. The Review thus proposed a new funding formula to provide all students with a base entitlement of government funds but with a supplementation for disadvantage such as low socio-economic status, disability and indigenous background (Review Panel 2011).

The emphasis on funding to drive change may seem a defining characteristic only of our era. Yet, as Ian Wilkinson and his colleagues have shown in their recent detailed history of 'state aid' to 'non-government' schools in Australia: historically, money has often been the driver behind such grand narratives as 'Church and State' or 'public and private' (Wilkinson et al. 2007). And in Australia since 1788, it is money from central government authorities that has been the dominant factor. Unlike in North America, Britain and Europe local government agencies for education in Australia have never been strong. Funds for schooling have thus come not from such sources as local rates and taxes but from central government treasuries. Central funding has thereby shaped much of Australian schooling.

The aim herein is to outline briefly how the process of funding schools has developed. Another purpose is to enrich the current debates surrounding the Gonski review by an historical interpretation. The explanation is principally focussed on New South Wales, which has a continuous history of government funding for schools for over two centuries, but the general analysis applies across Australia. The discussion is also set against both changing patterns of government revenue raising from the nineteenth century to the present as well as Commonwealth-state relations since federation in 1901.

These funding arrangements have long created controversies and 'heresies'. In the nineteenth century some Church figures opposed the introduction of state schools in competition with state-funded Church schools. The withdrawal of aid from Church schools through the colonial secular Acts was then regarded as an arch heresy by the Catholic Church. Equally, the introduction of Commonwealth aid to almost all schools after the Second World War was seen as a sacrilege against the principles of a secular state. And now a national plan for funds distribution, embracing all schools and systems, raises possible new heresies disturbing arrangements in place for almost half a century.

The Governor's Purse

The 'King's purse' was once the repository for the estate and income of the British Crown. In the first decades of British colonial settlement, the Australian governors disbursed funds from their colonial treasury to support various educational endeavours such as schools for the children of convicts, 'orphan schools', and institutions for the instruction of the indigenous populations. The intent was principally for both social order and the moral improvement of the population, attesting that money for schools has long been associated with the idea of 'improvement' in its various forms. Initially those who received the money were private schoolmasters and schoolmistresses as well as governors' wives and clergy seeking to bring about

moral improvement in the rising generation (Cleverley 1971). From 1810 Governor Macquarie began to improve and rationalise the delivery of government services creating, for instance, an orphan fund for charity schools. Revenues now came principally from customs dues on exports such as timber, wool and whale oil, as well as taxing such sources as liquor licences and coal and timber production (Reinhardt and Steel 2006: 4; Griffiths 1957: 20–26).

In 1825, the Colonial Secretary in England ordered the local governor to open the local purse further and establish a Clergy and Schools Lands Corporation whereby one-seventh of the lands in the colony would be made available as an endowment to the Church of England to 'provide religion and education, along Anglican lines' to prevent 'vice and immorality' (Yarwood 1977: 261). This was the first organised colonial use of moneys from land sales to support schooling. The aim was to maintain churches, schools, orphanages, and infant, parochial, grammar, and collegiate institutions and also to proselytize the Aboriginal population (Yarwood 1977: 262).

This first grand plan to use colonial government money for education hardly achieved any of these aims, although it soon established the principle of what is given to one religious denomination shall be sought by all. It was not possible to maintain exclusive Anglican access to government funds in a society which was increasingly diverse in religious faiths. Nor could the dominant Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian Churches be persuaded to co-operate in the manner proposed by Governor Richard Bourke, whereby there would be a common government school providing an institution open to all faiths, in the manner of the established Irish National System. Bourke with the 1836 Church Act did establish government support for the building of churches and the stipends of the clergy. For the following quarter of a century government funds thus supported both the churches and their religious schools. And for more than a decade all the major religious denominations resisted the idea of government funds for 'national' schools open to all students of whatever faith (Turner 1972).

It was only in 1848, on the eve of the introduction of colonial democracy and parliamentary government, that general oversight of government funds was established through two administrative boards. The Denominational Schools Board was created essentially to mediate between the interests and claims of the four major religious denominations of Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist all of which had opened schools principally in the major urban areas (Barcan 1988: 81–83). The Board of National Education developed a much wider brief. Its aim was to develop a system of schools open to all children in both urban and rural districts. This also involved stimulating and then subsiding local communities to establish schools under local patrons and boards. Increasingly seen as being provided by government, national schools were both more efficient and more popular than the denominational schools where educational standards were often poor. William Wilkins, secretary of the Board of National Education became the first of a line of government school administrators who combined educational expertise with new more efficient techniques of administrative governance. The result was that the national schools attracted all sections of society, and often their students were drawn

from the middle classes rather than the poorest, with many of the latter still attending the denominational schools (Sherington and Campbell 2007: 26–30).

By 1866, the Public Schools Act had abolished the dual Boards and created a Council of Education as a single administrative body to oversee all schools receiving government funds. The national schools became 'public schools' which were expanded in many local areas. Central administration replaced the local school boards. Existing denominational schools were now subject to the standards of state inspectors and the opening of new denominational schools was restricted (Sherington and Campbell 2007: 29–30). Effectively this was the beginning of a century long primacy of government in the administration and provision of schooling.

A Secular Public Education System

A number of social and political contexts gave rise to the 'secular schools' legislation passed in all the Australian colonies in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Overall this nineteenth century 'secularism' was part of the development of a common Protestantism which was resisted by the Catholic Church hierarchy as just being a thinly veiled state-based attack on their faith (Ely 1976: 36–37, 1981: 143–157). But there were also pressing concerns over economic efficiency and rational use of resources in the new era of representative and ministerial government. Sir Joseph Carruthers, colonial liberal politician and later early twentieth century Premier of New South Wales, wrote in his memoirs that in 1866 when the Council of Education was formed, despite the variety of provision, less than one third of the colony's children were in school:

> there were so many competing agencies in the educational field, with a scattered population in the Colony- less than 600,000 together- the waste of energy and of money could not be averted under the existing lack of systematic education. In many districts there were three competing schools, all receiving aid, with an average of 75 children in the district attending school . . . It stands to reason that they could not be properly staffed, that the children could not be properly taught, and that much money must have been wasted in three school buildings and in the salaries of three sets of teachers (Hogan 2005: 113–114).

The answer became a state department under a 'minister for public instruction' responsible to Parliament for the expenditure of public monies. The 1880 Act and the similar secular Acts in the other Australian colonies were thus both a cultural-religious and funding divide in Australian schooling that would persist for three quarters of a century. In some colonies, such as South Australia, aid to all denominational schools had already been withdrawn in the 1860s. This process was now consolidated throughout Australia. The Protestant Churches gave up almost all of their schools that had once been funded by government. The Catholic Church resolved to maintain its schools through religious orders and with the support of local parishes (Sherington 2009).

There was another social and financial divide indirectly arising out of the secular Acts. Both Catholics and Protestant denominations now concentrated their financial resources for education on continuing or establishing 'corporate' single sex secondary schools under their own councils. In New South Wales, these corporate schools grew substantially in numbers and enrolments in the wake of the 1880 Act. Endowed with land and bequests, and with relatively high fees, such schools would come to assume the status of being 'independent' of government and even sometimes of the church body which had created them (Sherington et al. 1987).

In contrast, assured government funding now allowed public education to develop into a centralised system. Closely associated with this was the idea that not only were public schools open to all citizens but that public education would serve public interests by creating responsible citizens while widening educational opportunities. Following the suggestion of William Windeyer (who was closely associated with the University of Sydney) the 1880 Act allowed for the creation of single sex public high schools (Sherington and Campbell 2007: 33). Public schools can thus be seen as part of the extension of the reach by government into civil society in the late nineteenth century. They were in certain ways the first universal government social service complementing the pragmatic 'colonial socialism' which saw governments assuming responsibility for financing infrastructure such as railways and ports in the interests of the common good (Butlin et al. 1982: 13–18).

The gold rushes of the 1850s had provided funds to establish the University of Sydney as a public institution but most colonial infrastructure had been funded through loans raised in London, or from the receipts of customs and excise charges. The role of government was also financed through land sales as well as excise and dues through tariff protection. In 1875 land sales and rent alone contributed half of the government revenue in New South Wales (Reinhardt and Steel 2006: 5). In the 1880s the emerging Labor Movement was attracted to the idea of a 'single' tax on land to capture 'unearned' profits and capital gains. But in 1894, the free trade Government of Premier George Reid introduced a new income tax to help replace customs dues – an initiative adopted in other colonies similarly as a response to the budgetary crises of the 1890s Depression. Thus the principle was established that governments could now draw on the income of individual citizens to achieve collective ends (Robinson 2005).

The government funded public education system became more prominent in the early twentieth century when Peter Board was appointed the first Director of Education merging the role of administrator with that of educator. Board drew upon the ideas of the 'New Education' to exalt the public school system as the source of inspiration for change. He also developed the system of state high schools linked to the University through bursaries as well as teacher and other state scholarships. A public examination system now set standards for all schools in the State. Board's proposals still favoured an academic curriculum, and his ideology was driven by notions of efficiency but much of this programme conformed with the aims of the first Labor government elected in 1910. Under the leadership of Premier James McGowen, who placed a high priority on public schools, pre-First World War Labor became committed to an educational programme of overlapping principles of

merit and equity through extending schools and providing support to the Technical College and the University. Bursaries and scholarships now became open to students in both and non-government schools but only if such schools allowed their pupils to sit the state endorsed examinations (Taksa 2006).

Overall, financing public education was a major plank of the Labor Governments which came to power in most of the Australian States just prior to the First World War, even though there were increasing claims from other areas of emerging social expenditure. From 1911 to 1940 per capita levels of Australian social expenditure rose 208 % accelerating the growth in public expenditure since the 1850s. But much of this was for income support rather than direct services such as education. Under the Labor Premier Jack Lang in New South Wales during the 1920s there was more focus on such areas as the widow's pensions and child endowment followed in the 1930s Depression by unemployment relief payments (Robinson 2005: 10–19). Nevertheless, throughout Australia, governments spending on education rose over these two decades from 4.3 to 6.2 % of total State expenditures (Butlin et al. 1982: 185).

The Depression also raised the issue of the equitable distribution of funds within public education, including technical colleges and universities. This was of particular interest to those with rural and regional interests. In the 1930s Depression, David Drummond, leader of the Country Party in New South Wales, encouraged public education as well promoting a new University of New England, as a means to develop a regional base in New South Wales, and to provide more educational opportunities for rural children (Barcan 1988: 213–215). At the same time, the 1930s Depression caused a fiscal crisis for all Australian State Governments, placing in doubt the future growth of educational services. As Minister for Education in New South Wales, David Drummond would be one of the major figures supporting the establishment of the Australian Education Council, the forerunner to the later post-1945 organisations representing the interests of the States in the area of schools and education (Spaull 1986: 12–29).

The Commonwealth Treasury

The finances of federations are often based on a 'vertical fiscal imbalance' whereby revenues do not match expenditures for different levels of government (Dollery 2002). In the case of Australian federation in 1901, the new Commonwealth had prime access to revenue collection, initially though the national tariff system, while the major areas of expenditure in such areas as railways, hospitals and schools were 'reserved' as responsibilities of the States. But there was also general agreement on the need for 'fiscal equality' in the new Australian federation. For the first decade from 1901 the Commonwealth returned to the States three quarters of customs and excise revenue. From 1910 each State received a per capita grant. In the 1930s Depression the Commonwealth Grants Commission began to provide grants on the basis of need to each individual State (Hancock and Smith 2001).

The Second World War brought new roles to the Commonwealth and a new relationship with the States. The 1941 National Fitness Act, whose genesis lay in the fears prompted by the advent of war, provided Commonwealth grants to the States to provide recreation and camps for schoolchildren and young people (Irving et al. 1995: 51–64). By 1942, the Commonwealth was more directly involved with funding university activities and research to support the war effort, even providing scholarships in the area of science. The War thus inaugurated a new era in the Commonwealth funding Australia's universities. From the end of the War, tentative steps began towards a system of providing grants to university education, beginning with the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme providing support to ex-servicemen and culminating in the Murray Report of 1957 which established the Commonwealth as the main purse for universities (Australia. Committee on Australian Universities and Murray 1957; Horne and Sherington 2012: 253–256; Spaull 1976).

The War also increased the taxation powers of the Commonwealth. The first Commonwealth income taxation act had been introduced in 1915 as an emergency measure later extended. The taxation rates under this measure were low and cut in at a high threshold, but this meant that both Commonwealth and States now imposed income tax (Reinhardt and Steel 2006: 7). A lasting legacy of the Second World War was the Uniform Taxation Agreement of 1942 which consolidated the power of raising taxation within the Commonwealth. Under the uniform tax system Commonwealth taxes were required to be paid before State income taxes, and this made it difficult for the States, which retained the power to levy income tax, to introduce a parallel income tax. The States were compensated through Commonwealth reimbursement grants provided that they ceased to levy their own taxes. This was affirmed after the War when the High Court ruled that as a condition of receiving grants from the Commonwealth the States must not impose their own income taxes (Spaull 1986: 54). The judgement further bolstered the federal fiscal imbalance as the Commonwealth showed no inclination to take on responsibilities of the States.

While committed to a programme of social reconstruction, the federal Labor Party in power 1942–1949 was not prepared to assume any financial responsibilities for schooling despite the urgings of the Minister for Reconstruction, John Dedman (Spaull 1988). The Australian States were thus dependent on conditional grants from the Commonwealth at the very moment that they were facing expanding post-war financial commitments in such areas as hospitals and schools as a result of the demographic surge from the post-war baby boom in the late 1940s and 1950s as well as the expanded immigration programmes of the Commonwealth. In 1938 expenditure on education had represented only 9.45 % of the New South Wales State budget, by 1958 this was 18.42 % and by 1963, 22.55 % (Kensall 1972: 253–255). At the same time the Department of Education under the new Director General, Harold Wyndham, was moving towards establishing a system of comprehensive high schools to cope with the growing demand for secondary school qualifications (Hughes 2002).

Despite pleas from the States at the Australian Education Council, Robert Menzies, the federal Liberal Prime Minister in the 1950s, refused to contemplate the Commonwealth assuming new financial responsibilities for State public schools. As he told the Conference of Premiers in 1954, he did not believe that the Commonwealth should run education on a centralised basis even though the States now relied on federal income tax receipts:

> Education is a business for the States. It is not our constitutional job and, speaking for myself, I hope it never will be. It is a matter on which the States themselves ought to have unfettered authority, not handicapped by authority from us or strings or grants, and therefore, its real significance is that it is a large item in which you might call the claim on tax reimbursement (Spaull 1986: 90–91).

Major change on direct funding arrangements did not come therefore from the politics of Commonwealth-State relations. But it did emerge from the new campaign for state aid to non-government schools stimulated by a changed federal politics after the Second World War. In part this arose from the abatement of the sectarianism and hostility between Catholics and Protestants which had been fanned by the nineteenth century secular acts. Unlike the First World War, when the Dublin uprising and the conscription referendum had tested identities and loyalties in Australia, the Second World War had tended to consolidate identification with a common cause in a nation under threat (Wilkinson et al. 2007: 1–50). And as with public schools, local parish Catholic schools in particular faced the demographic pressures of the post-war years but without any government financial resources to fund the expansion required.

The re-emergence of the idea of state aid for Church schools related in part to the new domestic politics of the Cold War. Alarm at the influence of Communists in the trade union movement led to the split in the Australian Labor Party (ALP). Closely aligned to the Catholic Church the new Democratic Labor Party (DLP) adopted a platform which supported public funds for denominational schools. In response, sections within the Australian Labor Party maintained a commitment to public schools, reinforcing strong opposition to all forms of ‘state aid’ (Wilkinson et al. 2007: 30–32).

Individual state Governments took different stances on this issue. In New South Wales, the ‘Goulburn School Strike’ of 1962 arose from the pressure on local Catholic schools of expanding enrolments as well as the brinkmanship of Catholic authorities who decided to ‘close’ parish schools temporarily and withdraw all children from Catholics schools and have them seek enrolment in local public schools. The intention was to show the ‘power of numbers’ and eventually this led to the New South Wales Government agreeing to provide per capita government grants to supplement the resources in Catholic schools. But the wider campaign for state aid in New South Wales was principally a middle class citizens’ movement based not so much on the old claims for religious equity and social justice which the Catholic Church had long mounted, but rather the rights of parents to claim a fair restitution of federal income taxes when they decided to send their own children to schools

outside the public education system. This claim thus crossed the old boundaries of Catholics and Protestants, uniting middle class parents who paid school fees (Hogan 1978).

The matter of income tax would also provide an initial entry point for the Commonwealth in the area of subsidies to individual parents. While resisting the claims of the States, in 1952 the Menzies Government allowed school fees as a tax deduction and then provided gifts for school buildings to also be claimed. By 1956, Menzies had agreed to allow Church schools to claim the interest on loans for secondary school buildings (Wilkinson et al. 2007: 22). The next major move was framed from a more national perspective. Following his close election in 1961 Menzies was reliant on the DLP to stay in government. In 1963, with the DLP pushing for action and the ALP split over state aid, he adopted a report from the Industrial Fund for the Advancement of Science, which was closely aligned to the more elite independent corporate schools, calling for purpose-built science classrooms ("laboratories") in corporate schools on the grounds of meeting the threat posed by the alleged superiority of the Soviet Union in science education. But he also agreed to Commonwealth grants for science labs in all schools, so providing the grants to State government schools that he had long resisted (Wilkinson et al. 2007: 26–32). The science labs grants, and later grants for school libraries, could be seen as an effort to build infrastructure in all schools as part of a process of modernisation. In this sense, it complemented the re-building of infrastructure in universities following the Murray Report of 1957 as well as founding of new universities funded in partnership with the States. Menzies later portrayed these changes as perhaps the crowning achievement of his years as Prime Minister, creating a long lasting national endowment for education (Menzies 1970: 81–97; Martin 1999: 396–399). It was certainly part of a national investment in schools, beginning a trend of seeing Australian education in an international if not global context, an emphasis which continues in part with the Gonski review.

This was all part of a national endowment for education that was now extended throughout the 1960s and into the early 1970s. From 1964 to 1975 federal expenditure on education increased sevenfold, placing schools and universities at the forefront of Commonwealth policy. Under the federal Liberal Governments 1964–1972, educational expenditure quadrupled; under the Whitlam Labor Government expenditure quadrupled in 2 years (Smart 1976: 27). It has been argued that the mid-twentieth century marked a watershed and the final decline of the old 'colonial socialism' with government expenditure shifting towards specific urban infrastructure and the provision of social and human services (Butlin et al. 1982:10–48). But much educational expenditure in the 1960s and 1970s was for both infrastructure and general school maintenance grants. The major political difference was between the ideologies of choice and equity. Federal Liberal governments introduced maintenance grants for all non-government schools as well as building grants on the basis this would widen school choice following a decline in non-government enrolments in the 1960s. In contrast, with Gough Whitlam as leader, federal Labor finally agreed to 'state aid' to Church and independent schools on the grounds

this would consolidate a national education policy designed to overcome social inequities (Smart 1976: 34–36). Such differences would persist for the next two decades.

The Commonwealth Schools Commission

Prior to being elected to government in 1972, the federal ALP had committed to the creation of a Schools Commission to examine the needs of students in all schools. Following the recommendations of an Interim Committee, under the chair of Professor Peter Karmel, the Commonwealth Schools Commission was established in 1973. Ian Wilkinson and his co-authors have provided a detailed account of the policy and proposals of the Schools Commission over the following 15 years (Wilkinson et al. 2007: 51–106).

Jean Blackburn, deputy chair to Karmel, later member of the School Commission, and the source of many of the initiatives and proposals of both bodies specified three reasons for the establishment of the Commission. First, there was the changing financial relationship between the Commonwealth and the States since the Second World War, with the federal Government initially rejecting the claims of the States but then extending grants to non-government schools. Second, there was concern at unequal educational opportunities. Third, there were declining enrolments in non-government schools with many Catholic schools in crisis and in danger of collapse. The aim of the Commission she believed was to see that there were 'adequate standards' in all schools. The Schools Commission therefore had put no faith in a market even though there was some discussion of a 'voucher' system whereby parents would have had government funded vouchers to exercise school choice. Rather, the Commission sought to improve standards by increasing resources to all government schools and ensuring that all non-government schools received adequate federal and state grants based on a proportion of the resources provided to government schools, while taking into consideration the resources of each non-government school. There was to be special attention to 'disadvantaged schools' in the government and Catholic schools. The Interim Committee dropped its proposal to phase out all grants to wealthy non-government schools. The Schools Commission recommended instead that each non-government school receive a subsidy linked to payments to government schools' costs. It had also suggested that any non-government school receiving a subsidy that exceeded 65 % of standard cost would become a 'supported school', having to meet certain conditions on such matters as school fees and entry on the understanding that such schools were effectively becoming more publicly than privately funded, but this was soon rejected (Blackburn 1977).

Jean Blackburn concluded by pointing out that the legislation creating the Schools Commission enshrined the responsibility of governments firstly to ensure that public schools be open to all and be of the highest standard, and secondly, to support the right of parents to choose to have their children educated in a

non-government school. To Blackburn, unlimited school choice would not only impose high costs on government but 'would also put standards in non-fee public schools in peril' because non-government school parents would almost certainly 'supplement public payments by private ones' while 'the base standard that public payments supported would thus be very hard to raise and might even be depressed to a level agreeable as a subsidy to parents using non-government schools' (Blackburn 1977: 195). Instead Blackburn suggested:

> The end point contemplated is a redefinition of public schooling in which a variety of schools having different sponsorship and philosophies, fully supported by government funds and of comparable standards, will constitute a free public system, itself diverse (Blackburn 1977: 195–196).

But old divisions remained entrenched. There were now specific national grants to supplement the funds of State government schools. But the Catholic schools, which had benefitted from federal and State grants had no wish to be part of a public system that the Catholic hierarchy had long rejected. And although the Church and other corporate schools willingly accepted the largesse of both Commonwealth and State grants they were also determined to be 'independent'. Finally, the idea of choice, which was endorsed but not fully enshrined in the proposals of the Schools Commission, had the potential to extend the idea of 'state aid' to the establishment of new schools. Despite all this, the School Commission was instrumental in making recommendations which led to substantial increases in Commonwealth financial support for schools, while also developing programmes and new funding arrangements in such areas as social disadvantage, aboriginal schooling and multicultural education. The incorporation of the Commission into the federal Department of Education in 1985, followed by its latter demise, marked the end of two decades of national investment in schools. Despite this investment some would claim that the Commission had failed to achieve educational equity, one of its prime aims (Connell 1993: 263–282).

To Gonski and Beyond

In 1989, the Carrick Committee analysed government funding for schools as part of its overall review of schools in New South Wales. In the two decades since 1968–1969, government financial resources for both government and non-government schools had doubled in 1989 dollar terms. The Committee also noted two other emerging trends. First, as part of its overall economic re-structuring, the Hawke federal Labor Government was reducing its financial commitments to schools. Second, there was a growing parental preference for non-government schools which now had an assured funding base from both federal and State government grants (Committee of Review of New South Wales Schools and Carrick 1989: 65–77).

The 1980s marked a shift away from Australian governments concentrating on providing inputs into schools towards a focus on the outputs of schooling.

From 1984, the Hawke Government placed its grants to the States within a framework of the 'new federalism' signing specific agreements with State Governments while seeking to reduce the grants to wealthy non-government corporate schools and restrict the overall growth of non-government schools through its 'new schools' policy. Much of this was designed to ensure educational efficiencies while preserving the traditional role of government schools in offering universal and open access but also developing the skills base for Australia in the new global economic contexts. This was all a final attempt to maintain and even revive the primacy of government schools that had first emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In the end, the Hawke Government soon abandoned proposals to phase out grants to wealthy corporate schools. Instead there was an increasing emphasis on 'quality in education' and value for money. All schools were supposedly to be funded on a 'community standard' (Wilkinson et al. 2007: 107–151). The new schools policy also did not end the opening of new non-government schools although it did slow the pace of growth. Of particular significance was the emergence of 'independent' or 'non systemic' Christian schools, most of which were evangelical Protestant in outlook. The election of the Howard Government in 1996 led to the federal authorities abandoning any limits on the growth of non-government schools. The Howard Government also initiated funding policies which deliberately discriminated against government schools, reducing federal grants to States when there was a shift from government to non-government schools. On this foundation, governments helped to create the idea of a market in education, a situation which the Schools Commission had hoped to avoid. It now seemed a moral as well as financial obligation on middle class parents that they and not governments choose the best school for their child (Campbell et al. 2009).

By the first decade of the twenty first century 'school choice' had come to supplant 'public education' even in the discourse of governments that had once championed social equity. The New South Wales Labor Governments 1995–2011 were from the outset committed to school choice even within the public school system. The Grimshaw report of 2002 ensured that non-government schools would continue to receive from the New South Wales Treasury, one quarter of the per capita funding for government schools (Grimshaw and Review of Non-Government Schools 2002). By 2008–2009, just over one quarter of the New South Wales budget was devoted to grants to government and non-government schools. About two-thirds of all students in New South Wales were in government schools, just above the national average, but there had been a marked decline over the decade and a huge drop since the period just after the Second World War when almost three quarters of students attended government schools (Sherington and Hughes 2012; Wilkinson et al. 2007: 212–215).

The new funding framework for schools introduced by the Commonwealth in 2009 reflected this preoccupation with school choice. The accountability framework for government and non-government schools and school systems required national reporting on performance of individual schools to inform parents and carers and facilitate the appraisal by governments of school performance. Schools were obliged

to provide plain language student reports to parents and carers and make publicly available an annual report on the school's accomplishments and other contextual information (Department of Education and Employment and Workplace Relations 2010: 5).

The effect of these changes over two decades was dramatic as revealed in the early sections of the Gonski report. By 2008, Australian public expenditure on schools was 3 % of GDP and private expenditure 0.6 %. The former was below the OECD average but the latter above it, reflecting the transfer from public to private expenditure that occurred under the policy of school choice over the previous two decades (Review Panel 2011: 13). Of the total net recurrent income of $39 billion, government schools received $25.2 billion about equivalent to their enrolment share of 66 %. But in capital expenditure, government schools had only $3.9 billion or 49 % of funds while the independent sector had $1.6 billion or 25 % of funds but only 14 percent of enrolments. This latter figures would probably also reflect the capital expenditure undertaken by independent schools as a way to retain or capture market share of those prepared to pay high school fees (Review Panel 2011: 14). The breakdown of the income per student indicated that on average students in government schools each received $11,121 with 15 % coming from the Australian Government, 80 % from State and Territory Governments and 5 % from private sources. In Catholic schools, students received $10,002 with 57 % from the Australian Government, 20 % from State and Territory Governments and 23 % from private sources. In the independent sector, each student received $13,677 with 33 % from the Australian Government, 12 % from State and Territory Government funding and 55 % from private sources (Review Panel 2011: 15).

The social consequences of this funding were shown more clearly in latter sections of the report which analysed the concentration of social disadvantage in certain government schools. This was all part of a process of 'residualisation' whereby 'school choice' had actually led to many government schools being required to enrol students unable to find a place elsewhere. In contrast to most of the OECD, Australia now had 'a strong concentration' of disadvantaged students in certain government schools and a low mix of different socio economic groups throughout all schools (Review Panel 2011: 105–129). The Gonski solution was a new funding formula, based on a 'resource standard' with each student allocated a base entitlement which could then be supplemented by 'loadings' to take account of various forms of disadvantage with the ultimate aim of achieving school improvement and reform (Review Panel 2011: 153–155).

The Gonski report recommended that funding should be based on what it called a 'Schooling Resource Standard' (SRS) which reflected the cost of education in a selected number of high achieving schools. The SRS would include a 'per student' amount, with loadings for students and schools facing certain additional costs. The base funding would be the amount considered necessary to educate a student in schools where at least 80 % of students scored above the national literacy and numeracy minimum standard. There would be additional loadings for disadvantage such as low socioeconomic background, disability, English language proficiency, the particular needs of Indigenous students, school size, and remoteness

(Review Panel 2011: cvi). Public schools would be fully publicly funded to the standard. Non-government school public funding to be determined on 'anticipated' level of a school's private contribution.

And to achieve this end, the Gonski Committee proposed a 'national partnership' between the Commonwealth and State governments. One of its recommendations went so far as propose 'more balanced funding roles' as part of the 'transition' to a new funding model with the 'Australian Government assuming a greater role in the funding of government schools and the states in relation to non-government schools' (Review Panel 2011: xxv).

These proposals may become either a watershed or a dead end in Commonwealth-State relations in funding schools. They should be seen in the contexts of the past half century. Initial Commonwealth funding in the 1960s, such as the science laboratories, was intended to provide a national endowment. The subsequent grant system for all schools has laid the foundations for both a market and an expected subsidy and now an entitlement for those who exercise school choice.

Commonwealth-state financial relations now seem more confused than ever. On one hand, the 'vertical fiscal imbalance' between Commonwealth and States seems even more pronounced even though patterns of revenue collection have changed. At the same time, the Commonwealth has developed new roles as well as intruding into areas such as education reserved for the States at federation. Government revenue and expenditure is now a far more significant part of the economy. At federation, Australia's tax to Gross Domestic Product ratio was only 5 %. By the beginning of the Second World War the ratio was still only 11 %. But during and after the end of the Second World War, the Commonwealth relied increasingly on income taxes, sustaining the States through grants. The proportion of taxes to GDP actually fell in the 1960s to 18 % only to rise in the early 1970s with the increased funding for social programmes including schools. Much of this was based on a progressive taxation system with higher rates for high income earners. But the 'taxation reforms' of the mid 1980s and beyond have flattened out rates and broadened the base in various ways (Reinhardt and Steel 2006: 10–19). In 1964, when the science lab grants were introduced, the average tax rate of income was 12.3 %, the median rate 23.4 % and the top rate 63.4 %. By 1995 this had become respectively 22.1 %, 34.0 % and the top rate 47.0 % (Foster 1996: 107).

There has also been a move towards more indirect taxes, including the important Goods and Services Tax (GST) introduced in 2000, replacing previous wholesale and sales taxes, as well as other taxes imposed by the States. The GST was specifically designed to provide a revenue base for the States for such major services as hospitals and schools (Reinhardt and Steel 2006: 20–22). In some ways it mirrored the dependence on customs revenues of the nineteenth century or even the situation of the first decade of federation when three quarters of customs revenue came back to the States. But it is also subject to fluctuations in consumption, most evident in the recent Global Financial Crisis. In November 2012, Nick Greiner the former Premier of New South Wales, appointed to chair a review of the GST, suggested the tax was failing to deliver what was expected. He called for a debate over the scope and rate of the tax (Uren 2012).

Finally there are growing perceived 'entitlements' that involve direct government payments which benefit 'households' in many different ways, often according to the life cycle of families and the having and bringing up of children. In recent years there has arisen a myriad of 'family payments' all of which are in almost direct 'competition' with government funding for schools. Some commentators even foresee a future fiscal crisis as governments search for new forms of revenue to cover both existing and possible new commitments (Tingle 2012).

The newly elected Coalition government has promised to equal the previous government's funding over the next 4 years and to end "the 'command-and-control' regime that has emanated from Canberra" (Pyne 2013). But will the Commonwealth have room to draw general revenue sources for the proposals of the Gonski Committee? Will it need to employ the coercive use of its fiscal and other powers to establish a national policy framework? Even then there remain questions of a fiscal drought. Now not only are current income tax rates far less progressive the nature of consumption on which the GST is based is falling. Overall, Australia's tax to GDP base is one of the lowest among 30 OECD nations (Reinhardt and Steel 2006: 3). One can only wonder how a new 'partnership' between Commonwealth and States can find a way through all of this while satisfying both proponents of school choice and those who seek to overcome educational disadvantage. The vision of colonial governments funding just a centralised public school system now seems a fading past light.

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Chapter 15
Beyond Modernity? A Sociological Engagement with 'A Short History of Government Funding for Australian Schools'

Martin Forsey

Abstract Schools are good to think with, offering powerful scope for viewing and comprehending the wider society in which they are produced and replicated. This response to Sherington and Hughes centres on the apparent paradox of the secular schools legislation passed by all states in the final quarter of the nineteenth century occurring when religiosity was arguably at its peak in Australia, while, less than a century later, the ever increasing commitment to religiously-affiliated schools happened as Australia has grown more and more secular. My sociological eye is drawn towards interpretations that explore the complex relationships between individuals and society and the notion that we live in an unfinished modernity. The historical period covered by Sherington and Hughes is marked by initial constructions of a strong central and secular state, which eventually gives way to a more privatised, individualised "second modernity".

Schools are good to think with, offering powerful scope for viewing and comprehending the wider society in which they are produced and replicated. The ways in which schools are structured, positioned, funded, managed, appreciated, critiqued, cared for and neglected, presents us with a means for seeing beyond the rhetoric of a nation state to the lived realities faced by its citizens. In contemplating these realities, Sherington and Hughes (Chap. 14, this volume) provide much to work with. Starting where they finished, the colonial vision of funding only a centralised public education system in Australia is indeed a faded past light and the authors do important work in highlighting some of the paths that took us there. The big question for me centres on explaining the paradox of the secular schools legislation passed by all states in the final quarter of the nineteenth century occurring when religiosity was arguably at its peak in Australia, while, less than a century later, the ever increasing commitment to religiously-affiliated schools happened as Australia has grown more and more secular.

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_15

In contemplating the role played by state and national governments alongside various church officials in the shaping of communities of practice that are simultaneously national, state, local and even familial, my sociological eye is drawn towards interpretations that explore the complex relationships between individuals and society. In thinking about communities of practice, a term borrowed from Lave and Wenger (1991) but used here in a far more general sense than they advocate, I am drawing especially on Bourdieu's (1977) commitment to understanding the structured agency underpinning all human practices. In this more technical rendering of the term *practice* I seek portraits of human choices and behaviours that are inextricably shaped by the ideas and values of socially located persons. Cultured, structured agency is what I am seeking to uncover. The possibilities of practice are manifold, but the cultural repertoires individuals can draw upon are always limited by what it is possible to think and do in particular places at particular times.

The 'structuring structures are structured structures' argues Bourdieu (1998: 26), a reminder of the dialectical relationship existing between the ideational and the material. Sherington and Hughes emphasise the material over the ideational, arguing that central funding has shaped much of Australian schooling and that finances drive grand narratives of 'Church and State', 'public and private', much more than these narratives drive the financial transactions. In responding to Sherington and Hughes' contribution to the seemingly interminable school funding debate in Australia, I want to allow the ideoscape surrounding the debates a little more presence. The notion of ideoscape is derived from Appadurai (1996) to capture the flow of ideas characterising globalisation. Appadurai identified four other forms of "scape" *ethnoscape*, *technoscape*, *financescape*, *mediascape*, to represent the different flows of globalisation and to help recognise local responses to homogenising effects. The 'scapes' suffix offers a metaphoric link to the uneven local terrains into which global modernisation attempts to embed itself, helping to explain some of the irregularities of globalization (Martinez 2012). I am interested in the ways that the ideoscapes surrounding Australian schools and the various layers of government push and shape the winds of policy and the driving channels of finance.

My initial reading of 'Money Made Us', brought to mind Habermas's (1983) assertion that we live in an unfinished modernity. In a nation born modern (see Dixson 1996), the historical period covered by Sherington and Hughes is marked by initial constructions of a strong central and secular state, which eventually gives way to a more privatised, individualised "second modernity" (Beck and Lau 2005). This standard enough sociological narrative stands up well next to the historical portrait provided. In the setting up of what was to become the bureaucracy of the NSW state education system by successive colonial governments we see a significant part of the grand modernising project in action, one that had captured the imagination of policy makers across the Western world at this time. In making the point that public schools were the first universal government social service in the New South Wales colony, Sherington and Hughes alert us to the significant nation-building role of schools. They are not simply educational institutions, but sites where social imaginaries are exercised in significant ways by persons pursuing causes characterised by the usual levels of consensus and dispute.

Acknowledging immediately that the developments described by Sherington and Hughes represent policy formations that often appear more rhetorical than actual, the commitment to secularisation and 'improvement' of society and the opportunities offered to individuals within it, reflect broader national and international trends of the time. The continuing commitment to equity documented as part of the policy push of the twentieth century propelled the various state school systems towards formations arguably representing the apotheosis of the modernising project in the development of "comprehensive secondary schooling for all" that characterised the post-WWII era.

The modernising drive resulted in remarkably uniform systems of public schooling in each of the Australian states, a policy response linked to the demographic realities of urban concentration and the vast areas of sparsely populated rural spaces characterising the nation. These highly centralised state-wide bureaucratic systems were built around rhetorical commitments to equitable provision of educational opportunities and resources across vast geographic areas (Harman et al. 1991). Characterized by clearly defined hierarchies of authority, extensive regulations aimed at fair, equitable and uniform outcomes and an efficient, equitable distribution of resources to schools, these monolithic bureaucratic systems ensured compliance in curriculum, personnel, finance and facilities administration. So much so, for much of the twentieth century few degrees of freedom were offered to, or exercised by, school principals or staff (Chapman and Dunstan 1990).

Sherington and Hughes are correct in asserting that the history of government funding in New South Wales applies more nationally; indeed, much of the policy directions assumed by the late colonial government in the area I am most familiar with – Western Australia – were clearly derived from New South Wales. However, it was the state of Victoria that led the decentralising charge of the 1980s, a significant policy development, and one that is clearly associated with school funding. Autonomy became the catchcry for government schools in this era. In Victoria this policy formation was initiated via amendments to the Education Act promulgated in 1983, whereby School Councils were given the power to direct the general education policy of the school, oversee the school budget, and, most significantly, to select their own Principals and Deputy Principals (Gamage et al. 1996). One of the more concrete outcomes the reforms of the Victorian education system was the closure or amalgamation of nearly 300 government schools, which some argue were oversupplied for several decades (Caldwell 1999).

As Sherington and Hughes point out 'equity' and 'choice' are key signifiers of the ideological battles that have played out through the development of the various Australian school systems. Particularly pronounced in these neoliberal times are the struggles over rights to either enrol a child in the school of one's choice or for all students to receive as equal a chance as possible through their educational experience, with the discourse often transposing into debates opposing equity to excellence (Forsey 2004). Choice is in ascendency. Even as the (diluted) Gonski reforms were being implemented, the two Labor Prime Ministers of the recent past had made it clear that the new funding model would disadvantage no school, irrespective of its level of luxury. Whereas the Hawke Labor government of the

1980s felt obliged to abandon ‘proposals to phase out grants to wealthy corporate schools’, in favour of ‘quality in education’ and ‘value for money’, there was no such pantomime from the more recent Labor leaders. The watershed for this particular stance emerged from the ill-fated attempt by one Mark Latham who, as a Labour leader in opposition, went to the 2004 Federal Election proposing to cut government funding to 67 high-fee independent schools, which he claimed was necessary in order that funds could be re-distributed to needy government and non-government schools (Yaxley 2004). The Liberal Government returned to power having gained five seats in the process. In the various analyses of the Labor Party loss, Latham’s school “hit list” was often cited as a major cause (see Browne 2012). However, according to opinion polls conducted during the 2004 election, the education policy was an electoral plus for Labor. In pointing to these polls, Ashbolt (2006) argues that other factors were much more significant contributors to the demise of Latham’s political capital. Ashbolt is almost forgiving of what he calls ‘journalistic amnesia’, but he is mystified as to how the Labor Party managed to convince itself of the mythology surrounding the 2004 election loss. But as the discourse surrounding the Gonski reforms have shown, Labor leaders have convinced themselves that defunding elite schools is electorally dangerous, making the return of political debates regarding funding of luxury schools highly unlikely in the short to medium term.

Returning to the ironies of secular Australia supporting religious schools as never before, it seems fair to suggest that, in the federating Australia of the late nineteenth century, the Protestant and atheistic elites of the late colonial societies were not concerned that support for secular schooling undermined their ability to access productive education for their offspring. Colonial socialism may have been the order of the day, but the elites were happy enough for Catholic schools to become and remain “residual”. Fast forward a century or so, we see that the modernising commitments to equality producing a comprehensive education for all, at all levels of the education system. In these changed circumstances clear advantages arise from exclusive schooling, even in those institutions run by Catholics. The residualisation of government schooling becomes one of the obvious effects of this shift in focus and practice. However, it is not just elite behaviour that should draw our attention, the fact is more and more Australians are opting out of public education, particularly at the secondary level.

How do we become neoliberal subjects? The question flows from Larner’s (2005) important challenge to orthodox academic portraits of neoliberal political formations. She argues (p. 11) that what we see in contemporary polities such as Australia reveals less of a unified and coherent political philosophy than complex, hybrid, multi-vocal imaginaries and realities that are never simply imposed on an unsuspecting population from a great height. Commitment to equity remains an important, if vague, cultural value for Australian people (Bullock and Thomas 1997; Pusey 2003), but so does a commitment to choice, particularly when contrasted with terms such as ‘bureaucracy’, ‘compulsion’, ‘regulation’, and ‘homogeneity’

and when it is framed in terms of control over decisions affecting one's children and their future (Forsey et al. 2008; Boulton and Coldron 1996).

Commitments to the equitable aspirations of high modernity have not suddenly disappeared but they sit alongside an intensified commitment to self-expression and fulfilment. In earlier times the nation state and the welfare system helped sustain modernity but now are increasingly thought to restrain it. We are allegedly living in a second phase of modernity with an increased emphasis on the emancipation of the individual, the impetus for which, according to Beck et al. (2003), derives from the welfare state. Beck and his colleagues also characterise this period as one of 'reflexive modernization', which they suggest is characterised by a 'heightened awareness that mastery is impossible' (p. 3). In their words, 'Simple [first] modernization becomes reflexive modernization to the extent that it disenchants and then dissolves its own taken-for-granted premises'. This disillusionment undermines every aspect of the nation-state, 'the welfare state; the power of the legal system; the national economy; the corporatist systems that connect one with the other; and the parliamentary democracy that governed the whole' (p. 3). Put another way the class compromise that helped build the first modernity paved the way for the destruction of the very consciousness that helped produce it. The increased governmental expenditure on education and social protection that marked the post-war period in most Western nations produced 'a more predictable, institutionalized childhood, greater consistency in the period when children grow up and leave home, a narrowing of childbearing years and a clearer demarcation between when working life begins and when it ends'(Higgs and Gilleard 2006, p. 229). This predictability brought to the lives of most citizens by the institutionalization of the modern life-course increased the possibilities of, and desire for, the exercise of flexibility and choice. As Higgs & Gilleard help show (p. 230), an increased emphasis on individualization flows readily enough from the conditions produced out of this predictability and stability.

Larner's exemplary caution against monolithic representations of neoliberalism is also important for any portraits of new phases of contemporary social life. While Beck et al.'s (2003) portrait of contemporary Western society carry a good deal of explanatory power, their claims about the decline of key social institutions are clearly exaggerated, and they readily acknowledge the importance of testing and exemplifying their assertions about the erosion of many of the ascriptive patterns of collective life via empirical research (pp. 6–7). I find it helpful to contemplate the changes documented by Sherington and Hughes as reflecting shifts away from modernity's initial push towards the certainties and securities of collective patterns of life, its progress and controllability and the promise of full employment towards the increasing levels of individualisation, underemployment and global risks of more recent times (Beck and Lau 2005). Sherington and Hughes' study helps complicate the picture as it should, allowing movement beyond the sociological orthodoxies that normalise Keynesian-welfarism, and helping us to recognise it as the temporary, and tenuous, political settlement that it necessarily was (Larner 2005, p. 11).

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Chapter 16
Markets All Around: Defending Education in a Neoliberal Time

Raewyn Connell

Abstract Australian education has been re-shaped over the last three decades by a market agenda, promoted by both major parties and business organizations. It is important to understand the nature of neoliberalism in general, to understand why it has impacted education, and an outline of global neoliberalism is given. It is also important to think about the nature of education itself, as a social process of nurturing capacities for practice. Education itself cannot be commodified; but access to education can be. For markets to work, there must be a rationing of education, hierarchies and mechanisms of competition. Hence the redefinition of schools and universities as firms, and the striking revival of competitive testing culminating in the MySchool website, as well as the expansion of public funding of private schools. Teachers are placed under performative pressures that tend to narrow the curriculum in schools, and make the sector's workforce more insecure. Even the knowledge base of education is impacted, with technicization of professional knowledge and a growth of cultural fakery around education. So far, no happy ending to this saga is in view.

In this chapter I will not be proposing a heresy about education. My idea of education is so orthodox it is almost boring. But I will be proposing a heresy about education *policy* – a heresy in defence of education.

The Change

Australian education has been reshaped, over the last generation, by a cascade of policy and organizational changes. They have been introduced separately and by different governments, but have all, with hardly any exceptions, increased the grip of market logic on schools, universities, and technical education.

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_16

Staff of universities had direct experience of this early in the process. The replacement of Susan Ryan by John Dawkins as federal education minister in 1987 signalled the end of a clear-cut social justice agenda in federal Labor Party education policy, at the moment when Labor, under Hawke's leadership, was at the peak of its popularity and power. The Dawkins reforms that quickly followed injected neoliberal logic into every sector of the education system. University fees were reintroduced in 1988–1989, defining higher education as a commodity not a citizen right.

This was soon followed by the redefinition of higher education as an export industry, the moral equivalent of iron ore. High fees paid by overseas students now became the focus – Australian universities had once educated overseas students for free as development aid by a rich country to poor countries – and some university budgets became very heavily dependent on this income, as the relative contribution of central government funding fell dramatically.

With the introduction of fees came the abolition of the old two-tier higher education system. This had a social-justice element; Dawkins presented it as widening access to university, which in a limited sense was true. It was not achieved by sensible planning, however, but by an astonishing free-for-all takeover binge, that cast university administrations as entrepreneurs. As that competition deepened, a new multi-tier university system emerged, with the "GO8" universities trying to dominate both prestige and research funding.

The resulting system is certainly meaner and arguably as hierarchical as what we had before. The inclusive component of the Dawkins reforms has been undermined by the very mechanisms those reforms introduced. A higher proportion of the age cohort go to university; but the universities they go to are increasingly unequal, and the government has got a larger university system on the cheap.

Funding mechanisms in Canberra have persistently tried since then to force universities to compete with each other, for budget funds as well as student fees. These are little-publicised moves with powerful effects, driving the growth of managerialism in universities. The growth of managerialism in turn has undermined academic democracy, with the power of central managers and deans rising, departmental decision-making declining, and students nowhere. Students are defined now as customers of universities as firms.

University central managements are now in open conflict with higher education unions, and are felt by many staff to be a remote and sometimes hostile force. There is increasingly intrusive and extensive surveillance of staff by online "accountability" mechanisms and "performance management". The loss of trust within universities is papered over by corporate "branding" – called exactly that, at the University of Sydney, by a management that has (I hope) forgotten the literal meaning of the word.

In the technical and further education sector, as Australia de-industrialized – a direct effect of neoliberal economic strategy – and the old apprenticeship system crumbled, the conditions for extensive marketization were created. Attempts to modernize and expand technical training were interwoven with a corporatization of public sector TAFE institutions, and a growth of managerial power at least as marked

as in universities. The occupational cultures of teachers were undermined, and a new regime of precarious employment and pressure to be profitable transformed the experience of working in TAFE (Clark 2003).

The attempt by policymakers to create competitive markets in training services meant that both public and private institutions became simply "providers", competing with each other for fees and subsidies. More entrepreneurs moved into this very substantial market. A study of the situation in 2003 found about 3,000 private registered training organizations in Australia and estimated they had nearly half a million full-time students and about 1.7 million part-time students (Harris et al. 2006). The public sector TAFE workforce was ruthlessly restructured, while the public education rationale of further education was shunted into a separate user-pays market regarded as hobby courses. As technical education too was integrated into a global market and became, from the Australian policy perspective, another export industry, a lucrative and substantially unregulated market in training overseas students emerged.

The school system remains the largest institutional part of the education sector, and has therefore been a focus of neoliberal policy concern and rhetoric. The new agenda was stated by the Prime Minister Julia Gillard in September 2012. The national goal is now for Australia to be ranked as a top-five country in tests of reading, mathematics and science by 2025. "To win the economic race", she or her speechwriters declared, "we must first win the education race." The idea that schooling is basically a "race", about winning and losing, with an ultimate economic purpose, is a nice summary of the neoliberal mentality.

Schools have actually been more resistant to the excesses of managerialism than the universities and TAFE, so far, but the school system too has been impacted by the market agenda, in Australia as overseas (Campbell et al. 2009). De-zoning of public schools and the expansion of state selective schools have undermined the comprehensive public schools of the previous generation. The Kennett government's "Schools for the Future" programme in Victoria is the classic case but similar moves have been made elsewhere. The effect, and the intention, is to define each school as a firm competing with all others for students, marks and money, in markets where parents are consumers expected to exercise "choice" between different firms/schools.

These changes at state level are powerfully reinforced by the federal government's policy of expanding the private school system. "State aid" for religious schools was introduced by the Liberals in the 1960s in a bid for the Catholic vote, and expanded in the 1970s by Labor. At this time the policy rationale was to provide for disadvantaged children, many of whom were in Catholic schools. Since then, the federal subsidies to private schools have grown enormously, and changed in rationale. They now support a mass market in privately-controlled schooling that is effectively secular, and whose main clientele now is middle-class families "choosing" for their own advantage.

Working-class children mostly go to public schools, but the public schools are increasingly residualized. The main exception is selective public schools, which now function as cheap private schools for families able to win at the competitive-

examination game. The creation of the *MySchool* website, proudly launched by Julia Gillard as education minister in early 2010 just a few months before she became Prime Minister, may be taken as a sign of the national consolidation of the neoliberal regime in schooling. It signalled the consolidation of the market in schooling, the triumph of competitive testing, the promotion of selfishness as the basis of public policy, and the end of a concept of public education. It is telling that the site was named *MySchool* – not *Our Schools*. I will come back to this.

In the basic logic of policy, there is now no difference between Labor and Liberal/National parties. The unchallenged assumption of national and state policy is that whatever problem exists, market logic is the solution. If there is still a problem, apply *more* market logic. So in 2012 after *MySchool* we had the *MyUniversity* website coming online. Doubtless soon we will have *MyKinder*, reporting competitive test results for 5-year-olds. How on earth did we get to this point?

The Market Agenda and Neoliberal Politics

Most people closely concerned with education do not pay much attention to economic policy nor read the business pages of the newspapers. So when a neoliberal coup hits them, it seems to come out of blue sky. To understand what has been happening in Australian education in the last 30 years, it is vital to understand that this cascade of change, in whatever language it is marketed by the politicians, is not mainly about education. It is about development and corporate profit, social transformation under the sign of the market, and it reflects strategies that began in a military dictatorship in the 1970s and have since come to regulate the world. (For a general introduction to neoliberalism see Braedley and Luxton 2010; for a general analysis of markets in education, see Marginson 1997).

Neoliberalism is most familiar as a set of economic policies and supporting ideas. The ‘free market’ is the central image. De-regulation measures that were supposed to free the markets, especially capital markets, were among the earliest and most important neoliberal policies. Controls over banking, controls over currency exchange, and controls over capital movement were all loosened. Gradually a fastmoving global arena of financial transactions, consisting of a network of national and international markets in shares, bonds, financial derivatives and currency, was brought into being. This arena is the core of what corporate executives and financial journalists mean by “globalization”. Through its linkages, the Wall Street financial crisis of 2007 was turned into a global slump.

Neoliberalism seeks to make existing markets wider, and to create new markets where they did not exist before. This is central to the interests of the businessmen who fund and sustain neoliberal politics: an expanding terrain of profit-making *is* their definition of development. Neoliberalism pushes towards the universal commodification of services, including the realm of social reproduction. The most dramatic form is the privatisation of public assets and services, such as land and

electricity. However neoliberals have been quite inventive in finding other ways to commodify services, in education as elsewhere.

The expansion of market relations allows, at least in principle, a lower level of public spending, and therefore a lower level of taxation. Alongside de-regulation, cutting taxes was one of the first neoliberal policies to be put into practice. The passing of Proposition 13 in California in 1978, a referendum to cap property taxes which eventually caused a massive funding crisis in Californian public education, is one of the historic markers of the neoliberal turn. Tax cutting has remained a banner cause for neoliberals, currently promoted by the Tea Party in the USA and Gina Rinehart in Australia. In cold fact, the overall tax take of OECD governments has fallen little. But there has certainly been a shift to a more regressive tax system, moving from direct to indirect taxation, with a marked reduction of taxes on wealth and on high incomes.

Neoliberal policies have not 'rolled back' the state – indeed its repressive capacity has grown – but they have gone far to halt the growth of public sector expenditure, translating into a real squeeze on many public services. This gradual process in the economies of the global North was packaged in a more drastic form in the IMF Structural Adjustment Programs of the 1980s and 1990s imposed on countries of the global South. Structural Adjustment Programs are supposed to be a thing of the past, but the logic remains – as the devastating conditions imposed on Greece in 2011–2012 make clear.

In Australia, this process got a solid grip during the 1980s, with the hegemony of market ideology in the public service as well as among the politicians (Pusey 1991). This happened under a federal Labor government, and since that time, the major parties have differed only in the vehemence with which they pursue a neoliberal agenda, the Liberals being more ruthless. The recently-defeated Labor government of Australia imposed a structural adjustment programme on itself, centred on the creation of a budget surplus, and the new Coalition government is following down the same path by cutting the public sector harder.

In the remaining public sector, a new ethos of managerialism has appeared. Managers' salaries and bonuses rise, in both the private and the public sector, to unprecedented levels; while an emphasis on labour market flexibility produces a growing workforce of part-time and casual and contract labour at the bottom of the organizations. Applying market discipline to the labour force has meant sustained pressure against unions. Worldwide there has been an irregular but insistent roll-back of entitlements and security which the organized part of the working class had historically won.

Thus neoliberalism has succeeded in changing the connection between politics and economy in much of the world. In the global North, it has dismantled the Keynesian welfare state, the system of regulated capitalism and state-supplied services that was dominant in the generation from 1945 to 1980. In the global South, neoliberalism has dismantled the social-democratic developmentalist state, and broken up the social alliances around it – most successfully in Latin America, Africa, and Oceania.

The forces driving neoliberalism are generally understood through a systems model of capitalism that focusses on the global metropole (Harvey 2005; Duménil and Lévy 2004). But the first country to adopt a strongly neoliberal economic regime, in the 1970s, was Chile. It was in New Zealand and Australia that labour governments in the 1980s pioneered the shift from social democracy to neoliberalism. In the 1990s the great triumph of neoliberalism was in the former Soviet bloc. In the 2000s neoliberalism has been working its way through the Arab world and consolidating in south Asia. And since 2000 it has been Latin America where the most powerful contestation of neoliberalism has emerged. With Samir Amin (1997), I consider that neoliberalism has as much to do with the restructuring of metropole/periphery relations as with crisis tendencies internal to the metropole.

In Australian politics, as in most parts of the global periphery, neoliberalism appears as a *development agenda*, a strategy for growth and prosperity. An early dramatisation of this was Paul Keating's 'banana republic' statement. The most recent version is the white paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Australian Government 2012). In this astonishing document – Chap. 6 should be read by educators who want to see the policy future – neoliberal educational mechanisms are presented as the essential preparation for Australia [read: Australian business elites] to tap the rivers of gold about to flow from the rising middle class of rising Asia.

The commodification of services and the privatisation of public sector agencies demands institutional and cultural change. The profit-seeking corporation is promoted as the admired model for the public sector, and for much of civil society too. Schemes of organization and control are imported from business to public institutions. In an "audit society", public institutions have to make themselves auditable, on a model imported from business accountancy (Power 1997). The discussions in the 1970s about representative bureaucracy and industrial democracy came to a sudden halt, displaced by a new ethos of managerialism. A clear measure of the new scale of managerial power is that managers' salaries and bonuses have risen, in both the private and the public sector, to unprecedented levels. The top corporate managers in Australia now are paid $10–$15 million per year, each. This is publicly defended on the grounds that US managers, rock stars and mining billionaires are paid even more.

The Nature of Education and Educational Markets

The shift in policy, and increasingly in practice, towards market models is now so far advanced that it calls in question our understanding of fundamental matters. Most important, the market agenda and the spread of educational markets raise questions about the nature of education itself, about the purpose of our work as educators.

Neoliberalism has a definite view of education, as the forming of human capital. It is the business (literally) of forming the skills and attitudes needed by a productive workforce – productive in the precise sense of producing an ever-growing mass of

profits for the market economy. "Human capital" is a metaphor, and in itself too narrow. But this economistic idea does catch an important feature of education, that it is a creative process oriented to the future.

In this respect I prefer the neoliberal model to the view widespread in other areas of social science, including the sociology of education, that education is a process of social reproduction. This is the approach of sociologists influenced by the theories of Bourdieu in particular (e.g. Teese and Polesel 2003). That schooling can be a strategy for transmitting privilege between generations is an important observation, and one of the keys to what has been happening in Australian education. But the concept of social reproduction is far too static, as I argued some time ago in a critique of Bourdieu and other left functionalists (Connell 1983). In terms of practice, it leads either to complacency or despair.

The missing dimension is history, the creative development of social practice through time. Bringing history more centrally into the frame, we arrive at an understanding of education as the social process in which we nurture and develop capacities for practice. (For the bases of this definition see Connell 1995.) That may be done in a way that re-generates privilege and poverty; it may be done in a way that *increases* privilege and poverty; but it may be done in a way that trends towards equality.

Education understood in this sense is an encounter between persons, with all their capacities in play – intellectual, emotional, relational. It implies people capable of encounter, i.e. not under the control of other forces, chemical or social. Military training is not education. The capacity for care is deeply involved, that is indeed the basis of the creativity of teaching. An educational encounter implies a relationship of respect between teacher and learner, which requires a kind of mutual citizenship in the situation. Trust is the condition for the complex communication through which complex learning occurs.

To institutionalize education, in a school or university system, is thus a very demanding task, creating social institutions where these conditions are likely to be met. The social labour of creating and sustaining such institutions is very complex; it's what we study in school ethnographies and institutional sociology, where teachers' work is documented in its dailiness and its intricate variations. The theoretical models of education as human capital formation or social reproduction absurdly oversimplify these settings and the work that goes on within them.

Understanding education as the nurturing of capacities for practice also emphasises a reality test for educational relationships. We are not free to teach lies to children and call the result 'education'. We are not free to *imply* lies, even by omission, to distort reality, to create glossy pictures of the world and pretend they are real.

That is to emphasise the cognitive side of education, alongside the emotional – the dimension of intellectual excitement, at every level from basic language learning onwards. Learning involves discovery, realization, and engagement with truth. The inner fire of education is the same as the inner fire of culture in general; education does not involve a watered-down reality.

Education itself, understood in this sense, cannot be commodified. But something is certainly being commodified, bought and sold in the expanded educational markets. In the field of human services, as neoliberalism has shown in other areas, to create a market you have to restrict the service in some way. In this case you have to *ration* education, as Gillborn and Youdell (2000) accurately put it. What is sold, then, is a privilege – something that other people can't get, that is no longer common property.

Paying fees to get into university is the simplest example. What was the 1970s defined as a citizen right, funded from collective resources through progressive taxation, became a private benefit paid for by the student or the student's family. The changing ratio in Australian universities between income from the federal budget and income from fees is a stark measure of the commodification of higher education access. (This has dramatically changed international relations in higher education: Australian universities once offered free education to south-east Asian students as a form of development aid, but now extract large flows of money from Asia, especially China, by charging high fees to international students.)

Provided there is a rationing of these resources (i.e. unequal distribution through the society), it is possible to commodify a wide range of privileges: access to elite institutions; access to facilities, e.g. buildings and grounds; favourable teaching staff numbers and expertise; further support such as levels of pastoral care. As Joel Windle and Greg Stratton (2013) show, the marketing brochures and websites of private schools are a rich guide to contemporary ideologies in education; and these sites display all these forms of commodification.

Furthermore, the rationing itself is being marketed. This is a key ideological mechanism of neoliberalism in education. The brochures, and the mass media advertising in the case of richer schools, create an image of an orderly, disciplined, clean and uniformed little world. Parents are invited to contrast this haven with the undisciplined, dirty and dangerous world outside – 'outside' being, implicitly, the public schools. The ideal of this logic of commodification is the private school or private university as a gated community, with the messy reality of the rest of society locked out.

For commodification to work, in the arena of a basic social process such as education, exclusion is vital. There need to be visible losers, if parents are to be persuaded to pay for their children to become winners. Neoliberalism in education therefore persistently draws attention to the underachievers, the 'at risk', the non-performers, the pockets of poverty, the bad schools, the bad families, the under-motivated, the excluded, the failures. Radhika Gorur (2013) is right about the way *MySchool* narrows down the information about schools to centre on the competitive results of NAPLAN testing; and this is the main reason why.

The genius of *MySchool* is to make a vast public display of the losers, school by failing school, into a centrepiece of national education policy – erecting an electronic pillory right in the middle of the mall. The statistics are duly processed by the mass media into league tables, ranking schools in order of NAPLAN test performance (for instance the special supplement '*MySchool*: NSW Schools Ranked', *Sydney Morning Herald*, Monday 27 February 2012). The government is

cute, it doesn't have to publish league tables of its own; but is anyone so naive as to think they did not expect this immediate result?

The losing has to be legitimated, it has to be made credible and not appear a matter of unfair discrimination or bad luck. It is therefore not surprising that the neoliberal takeover of education has been accompanied by a great revival of competitive testing. A generation ago, competitive testing itself was on the nose. The results from IQ-test identical-twin studies that had provided the key evidence for claims that intelligence was predominantly hereditary had been discovered to be faked (for a careful later review of this debate see Tucker 1997). There was increasing evidence that conventional achievement tests were culturally and socially biased, and that competitive testing was of little practical use in classroom teaching. At a policy level, all this has been forgotten. The results of competitive achievement testing are now treated as unassailable truth, the basis of 'transparency', the gold standard on the basis of which individual students, teachers, schools, and countries are to be judged.

Not only do we have expanded national competitive testing, we also have international competitive testing, now coordinated through the rich countries' neoliberal think-tank, the OECD. Australia's competitive position in the PISA tests vis-a-vis Finland, Singapore, etc., is the subject of media exposures and policy angst. "Report Card Makes Grim Reading", was the headline of the opinion piece by the *Sydney Morning Herald*'s political editor (15–16 December 2012), while the front-page story by the same paper's education editor (12 December 2012) was headed "Maths and English – Nation Could Do Better". The main Australian provider of competitive tests, the ACER – whose CEO was quoted in both articles – has become a major player in neoliberal education strategy. The ACER is now pursuing a market-driven restructuring of the teaching profession as well as school assessment.

The creation of a system of winners and losers that is required to marketize education services is fundamentally at odds with education. The exclusive rights needed to establish ownership of something, and therefore the possibility of buying and selling it, are antithetical to the inclusive character of educational relationships. The egocentrism, jockeying for advantage, and distrust required in the operation of a competitive market is incompatible with respect and trust. The search for privilege through the competitive market undermines the equal citizenship required in education. The struggle for market position pressures schools, colleges and universities to become purveyors of spin, brand images and manipulative advertising. But these are relatively minor forms of cultural fakery. Much more important is the machinery of misrepresentation that has been created at systemic level.

The Situation of Teachers

The market agenda has important consequences for the workforce of the education sector, especially the teachers. In the earlier stages of the neoliberal movement, its ideologists very often denounced teachers, especially public school teachers. Now there is a more considered attempt to recruit teachers into the neoliberal project.

This second-wave agenda is evident in the recent OECD report *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2005). The report notes a looming crisis of generational turnover in teaching and sees it as an opportunity to re-shape the workforce. Written in a managerialist language of performance, reward, flexibility, monitoring, and quality assurance, and with an intellectual framework strongly influenced by PowerPoint, the main thrust of the report is to problematise teacher "quality" and propose the creation of a professional elite within school teaching.

A harder line in the same direction is taken in a report put out by the Business Council of Australia (2008), which commissioned some research about teacher quality assessment from the ACER and prefaced it with their own conclusions. With consummate hypocrisy, the Business Council presented their recipe for more inequality under the slogan "How Can We Raise the Quality of School Education so that Every Student Benefits?" The main thrust of this proposal is to separate "excellent" teachers from the ruck, introduce steep income differentials as incentives for the top teachers, and turn school principals into entrepreneurs. The Gillard Labor government embraced the scheme for differential pay during the election campaign of 2010.

In a perceptive international survey of research on teachers' work, Weber (2007) notes that the neoliberal agenda has more than material consequences for teachers. It calls into existence new social identities and political positioning, marginalizing teachers' voices in educational reform, subjecting them to new regimes of control and accountability, rather than treating them as autonomous and potentially disruptive actors.

The consequences of the neoliberal agenda for teachers include, obviously, changes in their workplaces. There is a visible shift towards corporate methods of management: a shift of authority from teaching staff to managers; a heavier reliance on financial techniques of control; a greater focus on measurable outcomes rather than the performance of traditionally mandated tasks; a greater focus on corporate image and public relations; and a tendency to see other educational institutions as competitors rather than colleagues. Particularly important for the workforce is the introduction of corporate schemes of "performance management", in which members of staff declare personal goals and managers try to measure how well one has achieved them each year. This is now widespread in Australian universities and TAFE, though has made less progress in schools.

A growth of managerial authority goes together with distrust of teacher professionalism. This is very clearly shown by the current introduction of accreditation Institutes by state governments, which have now been introduced across the country. These are new mechanisms of surveillance intended to guarantee quality by controlling entry to teaching, and scrutinizing teacher education programs. There is an expectation that they will eventually monitor teacher performance and assess grades of expertise, to recognize the professional elite foreshadowed by the OECD, though it is currently agreed they lack the resources to do this.

The institutional changes go together with a gradual cultural change, a redefinition of the idea of a good teacher. We have moved away from the idea of a

teacher as an autonomous professional to the idea of the teacher as the bearer of a set of skills and a body of information which the school, as an entrepreneurial market agent, offers to a set of customers. This is what I have called the "Competent Teacher" model (Connell 2009); Weber (2007), more acidly, calls it the "Compliant Technician" model.

There is still a need to teach specific curriculum areas, so subject-specific knowledge and skills are needed. Technical skills, including competence in new technologies, are also required. Those are the main services that schools offer to the market and there will be a continuing demand for them. But there is no need for the Competent Teacher to be able to reflect on the bodies of knowledge from which the school curriculum derives. That is the business of the central authorities, which audit the outcomes of the schools' work. Teacher-generated curriculum becomes an absurdity, because it cannot be competitively assessed; so there is no need to produce teachers with this capacity.

Stevenson (2007), in a study in the English midlands, shows how the restructuring agenda reorganizes pay scales and jobs to focus teachers' work on their "core task" and reward them for successful performance. This means shedding some of the administrative work they used to do, which is handed to lower-paid workers; but it also means shedding pastoral functions of teaching, because the measure of performance is the pupils' results on standardized tests. Under such a regime, teachers have more difficulty taking a holistic view of children's education. The pressure on teachers is publicly acknowledged: it is called, in an interesting slide into business language, "accountability" (Kleinhenz and Ingvarson 2004).

As Robertson (2000: 177) puts it in her study of the changing context of teachers' work:

> Commodified education in the market-friendly model of schooling is thus about establishing the conditions that guarantee advantage within society in an increasingly competitive world.

Schools are not only marketing advantages, they also have to gain advantage in competition with each other. Neoliberal managers (in all industries) will normally try to have a workforce that offers the necessary array of competencies at minimal cost. Likely consequences in teaching are the growth of modular and "teacher-proof" curricula, more part-time and casual employment, hierarchical divisions within the teaching workforce, and in-service education that emphasises measurable skills and is funded by the employees themselves.

The market agenda wants an insecure workforce. Neoliberal policies weaken employee unions and try to turn employer/employee relationships into individual contracts – individual on the part of the employee, that is. The strategy is international, as teacher unions have found (Compton and Weiner 2008). Casualization has, so far, not advanced very far in the school sector. It is rampant in TAFE, and far advanced in the university sector, where about half the undergraduate teaching is now done by casual labour, i.e. people on short-term contracts, often part-time as well.

Above the elite of teachers are the principals and deputy principals, who are being re-shaped in the neoliberal imagination as a managerial class, exactly parallel

to corporate managers in the private sector. With schools being redefined as firms competing with each other in a market, of course the firms need entrepreneurial managers to run them – not educators. They need managers who control a budget, hire and fire staff, attract corporate funding, market their product through advertising, and so on. Exactly this package was promoted in the 2012 education measures of the O'Farrell Liberal government in NSW (Stevenson and Robins 2012). A gradual change in relationships between classroom teachers and school executives is thus under way, with public schools being reshaped on the model of private schools, even without formal privatisation.

The consequences for teacher education are potentially very large. A list of auditable competencies can in principle become the whole rationale of a teacher education programme. There is no need, in such a model, for any conception of Education as an intellectual discipline – and therefore there is no need for teacher education to happen in universities. Private providers would do. There is also no need for cultural critique, since in neoliberal theory the only societal decision-maker is the market, aggregating individual choices. There is a limited role for educational research, mainly to conduct positivist correlational studies to discover "best practice" – research which can be contracted out, and need not be done by universities.

The neoliberal claim that schools are being freed from stifling bureaucracy and heavy-handed state control, is essentially a sham. Schools are being tied more tightly into a system of *remote* control, operated by funding mechanisms, testing systems, certification, audit and surveillance mechanisms. In this environment there is an inevitable de-professionalization of teachers. Teachers' capacity to make autonomous judgment about curriculum and pedagogy in the interests of their actual pupils is undermined by the system of remote control.

Educational Knowledge and Public Culture

If neoliberalism were only a set of economic policies, it would have limited effects and could be debated and contested in the conventional political arena. But it is much more; the market agenda reaches out to all areas of social life. One of the most disturbing consequences is its impact on the knowledge base of educational processes.

Commodification is well advanced in the production of organized knowledge. Public sector funding for basic research has been increasingly replaced by market-oriented private sector funding. This is especially true of biomedical research, a sector now largely funded by drug and medical-equipment corporations. This connection has already produced a series of corruption scandals in the research world.

Much more widely than the biomedical field, there is an increasing technicization of knowledge and knowledge production. What can be most readily marketed is patentable knowledge: the design of new equipment or new drugs, or techniques

for which access can be restricted and therefore charged for. It's not surprising that Intellectual Property has become an active concern of university managements in Australia as overseas, and that many universities have set up offices to patent and sell discoveries by university staff or to market the expertise of university staff. The irony that universities devoted to the advancement of knowledge now seek to *restrict* knowledge to extract a commercial benefit from it, is stark.

In school education, the technicization of knowledge is expressed through the testing system itself. The ability to administer and interpret standardized tests has been seen as part of teachers' professional knowledge since the 1930s, so neoliberalism has not changed the principle here. What's novel is the scale of it, with systems like NAPLAN and PISA, and the linking of tests to the idea that teachers should learn and use evidence-based best practice, and be held accountable for it, under the system of indirect surveillance. The evidence base appealed to is provided by the testing system, via an international literature, now very large, of correlational studies on what variables are associated with improved test results. The abstracted "teacher effectiveness" literature is a striking example of the technicization of knowledge, and the gradual absorption of business language (such as "best practice") into education. In this way, the neoliberal policy regime produces its own knowledge base, in a closed loop that does not allow other kinds of knowledge to enter policy debate.

As it happens, there is a considerable amount of other research on the powerfully divisive social consequences of the market agenda in education, tracing which groups are advantaged by it and which are disadvantaged. Indeed we have had this information for years, from different countries and indeed different continents (e.g. Reay 2001; Ball 2003; Teese and Polesel 2003; Chisholm 2004). It is quite simply ignored by policymakers. This is typical of neoliberal policymaking in all fields, as seen in the much-publicized 2012 White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century*. This official report, compiled for a Labor government by a team headed by a former Treasury Secretary who is now a Board member of a major bank, ignored the large body of expertise about Asian countries that exists in Australian universities, in favour of mickey-mouse thinking from management consultancies.

Neoliberal politicians, businessmen including management consultants, measurement experts, economists and education system managers now form the arena in which *education* policy is made. In Australia, the last vestige of a genuinely knowledgeable alternative was eliminated when the statutory Schools Commission was abolished in 1988, by none other than John Dawkins, and its weakened replacement, the Schools Council, was allowed to die later. The neoliberal policy community find their technicized knowledge base eminently satisfying, because nothing coming out of it can possibly question the framework in which they are acting or the privileged social interests they represent.

But this knowledge base is so impoverished that it cannot meet the social need for discourse about educational problems. So around it, there has grown up a gaudy arena of pseudo-science, fads and fakery about education, much of it promoted by the "consultants" who have multiplied in the neoliberal world. Brain science, boys' learning styles, parent training, computer solutions, boot camps for troublesome

kids, direct instruction, tough love, patent reading schemes, zero tolerance, charter schools, and many more slogans, programmes and devices are marketed. Since Australia is a small market, much of the language and policy thinking is copied from the USA, or directly imported. A famous case is the tough-guy New York schools chancellor Joel Klein, now working for News Corporation, imported to advise Julia Gillard on education, via Gillard's network of businessmen.

The process is not specific to education. The instrumentalization of knowledge in universities has led to a decline of critical disciplines such as philosophy – you cannot easily market deep reflection, nor patent its results, and philosophers don't seem to have the art of attracting million-dollar research grants. Corporate interests globally have mounted a fierce and well-funded attack on science when scientific findings challenge profit-making. In the cultural climate created by the spread of market logic throughout society, the encounter with truth that is a central feature of education is increasingly difficult to achieve.

But perhaps I am wrong to be bothered about the spin and distortion around markets in education. The main effect may be produced by the expanding market itself. Since the 1960s, both major parties have accepted what used to be called "state aid" to non-state schools. This was originally part of an auction for Catholic votes; in the 1980s and 1990s it became mixed up with neoliberalism and a strategy of expanding a "private" sector in schooling by ever-increasing subsidies. We have long been on the path towards a voucher system in school funding, the Gonski reforms being only the last step in this process, indeed a mild attempt to make it fairer.

The market is, in a sense, its own teacher. We learn more by doing than by being told, as all teachers know. So the best way to learn the market outlook is by being made to live in a market system. With markets all around, what else are people likely to learn? The ABC News now routinely includes the stock market quotations on the same level as the weather. The Federal Government puts your local school in a competitive frame on *MySchool*. The Australian Council for Educational Research supplies standardized tests and promotes performance pay. The newspapers publish advertorials for the private schools, and then publish the league tables for schools, and then publish the international league tables for universities.

The shift of the public realm in Australia towards corporate dominance is well advanced. The Labor Party, which lost its mass membership in the 1980s and 1990s, is now part of the neoliberal coalition, not part of the resistance. The Coalition, since Howard's ascendancy, is divided mainly between moderate neoliberals and hard-line neoliberals. In the education sector, the public school system is still large, but has been under attack by right-wing ideologues for about 30 years and is significantly eroded and residualized. The debates about the Gonski reforms have shown that no politician dares to reduce subsidies to the private schools, even the most privileged. The universities are now controlled by a thoroughly neoliberal managerial regime.

But totalitarianism of the market is not yet an established fact. A public sector survives; and as I have shown in other research, an ethos of public service survives within it (Connell 2011). The union movement has been battered, and frozen out of

educational policy-making, but not wiped out. The 2012–2013 industrial struggle at the University of Sydney shows a strong response to aggressive neoliberal management, not only in terms of industrial action but also in terms of ideas, as shown in the remarkable series of eleven Open Letters to the university administration, available here: http://www.nteu.org.au/sydney/article/Open-Letters-14308.

It is also important that neoliberalism has its limits and contradictions. You can't commodify spheres of life indefinitely, and rachet up market pressures indefinitely, without causing damage to human relations and even mental health. A psychiatrist has published a case report of 'neoliberal depression' in a poor family in Chile (Han 2004), and I suspect I have seen that syndrome among teachers and academics in Australia. The social consequences of unrestricted market power also become more evident. Even the *MySchool* website, which embeds the toxic competition of test results, also reveals the scale of inequalities across Australian school systems. Ultimately I think that education itself has a resilience, and a grounding in social needs, that cannot be suppressed.

As neoliberal rule attempts to displace education by systems of competitive training, competition for privilege, social conformity, fear and corruption, and protest is marginalized – well, to quote Shakespeare, stones have been known to move and trees to speak. We need inventiveness to generate practical alternatives, and there are certainly enough lively minds in the teaching workforce to be confident they will come. And we need coalitions of social groups able to create the spaces in which educational invention will work. There are already attempts to build coalitions between unions and community groups, traced in Amanda Tattersall's instructive book *Power in Coalition* (2010). What happens in the schools depends a lot on the social forces that can be brought together to support a democratic, rather than a corporate, future.

Acknowledgments This chapter draws on, but revises, material from three previously published papers: "Why do market 'reforms' persistently increase inequality?" *Discourse*, 2013, vol. 34 no. 2, 279–285, "The neoliberal cascade and education: an essay on the market agenda and its consequences", *Critical Studies in Education*, 2013, vol. 54 no. 2, 1–13, and "Good teachers on dangerous ground: towards a new view of teacher quality and professionalism", *Critical Studies in Education*, 2009, vol. 50 no. 3, 213–229. I am grateful to the editors and reviewers of those journals. I am grateful to Nour Dados, my colleague in a current study of neoliberalism.

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Chapter 17
Markets Made Out of Love: Parents, Schools and Communities Before Neoliberalism

Helen Proctor

Abstract This chapter responds to the historical dimension of Raewyn's Connell's account of the "neoliberal coup" imposed on educational institutions by global business interests and financial markets progressively from the 1980s. Focusing specifically on schools this chapter outlines a historical research agenda for understanding current policy and practice that goes further back in time. It briefly addresses longer histories of debate over the relative merits of centralisation and local control in public schooling and also about the historical agency, expertise and place of parents.

Raewyn Connell's summary, Chap. 16, in this volume of the impact of the application of market logic to education—'Markets all around'—makes for troubling reading. Universities, she argues, are meaner than ever before; knowledge is increasingly commodified or commercialised; public schools are under attack, and selfishness, disguised as choice, forms the basis of public policy for both Labor and conservative governments. Connell has always been good with words and here she showcases some of the inelegant, and frequently Orwellian, language of neoliberalism—"deregulation", "quality assurance", "performance management", "corporate branding", "choice"—as she documents a "cascade" of policies and organisational interventions that have transformed our educational institutions over the past 30 years. Insisting that all is not lost, Connell points to the persistence, against the odds, of some older, more morally-grounded, social forces. Labour unions are down but not out, public schools ditto, and an "ethos of public service" survives within the public sector. She also concedes that some neoliberal interventions may have the odd redeeming element. The exemplary neoliberal product, the federal government's *MySchool* website, for instance, not only facilitates the production of league tables of relative schooling achievement on standardised tests but also publishes incontrovertible evidence of schooling inequality. On the other

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_17

hand there is every likelihood that the new federal government will keep the worst of *MySchool* and scrap the dis/advantage data. Connell describes Australia, but her account has international currency.

For someone looking to the future, an important aspect of Connell's paper is its historical line of reasoning. There are two main elements to this. Firstly she explains "how on earth we got to this point"; secondly, she argues that history carries with it the prospect of change—for the better or for the worse—over time. Connell argues that education itself is an inherently historical project, a "social process in which we nurture capacities for practice".

In this brief response to 'Markets all around' I focus on the value of history as a useful tool in helping us to understand how things work. As Foucault put it, "Since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were made" (Foucault 1988: 37). Connell foregrounds a structural history here, a neoliberal "coup" executed from above in the interests of financial businesses and corporate profits. In this chapter I begin to tease out a different set of historical threads, considerations that might help us understand the apparent acceptance, even embrace, of some market reforms by a surprisingly broad sector of Australian society. My argument is partly informed by Gabrielle Meagher's (2010) analysis of the complex history of policies of provider choice in the disability and aged care industries. Meagher describes the historical promotion of "choice" not only by promoters of a consumer-market paradigm but also by those who are working within a human rights paradigm, concerned with personal dignity and control over one's own life. Choice is attractive and its parentage is complex.

In her chapter Connell addresses marketisation across a range of sites—universities, the technical and vocational education sector and schools. In this response I focus on schools, the largest education sector and one in which market forces, as Connell points out, have to some extent been kept at bay. Most school teachers are still government employees and the teacher unions remains strong and well-subscribed. Movement in the sector is none the less in the direction of further market reform.

I raise questions (and propose a new historical research agenda) about two of the key planks of market–oriented reform in Australian schooling—public school devolution and growing parental involvement. Both of these trends are international, but they have a particular flavour in the Australian context. First, Australia has one of the strongest non-government schools sectors in the OECD. Second, Australia has historically had some of the most centralised public schools systems in the world. So Australia entered the post-Keynesian era with a somewhat paradoxical mix of schooling provision. Currently Australia is recognised as a world leader in parental choice (eg Musset 2012) but has yet to embrace the privatisation of public schools, for example in the manner of the United States charter schools. (For a critique of the exaggerated promises of US charter schools see Ravitch 2010). Instead, the various states and territories are moving to implement public school "autonomy" programs, encouraged by a conservative coalition commonwealth government (Campbell and Proctor 2014).

Schools and Communities

At the time of writing the nationwide introduction of state school 'autonomy' or 'independence' programs for public schools is arguably the biggest shift in Australian public schooling management and governance since the establishment of the highly centralised colonial departments of public instruction in the late nineteenth century. Some argue that devolution in and of itself is the answer to a 'crisis' in public schooling: that what is needed in Australian public schooling is not money, but greater school choice for poorer parents and locally-grounded 'independence' for state schools, assisted by parent and community boards (eg Kenny 2013; Pyne 2013). This looks like pure neoliberalism, combining choice and competition with the new managerialism as school principals are transformed from leading teachers to chief executive officers. Much faith is also placed in the activity of the stakeholder-parent in keeping a watch over schools and holding them to account. Sometimes parents' rights are more talked about than children's rights, for example in debates about school choice and school funding.

As Connell and others have explained, a crucial part of the post-Keynesian organisation of public infrastructure is a recasting of the human relationships between people and institutions as business and consumer relationships (Marginson 1997; Davies and Bansel 2007; Connell 2008). In schools it tends to be parents who are cast as the consumers and schools as businesses (Forsey et al. 2008; Campbell et al. 2009). There are a number of excellent analyses of this, more of them cited in Connell's chapter. In this chapter, however, I go back to the historical period before neoliberalism. I look briefly at the history of public school autonomy and parent activity in Australia before neoliberalism. I argue that a history that addresses the making and remaking of school-parent-community relations earlier in the twentieth century, or even the nineteenth, can shed a distinctive light on the rise of the market and can help us to imagine other kinds of relationships between people and civic institutions and the state. I also begin to tease out the threads of the history of neoliberalism that come from within school institutions and the families that are connected with them. What hand have schools and families themselves had in creating educational markets? How has a constituency been built for these reforms?

Connell points out that public school devolution was pioneered in Australia in the state of Victoria with the program, "Schools for the future" associated with the radical conservative premier, Jeffrey Kennett in the 1990s (see also Marginson 1997; Blackmore 1994; Spaull 1999). Yet it is useful to look further back. Kennett's reforms were certainly an important neoliberal event but they also can be understood as part of a longer history. As early as the 1920s and 1930s the bureaucratic centralisation of public education was a vexed issue in Australian schooling, at least at the level of expert discourse. Centralisation was criticised in the strongest terms by successive international visitors to Australia, notably those who took part in the barnstorming progressive education festival, the New Education Fellowship Conference in 1937 (Cunningham 1938). Centralisation was criticised by progressive educators on the grounds that it stifled innovation. The Australian state public

schools systems, it was argued, were rigid and authoritarian and could never really move forward until they made more active and reciprocal connections with their local parents and communities, including degrees of local control. Defenders of the public education systems, on the other hand, argued that bureaucratic centralisation had ensured the equitable provision of good public schooling right across the country.

> The truth is that centralisation is the best form of educational rule for a young country with a vast hinterland. It ensures that the children of the rural pioneer receive as good an education as the children of the banker or artisan in the city, and Australia is proud of the efficiency of her small country schools. (Browne 1927, xviii)

Right up until the 1940s, the small rural public school was the most common kind of school in Australia (Spaull 1982), but these schools were progressively closed and consolidated from the 1950s.

From the 1920s to at least the 1950s the questions of how to balance and combine equality of provision with innovation and some sort of democratic engagement were live ones, at least in the writings of the education intelligentsia (Butts 1955). It is now well known that public schools at this time were also in policy and practice very repressive of certain communities, notably Aboriginal communities (Beresford and Partington 2003; Haebich 2000; Theobald 2001).

If one argument for local engagement prioritised democracy and progressive pedagogical innovation, another was instrumental-vocational. The idea of local or community engagement was, in the early-mid twentieth century, commonly associated with contemporary concerns about the relevance of the school curriculum as it prepared young people, especially boys, for employment in their local industries. Children and adolescents in farming areas were the subject of discussion and some anxiety. This was part of a longstanding critique of the school curriculum, especially for older children, as too focussed on pen and paper skills—'city skills'. One experiment, much celebrated at the time though largely forgotten now, was the Tasmanian Area School of the late 1930s and 1940s. These schools, designed for older children, prioritised farming skills (resolutely divided by gender as was the case with most vocational curriculum), on which they were advised by locally-recruited advisory boards (Tasmanian Education Department 1942; Phillips 1985). These kinds of experiments have not received the attention they deserve in the critical historiography, especially given current policy moves.

In the 1970s a further form of school-community engagement was applied to Australian schools, influenced by Johnson's Great Society in the United States and the 1967 Plowden Report in Britain and underpinned by the belief that schools ought to concern themselves with social inequality. In Australia the 1973 Karmel Report and the ensuing Disadvantaged Schools Program were influenced by this movement (Marginson 1997; Connell et al. 1991; Dudley and Vidovich 1995) as were early commonwealth government interventions into early childhood education (Brennan 1998). Some social equity language is to be found in the various policy statements of contemporary school autonomy programs, but mostly predominant is the language of school improvement, efficiency, accountability and choice.

Parents and Schools

Next, I turn to parents. One useful explanatory historical framework for understanding recent changes in the relationship between parents and schools, much used in English sociology of education in the 1990s and early twenty-first century (e.g. Ball 2003; David 1993) is Brown's (1990) description of a movement in schooling organisation from 'meritocracy' to 'parentocracy'. Brown argued that the establishment of educational ladders of opportunity in the early twentieth century were predicated on a belief in the separation of the educational fate of the child from the social status of its parents. In the late 1980s, however, this gave way before a system in which the work of advantaged parents to transfer competitive advantage to their children was supported and facilitated by public policy. A classic Australian text of meritocracy was a late 1920s survey of education in Australia compiled by the academic and teacher-educator G. S. Browne (1927). Parents and families scarcely appear in this substantial text: the state is the actor with all the legitimacy and all the ideas. The chapter on New South Wales includes the following:

> The people are the State. The children are the State's as well as the family's. From the lowest point of view, destitute of all idealistic or charitable interpretation, it pays the State to educate her future citizens. There are indeed, even at the present time, many taxpayers unhappily oblivious to their own best interests; but it remains true that those countries who spend most upon education are likely to outdistance the others. (Cole 1927: 9)

The language of investment in education is familiar enough—it is an idea from old liberalism that saturates neoliberalism. But the confident assertions about the state that characterise Percival Cole's chapter on New South Wales (from which these words come) attribute no expertise or judgement to parents, or other lay people, at all. Here, for better or for worse, schooling is a long way from a consumer-provider relationship.

It would be decades before parents, by simple virtue of being parents, were conventionally seen as having a legitimate voice in schooling, but by mid-century the landscape was changing a little. The entrepreneurial twenty-first century stakeholder parent is usually seen as a product of neoliberalism, with earlier antecedents scarcely explored in the research. I argue that the strategic consumer-parent of neoliberalism has a history not only in the economic and political shifts of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s but also in twentieth century developments in emotional, psychological and cultural history. A case in point is the rise of the educated, engaged (middle class) mother. The education of girls had been justified since the nineteenth century on the grounds that educated girls made better mothers. From about the 1920s, discussions of 'scientific' or 'rational' conceptualised motherhood as a career, as well as a relationship (Reiger 1985). The "good" mother of the 1920s and 1930s probably still left the school to do its job without too much interference (Proctor 2010) but she was beginning to be encouraged to intensify her interest in the child's academic and social development (Mackinnon 1997). By the 1950s a parent education movement was demanding of parents that they nurture their children psychologically, understand them and develop their minds. Benjamin's

Spock's (1946) *Baby and Child Care*, told parents to "trust yourself", but it's possible to argue that he was merely replacing one set of anxieties with another (Hardyment 2007). In Australia, the self-styled child psychologist and parenting expert Zoë Benjamin (1950) urged parents to keep an eye on their children's teachers, and to supplement their deficiencies at home through creative play and general encouragement. "As the standard of education in the school rises", she wrote, "parents need to have minds receptive to new ideas so that they can be more than mere parents to their children" (Benjamin 1950: x). In fact progressive post-war parent educators such as Spock and Benjamin anticipated that better, more psychologically-sound parenting would result in better, more generous and altruistic adults, but my argument here is that a psychological and emotional history of parent-school relations might offer another perspective on the hitherto more structural policy-economic explanations of the rise of the neoliberal parent.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Raewyn Connell's work has long been characterised by its attention to history, not only in the sense of knowing what happened in the past but also in the sense that the circumstances being analysed or described are dynamic, are always in the process of negotiation and renegotiation. Immersed as many of us are in neoliberal language and procedure in our daily working lives, it is crucial to have voices such as Connell's breaking through the stupefying routines to advocate for change. In this response I have aimed to take up and extend Connell's valuable historical analysis, proposing further historical contextualisations of current movements in schooling reform.

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Chapter 18
Who Are the Heretics?

Patrick Brownlee and Peter Freebody

Abstract The idea of the scholar as academic heretic and their place in education serves as a useful frame to analyse the challenges facing academia in recent decades. Beginning with the European tradition of scholarly criticism from its early institutional forms, a tradition that endured for many centuries, this chapter argues that recent changes to education wrought by global market economics are remarkable for their breadth and depth in a comparatively short space of time. Reflecting on a dominant narrative of neoliberalism within social scientific critique and within numerous chapters in this volume, examples are drawn together of neoliberal market ideology impacting education and learning. The analysis concludes that a philosophy for and of education has been eroded by neoliberal economics and might be rediscovered through a deeper critique of market-based practices of accumulation.

This volume grew out of a symposium originally entitled 'educational heresies'. Contributors to that symposium were presented with this definition: "Heresy is the dislocation of some complete and self-supporting scheme by the introduction of a novel denial of some essential part therein" (Belloc [1938] 2011, p. 5).

In the European tradition universities as we now recognise them gradually emerged through the eleventh and twelfth centuries from the organization and forms of institutionalised learning that had developed within the Christian monastic orders (Bartlett 1993; Southern 1961). For most of the subsequent eight centuries, political authorities and the growing mercantile classes have displayed at best ambivalence to this emergence. On the one hand they have recognized the need for increased technical specialization as the remarkable technological achievements of twelfth century found their way into production, trade and the creation of new markets; this period also saw increased reach and sophistication of European forms of governance – and that called in turn for increasingly literacy-based managerial and communication capabilities, formerly distinctive features of monastic life, that came to find extensive secular application following the "aristocratic diaspora"

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7_18

(Bartlett 1993, ch. 2) that flowed from the first three crusades. Authorities attached to the Church were wary of the academies' growing commitment to knowledge for its own sake, unmoored from its monastic goals of validating and enriching the Church's teachings (Southern 1997). These teachings were taken to be embodied in political rulers, the papal emperors and the imperial popes, and pursuing non-theological, non-liturgical goals at least opened the potential for critique, thereby for challenges to secular authority, and thereby in turn for the disruption of thought and practice (de Ridder-Symoens 1991, 1996).

Six hundred years later, the rapid development and spread of technological developments that came to shape the contemporary period has similarly drawn universities into new forms of economic and cultural significance and into periods of unprecedented expansion. But as a growing body of research and commentary shows, the intellectual and managerial latitudes long accorded the universities, however, hesitantly by some at some times and places, have only recently been openly diminished, undermined and discredited. Driving this has been a redefinition of universities as primarily commercial in their orientation – as corporations (Marginson 2010; Denman 2005). This has constituted a distinctive, more focused, and more overt departure from attitudes that generally held sway, if not always direct endorsement, over the previous eight centuries. The 2012 *Wilson Report* declaring UK Universities to be "an integral part of the skills and innovation supply chain to business" (Wilson 2012: p. i); the Australian Government's understanding of universities as key pillars of an imagined 'national innovation system' (Mazzarol 2012; Cutler 2008); and related national policy articulations that consolidate decades of the re-tooling of public higher education to directly serve private interests. Consequently, professional security and advancement for academics have been radically redefined, both in their nature and in their essential purposes. Academic work is tied to the generation of income through research and development grants, through collaboration of industries, accompanied by the need to recast applications to government funding bodies for the conduct of 'blue-sky' scholarship in terms of government priorities and economic benefits; the 'points scored' through targeted enrolment and strategic publication programs are, for the institution, essentially financial points.

For the community at large this radical re-alignment of the purposes and work practices of universities may appear to have brought them into line with the general movement toward the privatisation and commoditisation of many formerly public services, with results including the loss of long-term job security, the subsequent hollowing out of trade and guild knowledge, replaced by training in generic, on-site, 'flexible learning' skills, and the disciplining of workplaces through surveillance strategies that include frequent performance measurement. The traditionally uneasy and occasionally volatile relationship between universities and civil and commercial authority has thus been refashioned in less than a generation. Australian universities expanded rapidly in their teaching and research responsibilities over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, placing pressure on government budgets. The idea that the academies should reshape themselves as commercially entrepreneurial and competitive is often cast as in response to increased operational costs or declining

public revenue (Newman et al. 2004). However, seeking subsidy from private wealth is different from being in its service. Dependence on the beneficence and thus the ideological orientations of governments and business has redirected academic priorities and practices. Lines of inquiry, along with methods for securing employment and advancement have all been re-characterised as primarily acts of compliance – financial compliance for institutions, and security and advancement-oriented compliance for scholars.

This is why the lines of critique in many of the 'controversial' pieces in this volume have a strongly conservative, even nostalgic flavour. They harken back to a description of the individual and collective value of education drawn from the late twelfth to the mid-twentieth century, striking notes, however compelling and comprehensive, that are not unfamiliar to most readers, and probably not particularly shocking. They are remarkably straight-forward and, for the most part, chillingly self-evident in their empirical and ideological claims: the results of a standardised literacy and numeracy test cannot form the bases for judgments about overall school quality and the needs profiles of schools across the country . . . ? Really?? Deeper engagement of schools with the changing and often struggling communities around them is necessary for effective and consequential teaching and learning in those schools . . . ? Really???

What *is* striking is the need to articulate these observations again, apparently because those who now manage individual schools and school systems and determine educational policy more broadly need to set these ideas aside publically, as if they were never credible. The recent policy interventions that have transformed educational thought, discourse and practice in many countries have been radical in their intent and in their effects: Devolution of public ownership (Charter Schools in the USA, Academy Schools in the UK); site-based management; performance-based pay; selective schooling leading to residualisation and middle class envy; narrowing of curricula; quality and now 'impact' measurement of University research. It is *these* transformations, seen in the 800 or so years of tradition of western school and academic life that satisfy the criteria for 'heresy' – the discrediting and dismissal of core beliefs at the heart of the educational compact between governments, bureaucracies and communities for generations. So perhaps the arguments represented in many of these pieces can be seen, far from as heretical themselves, but rather as the 'invisible college' of scholars, their initial disbelief having grown into exasperation, rounding on the heretics, as a particularly divisive form of capitalism works away at bringing schools and universities to heel.

Two 'meta-heresies' are thus proposed in this concluding chapter in keeping with the theme of provocation:

1. The papers in the volume are not heretical.

   However:

2. There is no such thing as 'academic heresy' in social scientific inquiry any more anyway – perhaps until we all agree and know what is the orthodoxy.

As if by default varieties of neoliberalism are often together perceived as the *orthodoxy*, that which now invites criticism from the periphery. Some schools of thought suggest that neoliberalism is just a variety of the principal historical problem: capitalism (Hall and Soskice 2001); others wonder if neoliberalism ever existed as a uniquely new phenomenon given a tendency in "discoveries of social transformation . . . to over-diagnose new stages, phases, waves and paradigms" (Dunn 2012: p. 232); still others warn against 'neoliberalism fatigue' in the academy, where theoretical novelty comes with a use-by date, such that "what is uninteresting is also unimportant" (Elliot and Harkins 2013: p. 2). In this volume, neoliberalism occurs in many forms, reinforcing its status as orthodoxy, as power: in Bottrell, Connell and in Groundwater-Smith, neoliberalism is referred to directly and regularly as the culprit; in the chapters by Reimann, Martin and Vickers, teacher *accountability* and *control* via selective use of data and testing is critiqued; Reid discusses education markets and school choice as neoliberal; te Riele questions the focus on individual over social returns from education; while Forsey asks the question "How do we become neoliberal subjects", with concern that this is an organic and uneven expression emanating from Keynesian prosperity and predictability. Overall, the idea of 'neoliberal times' resonates as both symptom and cause of the current predicament.

Explanations and critiques of neoliberalism thus become situated as the counter force. But such criticisms, in fact, are not 'heretical' in the Enlightenment social scientific sense, and perhaps not even controversial. Criticising neoliberalism is necessary not least for the in-built exclusion and wealth disparity that attends it. But is a critique that neoliberal phenomena are disfiguring the social order as we knew it controversial or heretical? Or is the 'order' challenged by neoliberalism, the post war Keynesian-Marshallian social-economic contract, lauded for taming Twentieth Century capitalism (and socialism), outflanked and forever outmoded? This *remainder* is the orthodox, from which many critiques of the neoliberal still emanate. As the orthodox, as order, some claim it was pre-destined to buckle under its own weight, following Bauman's argument: "Almost all modern fantasies of a 'good world' were deep down anti-modern, in that they visualised the end of history understood as a process of change" (Bauman 1997: p. 12).

If, then, the academic project of this book constitutes a defence of the community and social bonds within which schools and universities have been conceived, legitimated, and grown, that which is 'heretical' exists only in claims that are definitively and provocatively *anti-social,* and anti-community: the *Clash of Civilisations* thesis tribalising West against (Middle) East (Huntington 1996); Thatcher's twin dicta 'there is no society', and 'there is no alterative', together defiant pro-market statements against collective forms of association; ongoing attempts in the USA to establish the corporation as a person, with all associated constitutional rights that would endow; more pertinent to the subject matter of this volume, the statement by then Governor of California, President Ronald Reagan that states have "no business subsidizing intellectual curiosity". These are all radical claims backed by a very particular logic about concerning role and force of *The Market*.

It is a heretical logic. Neoliberalism and its philosophical forerunners characterize social and community formations as distortions of rightful processes that generate and distribute wealth.[1] Consider the controversy posited in a number of chapters within this book: that school is the problem rather than the solution; alternatives and flexibility are needed (Wyn, Chap. 2, Bottrell, Chap. 3, Reid, Chap. 8, this volume). This can counter stultifying orthodoxies shaping the social organisation of schooling as universal requirement. But *The Market* is not necessarily concerned about that problem: Schooling, for market society proponents, is a consumer commodity for those who can get something from it. A de-skilled, precarious work-life (Marin 2012; ACTU 2012; Kallenberg 2009) backed up by an increasingly, globally over-crowded penal system have come to replace welfare (Wacquant 2009) for those who cannot achieve through standard pathways such as schooling.

Faith in this 'old order', in the educational institutions of the modern twentieth century, was first successfully challenged by social movements. The student unrest of the 1960s demanding and achieving, among other things, "the democratisation of University education" (see Manifesto for Public University; Holmwood, J. [ed], 2011) resonated globally. Recognising a perversion of that form of agency, the authors and activists behind the *Manifesto for the Public University* note that current restructuring of the University sector in the UK:

> . . . also identifies students as the agents of reform, but this time in their role as consumers of education. It is argued that, by paying fees, students will be empowered as consumers and this will give rise to better quality teaching and courses on offer will reflect student demand. In this way, without proper public discussion, a fundamental transformation of the role of Universities is being proposed, justified by a fiscal crisis (see *Manifesto for the Public University*).

In the anti-establishment push to do away with the modern, the postmodern individualised notion of agency can find itself doing the work for The Market in deinstitutionalizing and deregulating (Harvey 2005; Bauman 1997). The contributions to this volume of Forsey (Chap. 15) and Proctor (Chap. 17) are significant here: where devolution, particularly in schooling has legitimised parent-community as stakeholder able to inform localised decision making, it brings with it the acknowledgement that the institutionalism of the twentieth century was altogether anti-child and anything but trans*parent*. It is in this period that excesses against the most vulnerable were perpetrated by educational authorities, legitimated via a paternalistic definition of 'the public'. For example, the sometimes brutal ethnic cleansing meted out against Aboriginal children in boarding schools in the name of assimilation (Feneley 2013; Welch 1988), could succeed only where education and knowledge was heavily dependent upon centralization of authority. Nevertheless, as Proctor reveals, communities have been influential in determining curricula and alternative pathways throughout White Australia's history. What she exposes is a

[1]We emphasise a distinction here as *accumulation* and not only *distribution* of wealth created demands scrutiny. We return to this at the end of the chapter in relation to education.

positive form of self-representation and choice – parent as concerned and legitimate friend of schooling, and a negative form of self-representation and choice – the neoliberal parent, legitimate stakeholder by virtue of their purchase of educational goods and services.

Another example of our idea of controversy sharing an uneasy coincidence with that which it condemns is in Riemann's sound observation of school performance data gathering. His concluding remarks highlight an ethical dimension to the gathering and interpreting of data:

> . . . accountability by numbers is meant as a means for increasing 'objectivity', for reducing personal or institutional 'bias'. As such, it is essentially a form of establishing trust in situations where **trust** cannot easily be established by personal contact.

The contributions by Welch (Chap. 6) and Vickers (Chap. 7) in this volume are salient to how the growth of sophisticated accountability regimes has damaged trust in scientific, including educational, research. Bureaucracy is identified as the main beneficiary from this compromise (Wacquant 2012). Where governmental bureaucracies once guaranteed predictability for a social contract in which labour markets were also regulated, they now underwrite predictability for globally competitive research, development and skills 'markets' and part of that is accomplished through the regular recalibrating of education and training performance measurement: At the global level this is captured in market forms such as credit ratings (such as Goldman Sachs), and world GDP forecasting via *The Conference Board*, *World Economic Outlook*, or the *Global Competitiveness Index* (Commonwealth of Australia 2013). Linking training to projected GDP and thereby sovereign wealth, as a recent Australian Government report on skills is predicated (Commonwealth of Australia 2012), continues to be generalised within competitive market terms. This is despite the irony that GDP projections as a global comparator are based on very long-term historical data (Au-Yeung et al. 2013; Samir et al. 2010). Similarly, immediate school performance, such as that measured by OECD-PISA is not useful for system-level predictive purposes unless considered cumulatively or 'long-run', as the economists would say. Trust would seem not to be an empirical result of the present. Annual bureaucratic rankings in secondary or tertiary education, then, should be viewed for the disciplining effect they have on productivity flow and not for the reliability of their economic effects from 1 year or one ranking cycle to the next.

Trust also happens to be a vital ingredient in the business of commercial exchange; discomforting as it may be, the market idea of *laissez faire* depends on trust. The difference between the 'social version' of trust and its market counterpart is the extent to which the idea is elevated above any material condition. Trust is the stuff of the inter-personal and thereby the social; and so, as Connell also concludes in her chapter, trust is central to an authentic education, one not determined by or for any market. Trust, in the market sense, is a variable that can be exploited for advantage in what Bowles and Gintis (1993) explain as 'contested exchange'. The market essentialism of neoliberalism is not without faith, deriving legitimacy from Adam Smith's 'hidden hand of the market' (Smith 1976 [1776]). This legitimacy is the subject of ongoing debate about *embeddedness* (Konings 2012; Paton 2012;

Polyani 2001 [1944]; Ruggie 1982), that is, whether the economy is embedded within a given society and therefore subject to its control, or whether the economy simply exists under its own inalienable laws of motion. In fact, people create markets and economies, as surely as they create learning opportunities for their young.

Nevertheless, it is market processes confounding the task of understanding and disseminating the value of education beyond its labour market utility. The orthodoxy and the materiality of the social contract in which education is deeply implicated have been seriously challenged in recent decades. As Martin (2004) laments, "Gone are the days when the value of education or of expertise can be taken for granted" (p. 7). But, he adds astutely "The skepticism of metanarratives is pervasive, but it takes the form of suspicion toward the utility of particular expertise" (pp. 7–8). The renewal anticipated from reflexive critique within and across disciplines inevitably generates a degree of self-doubt or skepticism. Martin's argument highlights how this self-doubt is readily seized upon by institutions and academic management to re-work curricula and pedagogy for the education market. Education as a field of social scientific inquiry and a social practice faces challenges from within as well as from without.

The academic-heretic, the public intellectual, and the university itself are partly casualties of their own success. Disassociating from the modernist institutions that nourished them, and benefitting from an interregnum that in countries such as the UK and Australia coincided with a captured-market massification of higher education in the 1970s, the historical figure and successful champion of critical public scrutiny and social change faces a different 'real world' in which to carry out academic 'work'. The purpose and role of the academic in the public domain are confronted by a counter-radicalism in market logic. Citing the author of the provocative "*End of the university as we know it*", Brown sees the radical calls to abolish Faculties and Schools as institutional forms for the "narrow institutional interests" they apparently perpetuate (Brown 2011: p. 115). These would be replaced by flexible groupings of academics collaborating on a needs basis to deliver some solution. Tertiary industry newspapers and periodicals increasingly run columns by Vice Chancellors and other leaders about such 'innovations', largely driven by future-gazing about technology:

> And as technology only promises to improve personal interfaces – including the ability within 10 years to beam lecturers live into homes worldwide, with real time peer interaction – the focus must be on hiring experts in the field from anywhere in the world, at any time of the day, which, when given time zone differences, would create a rolling 24-hour teaching roster (Thomas 2012).

Another disturbing example highlights the blurring of bounded learning by more populist forms:

> We are in a tectonic shift right now. Every new cohort of student that comes to our institution is bringing more and more devices . . . . Indeed, this paradigm shift flips the classroom, as learning has changed. Two-hour lectures don't work when the audience tells you Khan [Academy] or TED talks are much more in line with how they learn . . . (Peter Nikoletatos cited in Macalintal 2013)

The futurists announce the neoliberal dream of deregulated, compliant, market-responsive knowledge creation. Much of this market discourse is instrumental; it speaks little of social values and norms which education inherently transmits.

The academic heretic, the idol of Enlightenment discovery and resistance to authority, has been left behind not by the postmodern scholarly *bricoleur* (see Derrida 1982), but by the entrepreneur, advocate of discovery for material benefit. It makes a certain sense. Returns on investment in R&D are potential game-changers for governments: a discovery in medicine is potentially worth a lot of money, prestige, and downstream promise of a health dividend for individuals and societies (e.g. Commonwealth of Australia 2013). Meanwhile, a social innovation like alternative schooling pathways as the chapters by Wyn and te Riele rightly advocate, is readily valued in terms of greater productivity as much as the fundamental concern that is minimization of self-harm or social exclusion. The immediate 'innovation' currently shaping higher education, MOOCs, is spoken of for its ability to massively reduce cost, or at least devolve the cost of education to the point of consumption. Entrepreneurial educators teaming up with software companies and designers stand to reap significant returns, while other academics may become residualised, under-employed academic labour (Rea 2013; Brown 2011; Martin 2004).

Is the neoliberal story of global free market determinism too compelling, even for education? Wage disparity, the gap between rich and poor, across OECD countries would suggest otherwise (Colebatch 2013); Global value chains that locate hyper-exploitative production in poor countries would suggest otherwise. Power over the economy continues to concentrate despite the classic liberal idea that private ownership in theory distributes power.

This chapter argued that tertiary education like so many other domains of human educational and, more broadly, community-oriented endeavor have been transformed radically by the commoditization of learning. Potentially heretical scholars, critics, public intellectuals, have been co-opted into this transformation, gradually losing a kind of agency in the pursuit of knowledge they have been, however patchily, accorded for eight centuries.

As an antidote, a revitalized, historically-savvy *philosophy* for and of education, for and of learning needs to be a priority; A philosophy that is inclusive of, but more than an amelioration of inequality, more than vocational or professional self-advancement. It must target understandings not of redistribution, but the foundations of wealth for its occasional opportunities and frequent injustices. It must rediscover and rearticulate public good in learning and knowledge. This may or may not need to be institutionalized solely in Universities – the technological change bearing down on higher education and learning in and of itself is not the heretical challenge. Nor is the solution to the emergent market orthodoxy only a matter of scholars 'being relevant' about their expertise, or even being articulate about what is exciting in scholarly endeavour (Brown 2011). The key philosophical bedrock is in public and social trust and how educators have for centuries been able to take decisive responsibilities for the intellectual and practical conditions of such trust. Removed from that, there is no such thing as education.

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H. Proctor et al. (eds.), *Controversies in Education*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 3, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-08759-7

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