THE 'PERFORMATIVE' STATE AND THE STATE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH[1]

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Introduction

The decade after Dawkins initiated the unified national system of tertiary education in 1987 has been a difficult and uncertain one for universities and educational research. Federal Labor and Coalition governments have introduced radical changes to the structures, funding and priorities of universities through a range of reforms, steering the sector in the direction of privatisation, marketisation and commodification of educational research and teaching (Marginson 1997b). In 1997 alone, there have been numerous reviews impacting on educational research and teaching to which the executive of the Australian Association of Research in Education has responded—the West Review of Higher Education (Lingard & Renshaw 1997), the Draft National Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education (Sachs 1997), and the Status of Teaching Review (Hatton 1997). These reform policy texts indicate a changing involvement by the state in tertiary education, as the onus for educational funding shifts from the state, as a matter of national investment, to the individual, as matter of private investment which hopefully also contributes to national productivity. This shift has wider implications for the relationship between the individual, the state and the role of education in citizenship formation (Marginson 1997a), as well as for educational research as a field of practice. There has also been an accompanying policy shift to a stress upon indicators of performance—an aspect of the 'performative state' which we consider later in this essay as it affects universities and research. At the same time, as indicated in this set of papers focusing upon Research Issues in Education indicates that educational research, as a field of practice, has become increasingly complex, both in terms of the theoretical

perspectives which are being brought to bear on educational research, and also the relationships between educational researchers and the 'users' of research in the context of the performative state.

Education as a research field

Education as a field of study and research has a range of characteristics which make it distinctive from other fields of research. These need to be noted before looking at the current situation of educational research in Australia.

The Australian Research Council sponsored *Strategic Review of Research in Education* (1992) pointed out:

> One of the most distinctive features of educational research is its diversity. The variety of participants in educational research and the differences in their interests, research paradigms, methodologies and writings mean that generalisations about the field need to be treated with caution (McGaw, Boud, Poole, Warry & McKenzie 1992, p. 7).

Keeves, an Australian educational scholar and editor of the 1988 *International Handbook of Educational Research*, likewise observed that the 'complex nature of educational problems' meant that research in education had to be multidisciplinary in character (p. 7). Putting aside questions of whether or not there is an 'epistemological unity' to educational research (Walker & Evers 1988), this essay conceptualises education as a 'research field' rather than a 'research discipline' with its 'boundaries and distinctive features' (McGaw *et al* 1992, p. 8) determined, by and large, by its focus on education.

The submission to the 1992 *Strategic Review* by the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) defined educational research in the following way: 'educational research is a systematic and disciplined endeavour to produce knowledge about curriculum and pedagogical processes in educational contexts'. This definition of education as a research field includes curriculum and pedagogy and contexts, both administrative and social.

Such a definition brings us to another characteristic of educational research, notably its relationship with educational practice and policy. Educational research has been marked by a particular relationship with education as a profession. From its beginnings in the latter part of the nineteenth century, in response to the emergence of mass schooling, educational research has focused to a considerable extent on child development, a theory of learning and sought to develop a 'science' of testing, all informed by the new science of psychology (Bessant & Holbrook 1995). Connell (1996) points to the promise of embryonic

educational research of contributing to a 'Great Didactic' to be developed in university departments of education, and capable of informing educational practices.

These beginnings established a hierarchical and status differentiation between education as a field of research located in universities and the work of educational practitioners. Subsequently such differentiation was challenged through 'action research' models and conceptions of 'practitioner researchers' (Kemmis 1988) during the 1980s and by policy driven attempts to create partnerships between researchers and practitioners in the 1990s (Yeatman & Sachs 1995, Ladwig & White 1996). Such work also challenged a linear conception of the relationship between knowledge produced by research and changes in practice (as well as in policy).

The submission from the Australian College of Education to the *Strategic Review* (1992) also emphasised the multidisciplinary character of educational research, defining it as:

> ... systematic and in-depth inquiry concerning the purposes of education; the processes of teaching, learning and personal development; the work of educators; the resources and organisational arrangements to support educational work; the policies and strategies to achieve educational objectives; and the social, political, cultural and economic outcomes of education.

Reflecting its multidisciplinary character, educational research thus includes such approaches as philosophy of education, educational psychology, sociology and anthropology of education, educational policy and administration, and the economics of education. This broadening of the scope of educational research is reflected in both the membership of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) and its journal, The *Australian Educational Researcher*.

Contemporary theoretical developments within the social sciences, particularly poststructuralism spawned by the 'condition of postmodernity', have seen a blurring of the boundaries between social science disciplines[2]. Disciplinarity has been challenged within the social sciences. Educational research has been affected to a considerable degree by earlier and more recent developments within the social sciences. For example, in the late sixties and early seventies the paradigm war between quantitative and qualitative approaches was played out quite forcefully within educational research. The subsequent truce is reflected in the acceptance of a more eclectic stance which recognises the pertinence of different methodologies to different research problems in the field of education. The postmodernist turn in research is evident in both how we do

and write about research, as indicated in the papers by Joanne Reid in this issue, who uses a Foucaultian approach to 'discipline' her data and Diamond *et al's* collaborative research practices as a palimpset. We would accept the need for a new 'postmodernist' political arithmetic to document the effects of market driven restructuring of education upon social justice concerns and as a way to counter political assertions about the putative beneficial impact of restructuring (Halsey, Lauder, Brown & Stuart Wells 1997). Despite the apparent dominance of qualitative approaches over the quantitative, in terms of commissioned research for educational policy makers, it remains the case that quantitative studies still have more purchase. McLeod and Yates' paper in this issue depicts the dilemmas that policy makers preference for the quantitative produces for researchers, and how they have moved towards more longitudinal research to offer more depth to their research. Contemporary theoretical developments—what we might encapsulate as the 'posts'—have also had a considerable impact, as have the politics of contemporary social movements such as feminism and more recently, posicolonialism. For example, Australian feminist research in education (Yates 1993, Kenway *et al* 1997) has been very influential in both educational policy production and in educational practice and is highly regarded within international educational research circles.

Education as a research field with its symbiotic links to educational practice and the institutions and policies within which such practice occurs, has also been affected by recent political developments. These have seen reduced commitments by governments of all persuasions to the public sector generally, while the public sector has been very substantially restructured with greater emphasis given to the market, as well as to the use of market mechanisms within the public sector itself. That scenario has also witnessed a reconstitution of research as needing to contribute more directly to the international competitiveness of the Australian economy. The emphasis on applied research has favoured the sciences, business and technologies while not challenging the traditional or 'elite' professional fields of law and medicine. Overall, the emphasis on input/output models of research through such mechanisms as the Research Quantum has somewhat weakened support for curiosity driven or 'pure' research generally and specifically for social science research, including in education.

In sum, educational research is multidisciplinary in character, while disciplinarity has been challenged to some extent by poststructuralism. Educational research focuses on the complexities of educational policies and practices from the micro to the macro and sits in 'tension' with the education profession and educational policies and practices. Adding to the complexity here is the reality that the 'cultural field within which education operates' is changing rapidly with the emergence of an inchoate alternative education system via the

internet and world wide web (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry 1997, p. 61), and with much education now being conducted in the workplace. Further, and as noted by both the *Strategic Review* and the recent OECD (1995) study, *Educational Research and Development: Trends, Issues and Challenges,* research in education is framed by the expectation that it will lead to improvements in both educational policy and practice and the view expressed by policy makers and practitioners that it has not satisfactorily fulfilled these expectations. There has also developed a strong tradition of school-based action research which deals with context-specific practice problems.

It is thus very difficult in an essay of this kind to do justice to the field and to offer the usual evaluations of existing strengths, weaknesses and gaps within educational research, and to comment on the international standing or otherwise of such work. Hence instead, this essay will deal with the level of institutional capacity and support for educational research in Australia, the idiosyncrasies of research training and careers in education, the developing nature of practitioner/researcher relationships, the impact of the 'performative' state upon educational research and make some concluding remarks on the current standing of such research.

Institutional capacity and support for educational research

The capacity of Australia as a nation to conduct educational research has fluctuated over the last thirty years or so in the move from the final years of the post-war boom and increased expenditure to the current situation of parsimonious support for public sector activities. The effects of the changing socio-political context upon educational research are very apparent if one briefly peruses a number of key Australian surveys of educational research.

In 1971 the Australian government established the Australian Advisory Committee on Research and Development in Education (AACRDE) which was to advise on the types of research needed, measures to improve and enlarge the capacity for research training and the possible need for new educational research institutions. The first report commissioned by the AACRDE (Radford with McDowell 1973) optimistically noted the increased educational research capacity of the nation at that time, with more educational researchers in universities and the Colleges of Advanced Education, as well as the rapid expansion of the Research Branches of State and Territory Departments of Education. In 1976 the AACRDE became the Education Research and Development Committee (ERDC) which was subsequently abolished in 1981 as one element of the Fraser government's moves against public sector expenditure and its new federalism

with the argument that the State systems ought to determine their own research focuses. In the Academy of Social Sciences sponsored 'Trend Report in Education' (Keeves 1987), the demise of the ERDC was lamented, as was the concomitant challenge to 'the value and quality of research into educational issues' as indicated by further reductions in public expenditure support for it. It is noteworthy that this observation was made prior to the Dawkins and Vanstone 'revolutions' in higher education and the massive restructuring of Australian education systems at both national and state levels and further reductions in public sector expenditure.

The *Strategic Review of Research in Education* (1992) proffered a similar lament, noting that only about .35 % of total educational expenditure in Australian went on research. It recommended that this be increased to .7 % with a long term goals of increasing the level of public sector support for educational research to 1 % of educational outlays—still short of the level of support for medical research where about 1.4 % of overall health expenditure goes on research[3]. The *Review* noted that this comparative situation probably reflected the different perceptions of the uses and benefits of research amongst educational practitioners as compared with the medical profession. It is difficult to disagree with the *Strategic Review's* observation that: 'It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the level of support for research in education is not commensurate with the importance of education to the nation' (p. 25). The OECD (1995) review of educational research made the point that educational research expenditure in member countries was much lower than for other policy sectors. Educational research in Australia only accounts for 1.6% of total (gross) expenditure on research and development[4] At the same policy moment as more and better education for all Australians is deemed necessary to our future well-being in the context of an increasingly globalised economy, actual public sector financial support for education, including educational research, is being reduced.

Most educational research in Australia is conducted in universities[5] which had research infrastructure monies withdrawn in the late eighties and which resulted in placing most educational research within the competitive Australian Research Council (ARC) model. In 1994-95 research in higher education accounted for 87.3% of all educational research expenditure, whereas the figure for all fields of research was only 46.5%. Higher education's share of research in education fell across the 1980s and then increased so that for 1994-95 its percentage was much the same as for 1984-85, a result of the reduction of expenditure on educational research by other sources. Education's share of monies for all fields of research in universities reached a high point of 4.9% in 1990-91, reflecting the then strength of education enrolments and staff numbers and the enhanced access to research funds of former College of Advanced Education staff. There has been a

subsequent decline in education's share of enrolments, staff and research expenditure in the higher education field[6]. Most potential and actual educational researchers are located in the 'newer' and 'amalgamated' universities which resulted from the Dawkins 'reforms', many of which in the past had greater aspirations than actual support for research, so that many of the research higher degree students in education faculties in the older universities are staff of these newer institutions. The move to an even more competitive, market policy regime in higher education places pressure on the capacities of university-based researchers to conduct research. The emergence of new status hierarchies between and within universities, and between teachers and researchers within them, will also have important implications for educational research capacity as a more highly differentiated academic labour market emerges (McCollow & Lingard 1997).

At the same time, a trend noted by the *Strategic Review* in 1992, and now largely achieved in 1997, has been for State Departments of Education, as part of their restructuring, to abolish their Research Branches and to emasculate financial support for educational research. There has been a reduction of expenditure on educational research by state authorities by 50% in real terms between 1986-7 and 1992-3, down from 15% to less than 5% of all educational research expenditure (Blackmore & Lingard 1996). The very limited monies now expended by State and Territory Departments of Education on educational research counters the very claims made by many of those initiating the politically and ideologically driven restructurings which have been carried out. At the same time as the States have reduced commitments to educational research, they continue to contribute significantly to general research expenditure, while the Commonwealth's share of educational research expenditure has also reduced over recent years.

What we have witnessed is nothing less then the structural transformation of Australian schooling, accompanied by little commitment to critical research-based evaluations of the impact of this on student outcomes and social justice concerns. (There are exceptions to this picture, notably State Department support for research on the 'Leading schools' restructuring in Queensland.) Education systems, as part of the restructured public sector, have reconstituted relations between central offices, which now concentrate on developing broad policy and outcomes accountability frameworks, and schools, which now carry greater responsibility for the achievement of these goals, with related intensification of administrators' and teachers' work. Central to this 'steering at a distance' (Kickert 1991) model has been the use of standardised test results as *ex post facto* measures of accountability. Devolution has pressured school principals to conduct market type research based on community satisfaction surveys[7] as part

of new accountability frameworks, rather than develop more critical 'teacher as researcher', action research approaches, which have a strong tradition in Australian education. Thus at the same moment that Departments of Education, and indeed schools, are awash with more test-based data about their students than ever before, these very systems (and schools) have less capacity than ever to analyse, interpret and draw policy and practice implications from such data. The political motivations, rather than research base, of the structural transformation of education departments has meant that much of this data which is expensive to collect is not useable educationally or strategically at either system or school level. Finally, these cash strapped public education systems (including TAFE) which tend to value quantitative over qualitative research, make up a large proportion of the education industry which educational researchers now are expected to 'tap' as the privatisation of universities increases their reliance upon non-DEETYA funding.

In that context, many university based educational researchers have been brought into contract relationships with these systems and schools to conduct evaluation research. This tends to be short term research for a very specific purpose. Such research tends to demand a quantitative 'data based' model in which policy frameworks are uncontested. The problems associated with contract research include the question of access by independent researchers to data held by these Departments and the tendency for education systems to seek research consultancies which will provide quickly the results wanted (McTaggart & Blackmore 1990). In some states particular education faculties appear to have the inside running in getting these research consultancies.

While most educational research is conducted in universities, another important site of educational research since its establishment out of Carnegie Corporation monies in 1930 has been the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)[8]. The *Australian Journal of Education* (AJE) and the *Australian Education Index* were both created in the late fifties by ACER. The Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), the major educational research association in Australian education with about 1,000 members, was created in 1970 out of an ACER sponsored conference[9]. AARE's journal, *The Australian Educational Researcher* was established in 1973, and along with AJE, is the major educational research journal dealing with the broad spectrum of educational research in Australia. At the present time ACER gets its revenue from three sources: an annual government grant (half from the Commonwealth and the other half from the states on a per capita basis); 'contracts and fees-for-service for research and development activities'; and through the sale of various educational and psychological tests and other print materials such as books (ACER 1996, p. 8). The latter is indicative of ACER's continuing involvement in

testing and measurement, reflecting both the character of educational research from its beginnings in the nineteenth century and the Carnegie motivation for supporting its establishment. The government grant has not grown very much in real terms across the last twenty years. However, there has been a substantial and disproportionate increase in revenue from the other two sources (ACER 1996, p. 9), reflecting the patterns of revenue in other 'corporatised', independent, not-for-profit companies. The increased dependence upon fee-for-service research has the potential to politically compromise the independence of research analysis and findings. However, with the demise of the State Departments' Research Branches, the ACER has taken on an even more significant role in Australian educational research[10]. It perhaps remains the only institution for those wishing to pursue a full-time career in educational research. However, in the current socio-political context there are more private sector research consultancy firms emerging to contest with the ACER and university education faculty tenders for short-term commissioned research.

Research training and careers

Most research training in education goes on in universities through higher degree work. Research students in education as a group differ significantly from research students in other fields. As noted by the *Strategic Review* a much higher percentage of education research students are part-time and external than is the case in other fields (p. 19). Education research students are on the whole much older than their counterparts in these other fields. According to the *Review*, more than 88 % of education research students were older than 30 in 1989 and more than 42 % were older than 42 (p. 19). This situation reflects the fact that research students in education come to the task after a career in educational practice, administration and policy work and most often carry out this research while still holding a full-time job in education. Thus research students in education are most often mature and experienced practitioners. Furthermore, their qualifications path to higher degree study is different from that of research students in other fields. Most PhD students in education tend to have completed a Master's degree rather than enrolling after completion of a Honours degree. The move to full-fee course-work Master's degrees in education will have a significant impact upon the pool of potential PhD students in education. There are relatively few Honours degree students in education.

This situation has both its strengths and weaknesses. PhD students in education, as already noted, tend to be highly qualified (often with a couple of Bachelor's degrees as well as a Master's degree), experienced practitioners who are very motivated. On the other hand, in terms of the competition between and

within institutions for government-funded Australian Postgraduate Research
Awards (APRA), education faculties and their potential higher degree students,
usually part time, are disadvantaged by the small pool of youngish, full time,
Honours degree graduates who appear to be favoured for such scholarships. This
situation raises equity considerations, and needs to be addressed in terms of
education faculties developing strategies for strengthening their Honours
programs and the numbers of students within them, as well as for DEETYA and
the universities to consider changing the conventions governing scholarship
awards. Further, education faculties within universities need to work to argue for
the comparability of taught and research Master's degrees to Honours degrees
and simultaneously to emphasise the value of professional experience to research
work for a higher degree in education.

Some mention has been made to this point about the relationship between
education as a research field and its connection to practice. Most academic
researchers in education have also had a background in teaching and thus, unlike
many university academics in other fields, have specific teaching qualifications.
This has meant that some innovative approaches to research training have been
developed in education faculties. These include cohort approaches, teams
working together on a research problem, and the development of workshops on
developing research proposals, ethical considerations, collecting data, analysing
data, writing the thesis, getting published etc. Furthermore, there has been some
interesting innovations in research training in relation to the development of
professional doctorates and a conception of higher degree supervision as
pedagogy (See Green & Lee 1995, Lee & Green 1995, Brennan 1995).

AARE has sought to encourage the development of strong research cultures in
education faculties through a number of strategies. These include the
establishment of a Directors of Educational Research network, forthcoming
publications on ethics in research and postgraduate supervision, the publication
of a code of ethics for educational researchers, and the development of discussion
papers on protocols for research with Indigenous Australians, and PhD
supervision and examination.

Partnerships

Mention has been made to this point of the usual hierarchical relationships
between educational researchers and educational practitioners. In contrast, some
research theorists (eg Kemmis 1988, Carr & Kemmis 1983) have argued for a
partnership relationship utilising action research. Connell (1996) has suggested
the relationship ought to be 'participatory and respectful in both directions'
(p. 14). In that context he argues there are four specific tasks for educational

studies (and we would add research) in universities. The first is 'documentation' as an 'important archive for public thinking about education' in the context of the contemporary loss of memory experienced by restructured educational systems. Second, he argues for university education faculties and researchers to 'reticulate' their knowledge throughout the education system, a process which requires more than just publication in refereed academic journals. This is the question of dissemination of research findings. (The publication, Set: Research Information for Teachers, co-produced by ACER and its New Zealand counterpart, is one exemplary example of research dissemination.) This would also include the documentation of teacher knowledges and practices through researcher/practitioner partnerships. The fact that such publications do not 'count' for the Research Quantum might in the future serve as a disincentive to such important work. Third, Connell suggests that universities should do 'pioneering work', for example in attempting innovative teaching practices and researching their effectiveness. Finally, he argues that universities and in particular education professors should use their 'privileges' and research generated knowledges to 'critique' contemporary educational developments— 'speaking truth to power' as Said (1994) has put it.

Recent developments in teacher education, both pre-service and continuing, have emphasised the significance of university/school partnerships, the role of educational research in teacher education and the development of practitioner/researchers. Education as a field of research has a legitimate place within universities, but education academics also need to work in research partnerships with practitioners and policy makers. There are also distinctions between the 'orientation', 'intent', 'mode of communication' and 'test' of academic educational research and practitioner action research which need to be recognised (Yeatman & Sachs 1995, p. 57). As noted by Yeatman and Sachs (1995, p. 57), while the former is 'meta-analytical' and 'cross-contextual' in orientation, the latter is focused on 'practice' in a 'specific context', with 'validity' the test of the former and 'trustworthiness' the test of the latter. The intent of academic educational research is 'explanation/analysis' which is communicated to an academic research community in an academic genre, while teacher action research is aimed at 'improving practice' and communicated to other practitioners through a variety of means , including 'direct oral reporting', 'dialogue' and 'group work' (Yeatman & Sachs 1995, p. 57).

A number of policies pursued by the former Federal Labor government in the late eighties and early nineties encouraged such academic/teacher partnerships. Labor pursued a national policy agenda in schooling (Lingard, Porter, Bartlett & Knight 1995, Lingard & Porter 1997). When the States and Territories attempted to take back control of this agenda, Labor continued its pursuit through other

means, including a well funded National Professional Development Program (NPDP) which supported teacher professional associations to engage with the national agenda. These were premised upon a model of teacher professional development which was school based, oriented to changing practice through partnerships between classroom teachers, education authorities in all sectors, teacher professional associations and universities. Significant amongst these programs was the National Schools Network (NSN), which had developed out of the earlier National Project for the Quality of Teaching and Learning (NPQTL) and which worked as a partnership between the Commonwealth, employing authorities, government and non-government teacher unions and network schools, supported by university based education researchers (Ladwig & White 1996). The NSN aimed to improve learning outcomes in schools through a re-examination of traditional organisational structures and practices of teachers. Ladwig and White (1996, p. 303) note the central role of collaborative research in the work of the Network:

> In essence, the NSN is an Australian learning house of school reform knowledge and it supports member schools with ideas, professional development, electronic networking and research. Commitment to research is a key feature of the NSN's work, demonstrated both in building a critical research culture in schools as an integral part of the rethinking process; and in a substantial research program in partnership with university colleagues in order to evaluate progress towards the NSN objectives.

As such, the NSN has been a very important site of collaborative research partnerships, as well as academic/teacher collaboration in the professional development schools run by the Network. The same could be said of the Commonwealth funded Innovative Links Project, which involved University based teacher educators and teachers in schools together pursuing teacher professional development and whole school change to the end of improved schooling provision and learning outcomes (Yeatman & Sachs 1995).

Similar observations about researcher/practitioner collaboration could be made about a number of other NPDP projects. As Judyth Sachs and Susan Groundwater-Smith (1996, p. 6) note generally about the NSN, Innovative Links and the overall NPDP:

> The teachers' theories of action lie at the heart of the studies produced by the projects and the research has been constructed in such a way as to allow a critical dialogue between the academics as the outsiders, and the

research associates, as the insiders, using the policy activists as sounding boards in terms of the broader educational agenda.

Funding for NPDP has been abolished by the new federal Coalition government despite its pronounced commitment to improving the status of teachers, while support for the NSN and Innovative Links remains uncertain at this stage, with attempts being made to 'cobble together' financial support from university education faculties and State Departments of Education for the NSN.

The performative state

More generally, the recent reforms in tertiary education echo a shift from the welfare or protective to the performative or competitive state as universities and their 'commercial arms' now compete with each other, with TAFE, and with private providers in the open training market, for customers both nationally and internationally (Cerny 1990). The state is competitive in that within a globalised economy the chief goal of the state at the national level has become the need to ensure the international competitiveness of the putatively national economy. Under corporatist Labor during the 1980s there was only partial de-regulation of the education sector and equity remained on the agenda, if increasingly re-defined to meet national economic needs as Labor sought to link universities more closely to the economy. Under the Howard Coalition elected in 1996, universities have confronted drastically reduced funding of up to 10% over three years, but within a distinct policy vacuum on higher education despite the West Report, and where all decisions are premised upon cost. Universities are also subject to national competition policy which works against collaborative arrangements which may, ironically, improve and even cheapen provision of courses to students.

The restructuring of the academic workplace has been marked by the increased accountability demands put upon the sector through profiles and funding formulas at the same time that the sector is being freed up in order to earn its own keep. This centralised decentralisation produces significant tensions and contradictions in the daily operation of universities. In turn, these tensions are played out in the everyday/everynight lives of individual academics, in the form of demands made upon their time to provide feedback and accountability upwards to their institutions, through performance management, quality assurance and research quantums and productivity agreements under enterprise bargaining. This management accountancy is premised upon an input-output model in which the fundamental operative principle is efficiency—what Lyotard (1984) defined as 'performativity'. Performativity is the efficiency principle upon

which all decisions are justified. In the forward to Lyotard's text, *The Postmodern Condition* (1984), Frederic Jameson commented that the application of performativity requires 'a certain level of terror, whether soft or hard--be operational... or disappear'. The efficiency or operativity principle, he concludes, is 'technological: it has no relevance for judging what is true or just' (Jameson in Lyotard 1984, p. xxiv). Yet the principle of efficiency is not value free, but carries a normative dimension. Marginson (1997b, p. 102) comments on the shift to market liberalism, which views the market as the best mechanism for efficient distribution of goods and services:

> Market liberal knowledge/power was always normative in character. Market liberal explanations in economics, political science and public administration, were designed to persuade and convince people to a viewpoint, to shape people's behaviours... [As the founding fathers of public choice theory, Buchanan and Tullock, argued in 1965] 'we are not directly interested in *the* state or what *a* state is...but to define quite specifically what we think ...a state ought to do'.

That market liberalism (and public choice theory premised upon the notion of the atomistic, self-maximising individual chooser) does not match the reality of people's lives, is of no concern. Indeed, as feminist economists point out, neo classical economic theory, and in particular human capital theory, has a limited empirical base upon which to make its claims, as its models have not been tested by research upon any significant populations (Strober 1995).

The above indicates a substantive shift in the role of universities within the performative state. On the one hand, globalisation has meant the internationalisation of education, new information technologies as the internet gives greater access to information which opens up new possibilities. On the other, universities no longer monopolise, or even define, what is worthwhile knowledge. They no longer operate as the self regulated communities of former times but are open to external political, social and economic influences (Yeatman 1994). Increasingly, what is worthwhile knowledge is determined by the user— students in terms of their individual vocational choices; industry in terms of applied knowledge to increase profits; and the state, in terms of policy use and accountability purposes. There is little room here for the traditional notion of 'pure research' which seeks to contribute to knowledge, and in doing so in a less instrumental or linear way, achieve use value in the longer term. While this 'client-driven' approach can be viewed as promoting the democratisation of knowledge production and dissemination, there is a need to distinguish between data (eg. performance indicators), information (eg. internet), and knowledge (eg.

research). Increasingly, universities are being viewed less as knowledge producers (research) and more as information disseminators (as they have the technical infrastructure). This instrumental view of the role of universities is exemplified in government tenders which call for service providers of information clearing houses without any research or consultancy component eg. the recent citizenship education professional development tenders. Universities are expected to engage in evaluation or implementation research, rather than initiate research on important educational issues which will contribute to knowledge in the field, that is, research for policy rather than research on policy (Taylor *et al* 1997). This shift is evident in the West Review on Higher Education's focus on teaching and funding mechanisms and neglect of research as an essential aspect of any university's role (Lingard & Renshaw 1997). In turn, it puts in jeopardy the long held notion of academic work comprising both research and teaching.

This reframing of the research-state relationship has significant implications for academic work and educational research. Indeed, performativity entails a value shift as institutions respond to particular policy frameworks informed by market liberalism, producing a type of 'institutional schizophrenia' (Blackmore & Sachs 1997, Lingard, Ladwig & Luke forthcoming) in which the performativity demands (image and impression management, performance management, client driven) take precedence over substantive issues of research and teaching, the 'real' work of academics. The professional judgement of the academic is increasingly under challenge in the face of competitive tendering and largely client driven agendas. As recent studies about the restructured tertiary sector indicate, academics increasingly feel that more time is being spent competing for submissions to bring in funds to improve the institution's and individual's point score on the Research Quantum; on providing data for accountability upwards to management and DEETYA which is more about performance management rather than evaluation for improvement; and in image production exercises of marketing; than on innovative course development, good teaching and path breaking research (Blackmore & Sachs 1997). The focus upon input-output and on efficiency, as Lingard, Ladwig and Luke (forthcoming) suggest, actually fails to take into account any educational understanding of what may be an 'ethics of progress' (Lyotard 1984). Indeed, such an approach is a highly modernist response to postmodern issues of difference and governmentality, whilst also being postmodernist to the extent that it eschews any standpoint with respect to 'progress'.

Conclusion

Thus the paradox of postmodern times: at the moment when globalised and more culturally diverse economies demand a more highly educated and diverse workforce for gaining the competitive edge, the very same processes of globalisation (manifest as the ideology of market liberalism) demand reduced public sector funding, in which education and social justice take the brunt. The characteristics of educational research adumbrated throughout will continue to shape the field, but probably the broader Post-Keynesian politics will have more of an influence in the context of globalising pressures. It seems unlikely that more public funding will be available for educational research in the near future. Furthermore, there is the potential for new technologies to create alternative non-public 'systems of education' (Luke 1996)—an area calling out for more research—and for private agencies to become important sites for the carrying out of educational research. Additionally, there are policy pressures for pre-service teacher education to become less theoretically oriented and to utilise more university/school partnerships. There are contradictory implications for educational research here. Nonetheless, the move to partnerships could encourage more collaborative research approaches of the kind encouraged by NPDP and NSN.

At this moment, there are a number of dangerous trends emerging for education as a research field which put at risk some of its achievements. First, there is a suggestion that there may be a return to a more foundationalist view of disciplines as universities re-make themselves to meet market demands in ways which are regressive for the more multidisciplinary fields of research such as education or women's studies, which tend not to attract fee paying clients. This situation is exemplified in the under representation of education on the ARC: it falls under the rubric of the social sciences, and then within traditional categories which make little sense in respect of contemporary educational research. Secondly, the Research Quantum is becoming a normative instrument in determining what constitutes research, premised upon quantification of input and output which works against professionally oriented fields of practice such as education, nursing and welfare, and which also militates against the types of productive education partnerships mentioned earlier. Thirdly, this is echoed in the area of research training where the normative model, which still dominates the distribution of post graduate scholarships, now critical with the introduction of full fees, is the neophyte researcher from a Honours undergraduate degree fast-tracked into a full time PhD within a large research 'God-professor' research team model more typical of the sciences. As already noted, in education, post graduates tend to be experienced teachers, administrators and policymakers with course work Masters degrees, including a strong research component, who are

usually part time and work as independent researchers rather than being associated with established research teams. This requires us to think about how we might go about developing research cultures in education faculties, and to extend already existing innovative models of professional doctorates which are increasingly popular in education (Brennan 1998).

Despite the plethora of difficulties, there are many real strengths in educational research in Australia. This is indicated by the extensive participation of Australian researchers in international conferences, particularly the British Educational Research Association Conference, the conference of the European Association for Learning and Instruction and that of the American Educational Research Association. ACER is highly regarded internationally, conducting research work for a number of international projects and agencies such as the OECD. Australians are heavily represented on the editorial boards and as editors of prestigious international journals across the field of educational research. There is also an increasing presence of international scholars at the annual conferences of AARE. As part of the continuing effort to establish research partnerships with various countries in Asia, the 1996 AARE conference was held in Singapore jointly with the Education Research Association, Singapore.

As already noted, Australian research on gender and education is very highly regarded, as is work within what were called the 'foundations of education', namely the sociology, philosophy and history of education. However, while research work in these areas remains strong, because of developments within the disciplines and within the universities and in teacher education, these are probably in their weakest numerical position since their introduction into the curriculum, with both history and philosophy of education in danger of disappearing from education as a field of study. Australian research on inequalities in education has been well received internationally and has been influential in policy terms. However, there appears to have been less research concern with class-based inequalities in education in recent times. There has been a dearth of research on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, but some debate on ethical issues[11] and the emergence of some Aboriginal educational researchers. Australian work on critical and feminist educational administration has been influential, as has research in policy sociology in the context of more policy driven systems of education. Researchers in educational psychology have drawn on theories of learning and development and collaborated with other researchers and practitioners to produce internationally recognised work in mathematics education, science education, reading, writing and approaches to academic study. Related to this has been highly regarded educational measurement research conducted by both ACER and the universities on profiling within curriculum areas. Research in literacy education has emerged out of

critical cultural studies as well as drawing on educational psychology research on cognitive and metacognitive processes. Critical literacy research has been influential in both policy and practice terms in Australia and internationally, but perhaps on the defensive now in the context of the Federal Coalition government's literacy testing push. Finally, a distinctive feature of educational research in Australia across the recent past has been the development of researcher/practitioner partnerships through a large number of action research projects aimed to improve practice and build theory. Because of the emphasis granted to a national training reform agenda increased research monies will probably be available for this domain into the near future.

There are, nonetheless, many contemporary challenges for educational research in Australia, particularly for that of a long term and critically informed nature. There is no doubt that changing political conditions will make it very difficult to gain increased support for, and more coordination of, the research effort in education as called for by the 1992 *Strategic Review of Research in Education* and by the 1995 OECD report, *Educational Research and Development: Trends, Issues and Challenges*. This is yet another indication that educational research is affected as much, if not more, by political developments which reshape educational institutions, as by theoretical developments within the academy. In sum, educational research ought to be 'good, disciplined enquiry' able 'to stand up to scholarly scrutiny', but also focused on research agendas 'socially negotiated' between 'government, policy-makers, practitioners and researchers' (OECD 1995, p. 14).

Notes

[1]   This paper derived from an earlier paper presented by the authors to the Directors in Research in Education Faculties Conference held in Canberra in 1996 and the Academy of Social Sciences Review of Research in Australia, to which Bob Lingard and Jill Blackmore were asked to respond on behalf of AARE. The Directors of Research Network was established through the Executive of the AARE by Richard Bates in the previous year in order to inform those involved in educational research about contemporary policy shifts, issues and research training. The AARE executive considered that these were important issues, and that the Review for the Academy of the Social Sciences should be made available to the members of AARE through the *Australian Educational Researcher*. It was seen to be appropriate by the Editorial Executive of AER that this paper be an extended editorial for this special issue on educational research. We would also like to thank the following who commented on various versions of the Academy of Social Sciences Review : Barbara Preston (who provided much of the ABS data), Richard Smith, Peter Renshaw and Barbara Kamler.

[2]   For an analysis of the impact of postmodernism on the social sciences see Rosenau (1992).

Notes (cont.)

3 McDonald et al's (1993) analysis of research needs in TAFE for the relevant ministerial council found that research and development expenditure constituted only .22 % of total expenditure on technical and further education at that time.

4 For member countries for which reliable data are available the OECD (1995) review demonstrated that Australia was at the upper end of the expenditure continuum.

5 The greatest expenditure on educational research is indirect expenditure, that is, the cost of the salaries of academics working in education faculties in universities where there is an expectation that some part of their time will be spent on research.

6 These data are drawn from ABS Research and Experimental Development: All Sector Summary. Cat. No. 8112.0. Various Years.

7 This is not to denigrate this type of research, but rather to note the squeeze placed on other types of school-based research.

8 See W.F. Connell's history of ACER here.

9 See Bessant and Holbrook (1995) for a history of AARE.

10 ABS data indicate that private non-profit organisations, including ACER, contribute about 7% of research in education.

11 See Atkinson, M., Brabham, W., Henry, J. and James, D. (1994) for a discussion of ethics and appropriate research protocols on Aboriginal education, produced by the Institute of Koori Education at Deakin University.

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