

E1 School knowledge, working knowledge and the knowing subject: a review of state curriculum policies 1975-2005

E2 Aims and Background

Schooling is a central mechanism for forming knowledge, workers and citizens. In Australia, research and reform is strong in particular subject areas and on parts of the national system, or on Commonwealth-sponsored projects and policy, but school curriculum is a state matter, and we have relatively little data on the culture in relation to curriculum that characterizes different states and on the ways in which different concepts of knowledge are being taken up, circulating and driving broad schooling practices. This project focuses on state differences in the framing of what matters in relation to school knowledge. It takes a methodologically innovative approach to investigate comparatively and over a recent thirty year time-span the ways in which Australian states and territories take up some key questions of continuing centrality to education:

- Where is knowledge seen to reside, and what sort of a thing is it seen to be?
- How are the 'academic' and 'vocational' purposes of schooling depicted?
- What characteristics and dispositions is the learner assumed to bring to schooling, and how is difference among learners construed in terms of curriculum policies?
- What types of knowledge and what types of outcomes are named as core?
- How are agendas about schooling as a vehicle of knowledge and learning of the young being put together with agendas about schooling as a mechanism of competitive selection for life beyond school?

The project will analyse curriculum policies documents and assessment guides of all states and territories at 10 year intervals from 1975 to 2005; will interview bureaucrats and curriculum academics located in different states for their own accounts of what has happened and what has been constructed; and will analyse the questions, assumptions and agendas that have been emphasized in research and writing about the state curriculum over these years. The project will contribute a new knowledge resource to curriculum as a field of policy and practice in Australia, and more broadly to curriculum as a theoretical field in relation to contemporary times. It will provide a new type of evidence and new perspectives on the contending conceptions of knowledge and of the learner that feed educational practices, the meanings that circulate about curriculum and the consistencies and tensions in these, the framing of the knowledge and selection agendas of schooling; and the academic/vocational reworking of curriculum.

Background

In the last few years, most Australian states have produced (separate) major new policy statements on curriculum and visions of 'essential learnings' and (together) agreements on certain areas as 'curriculum priority areas' (civics as well as English, mathematics, science and ICT) in which some common standards are being developed. The Commonwealth government has sponsored inquiries into vocational education, boys, the teaching of reading, music in schools and has raised questions about history, standards and a national final school certificate. Over the past thirty years, the extent of the attention to reworking 'what matters' in curriculum is equally striking. Different iterations of policies for girls and gender equity; different configurations of the core vocational competencies; a phase of attention to knowledge as nationally agreed outcomes for eight key learning areas in the late 1980s early 1990s, then retreat from that, then limited revival; repeated state curriculum and assessment reviews. MCEETYA (a body including all state ministers of education) produces annual publications of a *National Report on Schooling in Australia* which gather some limited information on state patterns; the EdNA website (www.edna.edu.au) provides direct access to *current* state arrangements of certification and curriculum framework documents; from time to time, studies *within* particular discipline areas, or on gender or values or vocational education draw together a more detailed account of differences in state approaches in that area, but it has been remarkably difficult to get a systematic comparative picture of the broad state cultures and agendas and their

inflections of agreed curriculum norms.

Via the AEC then MCEETYA, collaboration between ministers and state systems has been taking place since the 1970s to produce some agreed consistencies in schooling (including the agreed goals of Australian schooling of the Hobart (1989) and Adelaide (1999) declarations, and the current work on curriculum priority areas and agreed learnings). But it is also the case that the history and culture of the different systems has continued to be marked by some different forms and emphases. For example, while Education Qld developed its high profile New Basics project (Luke et.al, 2000), designed to institute a clearer refined core of what schools need to emphasize as important learning, and while that state manages the selection element of schooling without an external final certificate; NSW emphasizes disciplines and subject departments as the heart of good education (as in the AESOP project, see Dinham & Green 2001), promotes a large number of selective schools, and continues to have external certification of year 10 as well as year 12. Vickers and Lamb (2002) argue that the LSAY data on retention patterns show that state differences in curriculum do have some measurable effects. Comparisons and mapping sponsored by governments themselves (even those agreed by the representatives of all states) are inevitably limited in their remit. They deal with the present, with regulations and hard data, with summary data, and with the conservatism of scope required in a politically sensitive arena (Marsh 1994). They do not allow us to see much of what is distinctive, to look at culture and meanings, and consistency and change over time, in the way that the current project proposes to do.

Issues of knowledge and schooling in contemporary times are difficult intellectual questions, not just technical ones. These changes and debates relate both to issues of the 'what' of the curriculum (what, today, is appropriate knowledge or ways of knowing for the young generation?) and to the institutional arrangements, boundaries and processes by which pathways are developed, status of different streams differentiated and choices set up within, between and beyond schools, that is, to their implicit as well as explicit constructions of what is important in relation to knowledge, subjectivity and vocational preparation. One background source of this project is the striking divergences in the contemporary literature about what knowledge is (what it looks like, how it might be assessed) and what kinds of knowledge matters for the schooling of this generation. Ideas drawn from cognitive psychology (Gardner 1999) contend with ideas about situated knowledge and the 'lifelong learner' (Lave and Wenger 1994); the OECD *DeSeCo* project names 'key competencies for personal, economic and social well being in the 21st century' that set up very different ways of thinking about knowledge than its own *PISA* project (the international student achievement studies which foreground single measurable hierarchies of knowledge within subject areas); knowledge as portfolio of accomplishments is promoted at the same time as other authors examine the increased competitiveness being developed around year 12 scores and standards. (see Gibbons, 1994, Gee et.al, 1996, Young 1998, Hayward and Fernandez 2004; Pring 2004; Willinsky 2005; McLeod and Yates 2006 and many more).

The early 21st century has been a major period of curriculum debate and reconceptualization internationally. The academic literature has been marked by a revived interest in the problem of what is appropriate work, empirically, theoretically and methodologically for a curriculum researcher or scholar (see for example Pinar et.al. 1995, Hamilton 1999, Hlebowitsh 2005). There has been a revived interest in the potential contribution of a new take on curriculum history (Green 2003, Cormack & Green 2000), and a noticeably revived interest in reworking the sociological perspectives of Bourdieu (eg symposia in *BJSE* 25 (4) 2004; and *Theory and Research in Education* 3 (1) 2005). The sociological and historical frame of the current project is engaged with these critical debates, and particularly with the *usefulness* of attempting to 'make strange' the commonsense of recent history, and the value of keeping in play different theoretical perspectives rather than seeking a single resolution of these (eg the different perspectives a Bourdieuean approach sets up with its central interest in the processes of who is being advantaged and

disadvantaged and how through school curriculum; compared with those raised by feminist or Foucauldian or 'new times' literature and their interests in what kinds of subjects, subject orientations and capacities are being formed in the contemporary world (McLeod & Yates 2006)).

The project's focus in its cross-state analysis is on the ways 'school knowledge, working knowledge and the knowing subject' are being envisioned and put together in curriculum, and it understands this particular interwoven problematic as a central locus of the multiple reworkings of curriculum today. 'Working knowledge' refers not just to the specifically vocational streams of curriculum, but to an interest in how curriculum policy sets up the forms of selection and knowledge status relativities; and to how conceptions of the post-school needs of young people feed back into the curriculum broadly. 'The knowing subject' refers to the way in which curriculum differentially constructs young people both as learner and as product of its activity, and both cognitively and demographically.

E3 Significance and Innovation

The significance of this project is that it provides a means of gaining new understandings of the culture of curriculum provision in Australia and a new and more detailed theoretical perspective on how contending conceptualizations of knowledge, the academic/vocational, and the learner are being taken up as agendas of the states. It is significant in its relationship to national priorities, in its focus, in its form, and in its likelihood of producing fresh knowledge about an important issue:

- **Significance for national priorities**

In the context of 'national priorities' and the Australian context, this has been a period in which there have been myriad attempts to review and reform the agendas of the school curriculum in the context of 'new times' and the heightened concern with standards and international comparisons; and we do not have sufficient knowledge about the 'common sense' and emphases and disjunctions as well as continuities that frame what states bring to these agendas, relative to each other and over time. In terms of public policy statements, different things are called up when the discussion is ICT (a world of constant change) than when it is mathematics or English (are traditional standards slipping?) than when it is vocationalism and outcomes of school (how to develop the new flexible lifelong worker-learner?) (Yates 2004, 2005). The proposed project is one way of standing outside the immediate technical questions of a particular authority, and of the traditions of discussion within a particular subject area, to take stock of constructions of knowledge and the learner that policy texts draw on and help to bring into being. It will provide a better foundation for future policy and practice both at an immediate 'problem solving' level by showing more systematically the consistencies and differences in approach that have been taken up across states and within states across levels and areas of study over a period of multiple new policy constructions, and by identifying more clearly points of tension and silence in these; and at a more meta level by a theorization of the evidence overall, and what it shows about curriculum constructions of knowledge, work and the learner in Australia.

- **Significance as a new type of study of education in the Australian context**

(i) The importance of better study of state inflections of curriculum:

In Australia, schooling arrangements and curriculum policies are largely a state responsibility and produce state-differentiated outcomes, but there has been remarkably little comparative research attention to the specific curriculum culture and agendas of the different systems (as distinct from the patterns of student retention, pathways and subject choice that are regularly monitored and reported on). Vickers, 1995, Collins & Vickers 1999 and Vickers & Lamb 2002 offer some beginnings of work in this area, and give particular attention to certification structures and their relationship to pathways outcomes; and a number of studies have been sponsored in particular subject areas of the curriculum. The one period when there was a systematic attempt to provide a broader account, was the state mapping of curriculum in eight agreed key learning areas in 1991-1993 as part of a foreshadowed move to agreed national statements and standards. Marsh's (1994) detailed account

of this ill-fated venture indicates some of the problems of trying to analyse state curriculum from within a government-sponsored and instrumentally understood arena. In order to get consistency in the foreshadowed statements and standards, the process itself set up a homogenising format which structured what could and could not be depicted (eg how many levels and strands could be part of a subject area); and the public debate associated with the instrumental purposes of the comparison (the national prescription) led to a type of critical scrutiny that ensured ongoing sensitivity about what states would agree to allow to be represented. Marsh's account and that of many policy sociologists focuses particularly on the politics of how decisions come to be made, key players, power and interests. The intention of the current project is to develop an approach that focuses on the curriculum conceptions themselves. It will contribute to a more subtle and differentiated view of 'Australian' curriculum than that which commonly speaks from within one state culture or policy reform or key learning area; or that takes only 'national' policies as its focus. And in the context of drives for greater national 'consistency' in curriculum, we need to understand more of the differentiated inflections through which curriculum agendas are understood in states with different spatial and historical configurations.

(ii) The significance of work of stocktake and review for educational purposes:

In the field of education, stocktake matters. Curriculum is both a normative field and one in which contending and impossible things are asked of it (Yates, 2005; Pring 2004). Research that has some longitudinal and comparative form, that goes back to what is being done to lift into view agendas, differences, silences, tensions and implications, *different possibilities*, is an important part of the field. It cuts into the rhetoric that frames what is approved at a particular time, to show what is incoherent or inconsistent or not well worked out; to find new ways of thinking about core questions or action agendas. For example, in the UK, alongside the government's own review of curriculum 14-19, a major independent Nuffield project has been supported at Oxford University to re-assess the knowledge and skills agendas (Pring 2004, Hayward and Fernandez 2004). From this review, Hayward found over 150 separate pieces of legislation had been mounted to produce the vocational skills of the 21st century, while alongside this, the simultaneous policy emphasis on competition between schools had actually produced a stronger academic rather than vocational emphasis. In a recent review essay in a major US journal, John Willinsky (2005) elucidates the ways three influential frameworks set up very different ways of constructing 'schooling for the knowledge society' and identifies economic and social outcomes not being well served in this. Fenwick and Rubenson (2005) have produced an invaluable meta-review of the work and learning literature and its emphases, differences, silences, which points to ways in which the literature from different traditions does not speak to each other and would benefit by doing so.

The assertion that this project's stocktake and systematic review of the current project will produce significant new insights is based on (1) the extent to which different constructions of knowledge, work and the learner are evident in existing policies, academic literature, schooling practices and public debates and the lack of a systematic account of what has in fact been taken up in different states and over time; (2) the fact that its questions and focus derive from tensions and changes observed in education practices and student subjectivity in preceding CI-led ARC projects and (3) the CI's past contribution to her field (see B10.1 and Yates refs) which has frequently been of this form (ie has reviewed particular fields of activities in ways that allows implications, silences and new issues to be recognized).

(iii) Methodological/theoretical innovativeness and contribution

This study combines different strands of approaching curriculum study. In line with the 'genealogical' and 'reconceptualist' lines of curriculum inquiry, this aims to draw on Foucault, Popkewitz (1997), Green (2003), Cormack (2000), Tamboukou, (1999) and others to ask questions about the curriculum discourses and the 'conditions of possibility' they set up, to draw attention to discontinuities, to avoid teleological readings, and to understand the texts as themselves constituted

in discourse. But it draws too on the lines of sociological and feminist theorizing whose questions are about ‘recognition’ and ‘distribution’ (Teese & Polesel 2003; Brennan & Zipin 2005); and on the concerns within more recent sociology of education (following Young 1998), that sociological analysis in education should have something to say to *educational* questions about knowledge and learning, not just to broader sociological questions about power and its effects. It is a new type of sociologically framed historical comparative study of Australia’s curriculum development. Its overall agenda in theoretical terms is to theorize further the ‘putting together’ of issues about knowledge, the learner and competitive selection that characterizes curriculum as a theoretical field as well as a field of policy and practice (Yates, 2005)

In summary, this project:

- Takes up key questions for contemporary curriculum (questions about knowledge, the learner and work), of both theoretical and policy significance;
- Takes an approach whose cross-state comparative and longitudinal design will make an important new contribution to knowledge of Australian curriculum;
- Will produce *new empirical and conceptual evidence* on the ways in which *particular questions about school knowledge* (including the vocational/academic, the epistemological framing, and the knowing subject) are understood in Australia, and continuities and discontinuities in this (over time as well as between states and different stages or parts of schooling); and in doing so will produce a new source of evidence and perspective for the ongoing reworking of these key issues;
- Will build new perspectives on curriculum as policy and the contemporary form in which knowledge, formation of the future citizen/worker and competitive selection putting together of in it.

E4 Approach and Methodology

The components of this project are

1. an analysis at 10 year intervals from 1975 to 2005 of policy documents and curriculum materials relating to curriculum across all Australian states and territories, including attention to within state texts related to different streams and levels and types of subjects;
2. an associated bibliographic review of published and unpublished secondary analyses (including theses and conference papers) of the state curriculum constructions in the period under review;
3. interviews with senior curriculum players and observers from department and academic contexts in each state about the changes, emphases and key hallmarks of the period in question.
4. a broader analysis and testing of the findings and perspectives of the project in terms of more general questions about curriculum theorizing and the distributive versus knowledge agendas of curriculum in Australia, using conferences which draw together leading theorists in this area.

Broad conceptual terrain:

Curriculum is a normative field. Research in this field is appropriately directed to the conceptions and directions and assumptions in what is being set up as well as to empirical data-gathering of enactments and outcomes. The following broad assumptions underpin the approach taken here:

- Curriculum policy texts and guidelines are not co-terminous with enacted practices, but they do have some regulatory quality, and they are one source of accessing the culture and meanings and discursive touchstones in which curriculum is practised. In my most recent project, for example, we studied ‘practices’ - pedagogies, teachers and students involved in vocational studies in different types of classroom sites – but some of what they were observably doing was negotiating different conceptions of knowledge set up in the state-mandated curriculum materials and assessment technologies (observable competencies for AQF; discursive representations of hierarchically assessable knowledge for HSC, Tennant & Yates 2005). Those policies and frameworks set up conditions in which the teachers made pedagogic choices; and

in which students were judged and set up on pathways relative to each other. Conversely, sometimes policy documents set up an agenda for curriculum that has a symbolic claim in relation to circulating meanings (eg 'inclusive' education, or 'develop each child's full potential' see Yates 1998, 1999) but which is not associated with particular enactments and criteria in the specific more detailed prescription guides.

- Analysis of texts is an interpretive rather than technical activity (Yates 2003). The delineation of different conceptions of knowledge is derived from previous projects and literature (see E2 and E3), and from close and comparative readings of the documents themselves. The questions for analysis have been an ongoing focus through different projects of the CI concerned with strands of curriculum theory; feminist challenges; the new vocationalism and new times.
- This project takes a historical sociological approach in its 'slice' approach that focuses on all states at the same four points in time to show what is being set up at those points. It is not an investigation intended to give a history of influences, major players, contexts. Like 'genealogy', the intention is to provide close readings of how conceptions are being put together at particular times; what 'conditions of possibility' they set up; to provide a picture that reads against and not just within the commonsense of the explicit agendas. The comparative 'mapping' itself is to be structured by taking 10 year intervals, rather than by structuring a narrative around major state policy events, as one way of de-centering a focus on strategy and events and overt political policy moves and rhetorical claims, and centering the questions on what, across the country, at four different points, is in place in relation to conceptions of knowledge, the learner, vocational/academic. (The project will nevertheless follow up major new policy documents produced in the intervening decade working back from the traces these leave in the year chosen for analysis.) The project is different from a policy-commissioned review that seeks to bring together the self-conscious models and aims and differentiations that states set up. Its aim is to analyse those models and aims in a new way.
- The project has both a conceptual and a 'knowledge resource' intent. In relation to the former, it wants to build a better understanding about curriculum conceptions and how these circulate, shift, contend, re-form. In relation to the latter, it wants to begin to build a better documented basis for seeing state curriculum activity comparatively than we yet have. In addition to the policy text analysis, two further components of the project contribute to both these agendas: interviews with key education bureaucrats and curriculum academics from different states about the years in question; and a review of published and thesis research and writing for each state on the same period. These strands of the study themselves will be analysed in terms of what they emphasized, construct, silence in their approach. That is, they will be analysed as texts or objects of study in themselves, as a further part of the agenda of seeing Australian curriculum and its research in fresh ways, not simply used as sources to draw on for the slice analysis of policy texts.

Design and selection issues:

The time frame 1975-2005 and choice of 10 year intervals encompasses major developments and changes politically and in policies over that period. In 1975 the Schools Commission was influential, *Girls, School and Society* was published, and the curriculum literature beginning to reflect the influence of sociology of knowledge. In the decades following, some noted developments included the growing interest and influence in 'effective schools', the development of stronger commonwealth led interest in a national education agenda, development and revision of national statements on curriculum outcomes, on vocational competencies and ways of assessing those, the 'ministerialization' of education, the growth of a neoliberal interest in efficiency and choice, the growing interest in new technologies and their implications; and the more recent, and in some cases quite dramatic, state reformulations of 'essential learnings' and pathways.

Most states provide major new statements about their curriculum agenda on a roughly ten year cycle – but not on the same year. The decision to structure this project by decade rather than by

particular major commonwealth or state new policies was in part to avoid prior framing of some policies rather than others in advance as 'key turning points', and in part to avoid a story that focuses on events (launch of a new policy and associated debate, for example) rather than an analysis that is attempting to use framing policy statements and guidelines as ways of seeing circulation of meanings, constructions of knowledge, work, the learner.

'Policy' texts

Policy is an ambiguous word. The project will focus on (1) formal statements of intent and values in relation to curriculum (which might or might not have a direct regulatory dimension); (2) curriculum and assessment guidelines issued to schools; (3) regulatory arrangements, especially in relation to the handling of different streams.

For each nominated year, we will collect the following:

- The overview statement of department policy and aims relating to curriculum (eg currently in Victoria Blueprint and VELs); and any statements within or separate from this related to primary and early years; middle years, post-compulsory;
- The statements and more detailed guidelines relating to different areas of the curriculum. This will not attempt a comprehensive account across all subjects. It will take different types of subject areas and examine guidelines for the early, middle and post-compulsory stages of study; and where streams or types of certification are differentiated, their guidelines.
- Any specific policy statements and curriculum brief on VET in schools
- Documents issued by the state Boards of Studies and/or Assessment Authorities such as SABSSA (or moderation guidelines from the Qld Board of Studies). Where available, we will include reports from examiners on HSC (or equivalent) issued the following year which explain the basis on which various types of answers were not adequate.

States differ in the extent to which they do issue centralized prescription, but this itself forms part of how knowledge is framed by them, and that will be part of the comparative analysis. Major new inquiries or policy documents produced in the intervening decade will be noted from the perspective of the way in which they have or have not been taken up in the texts for the year we investigate. This is not a study of press statements or policy management. We will be looking for statements of aims (including associated arrangements) in the formal documents produced by each state for schools and/or parents and public. In terms of substantive curriculum guidelines, we will select what is said across three different stages of schooling (early primary, middle years, and post-compulsory, including HSC), and different subject areas. Where textbooks or other resources are mentioned we will sample those. Specific attention will be paid to assessment practices.

Interviews: Interviews will be held with at least one senior curriculum bureaucrat in each state who has a substantial history in that state, and one curriculum academic based in each state, as well as key figures from DEST, Curriculum Corporation and ACSA. The interviews will be semi-structured and open-ended, and designed to produce narrative accounts about how each of these people understands what has been happening in a particular state in relation to the questions signalled (construction of knowledge etc) and for the period indicated.

Curriculum research (publications and theses on state curriculum policy for the period in question): in addition to searches through AEI, thesis archives and Australian and international curriculum journals, state-based interviews and library and archive work will be used. Writing and research related to particular subject areas (maths, English etc) will be included where they are dealing with issues of knowledge conception, assumptions about the learner, and about vocational/academic and the emphasis and agenda of a particular state.

Sources and approaches to analysis:

The most recent relevant documents are generally available online, and a large amount of material, particularly each major new State policy reform, is available from local libraries of the university, ACER, Curriculum Corporation, ACSA. However to bring together a full consistent set of relevant texts for each year nominated will require some local investigation in state education department libraries and archives.

The starting point for analysis of texts are the questions indicated at the start of this application (and below); and these are to be analysed through attention both to the explicit commitments of the documents and to the implicit metaphorical claims and regulatory agendas (eg modes of assessment and certification) they set up:

- Where is knowledge seen to reside, and what sort of a thing is it seen to be? (for example is it something located in the teacher and texts or in the workplace, or in an inner student capacity to be developed? Is it something that can be tested, or is it something that is displayed? Is its authority a disciplinary form of knowledge?)
- What characteristics and dispositions is the learner assumed to bring to schooling, and how is difference among learners construed in terms of curriculum policies? (for example, in recent projects we have noted that being able to know and reflexively position oneself has grown in importance as a cross-curriculum form of valuable knowledge, and that this has gendered implications Yates and McLeod, 2006, Tennant and Yates, 2004))
- What types of knowledge and what types of outcomes are named as core? (eg 'key learning areas', or 'personal and social skills' – and how are different agendas named and prioritised relative to each other in different types of documents?)
- How are the 'academic' and 'vocational' purposes of schooling depicted?
- How are agendas about schooling as a vehicle of knowledge and learning of the young being put together with agendas about schooling as a mechanism of competitive selection for life beyond school?

Comparison of what is being said on these questions will be made across different types of documents in a state in the same year (eg aims statements compared with assessment guidelines and comparing documents designed for different stages and streams); across that state over the four years 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005; and across states over that time. The national curriculum statements produced in the early 90s will provide an interesting comparative body of mapping for this work.

The approach to analysis is based in historical and sociological traditions as described earlier rather than specifically linguistic ones, and the analysis will not use a pre-determined typology of knowledge types, but construct its analytic categories after further reading of that material. Some elements of more linguistically oriented textual approaches will be included: in particular some attention to metaphors, to intertextuality, to binaries. Analysis is seen as a necessarily interpretive activity that draws on the broader literature for its interpretive categories, and establishes its interpretive claims discursively, by the explanation of the analytic strategies and the use of evidence in relation to claims and arguments. Background arguments and claims about the questions here are found in the literature and earlier projects discussed in E2 and E3.

The broad agenda of the project is to build a comparative analysis of the approach(es) to knowledge, work and the learner seen across states in this time period. This theorization will consider separately as well as together, the ways curriculum knowledge was constructed over time in those state policy documents and guides; in the approaches taken by researchers; and in the oral accounts of key players. This conceptual work will be refined in the course of the project both by a small focus conference that brings together senior Australian curriculum theorists to focus on contending frameworks of understanding the material and ways of seeing the state agendas and recent history of the present; and by holding symposia on these issues at the national and international curriculum association conferences signalled in the timeline.

The 'mapping' of the state policies at the four 10 year intervals will be set out in a final publication which includes an annotated bibliography of relevant state documents and published and unpublished secondary writings about the state documents; and a comparative table and extended analysis of state emphases, tensions, indicative extracts in relation to 'school knowledge', 'working knowledge' and the 'knowing subject'.

Timeline:

2007 Feb- April: (RA in conjunction with CI) prepare ethics application for interviews; online library work searching state materials and secondary sources; identify contacts and

interviewees in each state; arrange schedule of department visits for each state

May- Oct: For each state and territory outside Vic, RA liaises with local casual RA who will do preliminary review and gathering of relevant materials and sources. RA and CI will visit each state to directly investigate further archives; and conduct interviews with academic, professional association and education dept informants.

June: RA and CI review initial state materials and interviews to frame initial coding scheme.

July-Dec: annotating and coding of secondary writings on state curriculum; transcription and coding of interviews; coding of 1975 state curriculum documents

July: symposium on the cross-state interests of the project at the bi-ennial ACSA conference, and will use to gather further resources and contacts.

Nov: initial cross-state analysis of 1975 documents for AARE.

2008:Feb: paper at IAACS conference to discuss work in context of international curriculum field

Mar-Apr: cross state analysis of the 1985 documents; review of interviews, secondary material related to same, draft overview

May-June: as above for 1995 documents

July-Aug: as above for 2005 documents

Sept: focus conference with pre-circulated papers from project and other invited perspectives

Oct: revisit coded materials by state (analysis of each state consistencies and changes over time)

Nov-Dec: overview analysis and preparation of publications.

E5 National Benefit: Research Priority 3: Frontier technologies for building and transforming Australian industries: ‘Promoting an innovative culture and economy’

NRP3 emphasizes the importance of ‘better understanding of the conditions that are conducive to innovation and its acceptance.’ Schooling is a foundation mechanism for the knowledge economy and for building innovative technologies. In Australia we have relatively little data on the culture in relation to curriculum, knowledge and innovation that characterizes different states and on the ways in which different approaches to knowledge and innovation are being taken up and are driving broad schooling practices. This project focuses on state differences in the framing of what matters in relation to school knowledge. Its systematic comparative research will make possible a better sense of competing or conflicting agendas in the curriculum area, and of differences that may impact on attempts to move in a ‘nationally consistent’ direction, or to institute a more innovative culture of knowledge building. It will show more clearly what is and is not being taken up in relation to new vocational agendas and new conceptions of knowledge, and will make possible a more realistic appraisal of the conditions in which innovation and reform need to be construed.

E6 Communication of Results

The theoretical focus of the project will be communicated as the project proceeds in papers and symposia at national and international conferences of the Curriculum Studies Associations (ACSA, IAACS) and education research associations (AARE, AERA, ECER) and in refereed journal papers. The overview resource of state policies and differences detailed in E4 will be published as a book and CD that will be available for state authorities and professional bodies, and also for graduate study in Education. As Foundation Chair of Curriculum at the University of Melbourne, the CI will use the project and seminars and meetings related to it, in the public seminar series on curriculum which she convenes. Both the faculty and the University of Melbourne name curriculum as a key research agenda and strength; and the project will communicate via existing international collaborations, projects, publication and graduate training activities in this area, and by combining with related major projects located in the faculty (eg Wyn, Life Patterns project; Teese, Polesel, Keating et al On Track and Outcomes projects) to enhance the impact of our work internationally.

E7 Role of Personnel

This is designed as a project in which the CI can extend her analysis of knowledge, identities and changing times in school education by focusing on the policy constructions that frame the different

pathways and pedagogical tensions evident at school level; and as a project where she can contribute new perspectives on Australian curriculum work. She will work with a research associate who has a PhD in history of education, and who is familiar with the resources and archives of different state departments. The RA will be responsible for the extensive library, online and archive searching; for filing and coding documents; for arranging contacts and interviews; and in year 2 will organize the focus conference associated with the project. RAs in each state will be employed casually for a short period to do foundational compilation work for that state. The CI and RA together will frame the analytic coding of materials, and will work together on the overview report, mapping and annotated bibliography, analysis of academic and bureaucrat perspectives on the state curricula, analysis of key themes and silences of the research materials. The CI will conduct most project interviews; and will be responsible for the curriculum theorization agendas of the project.

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