



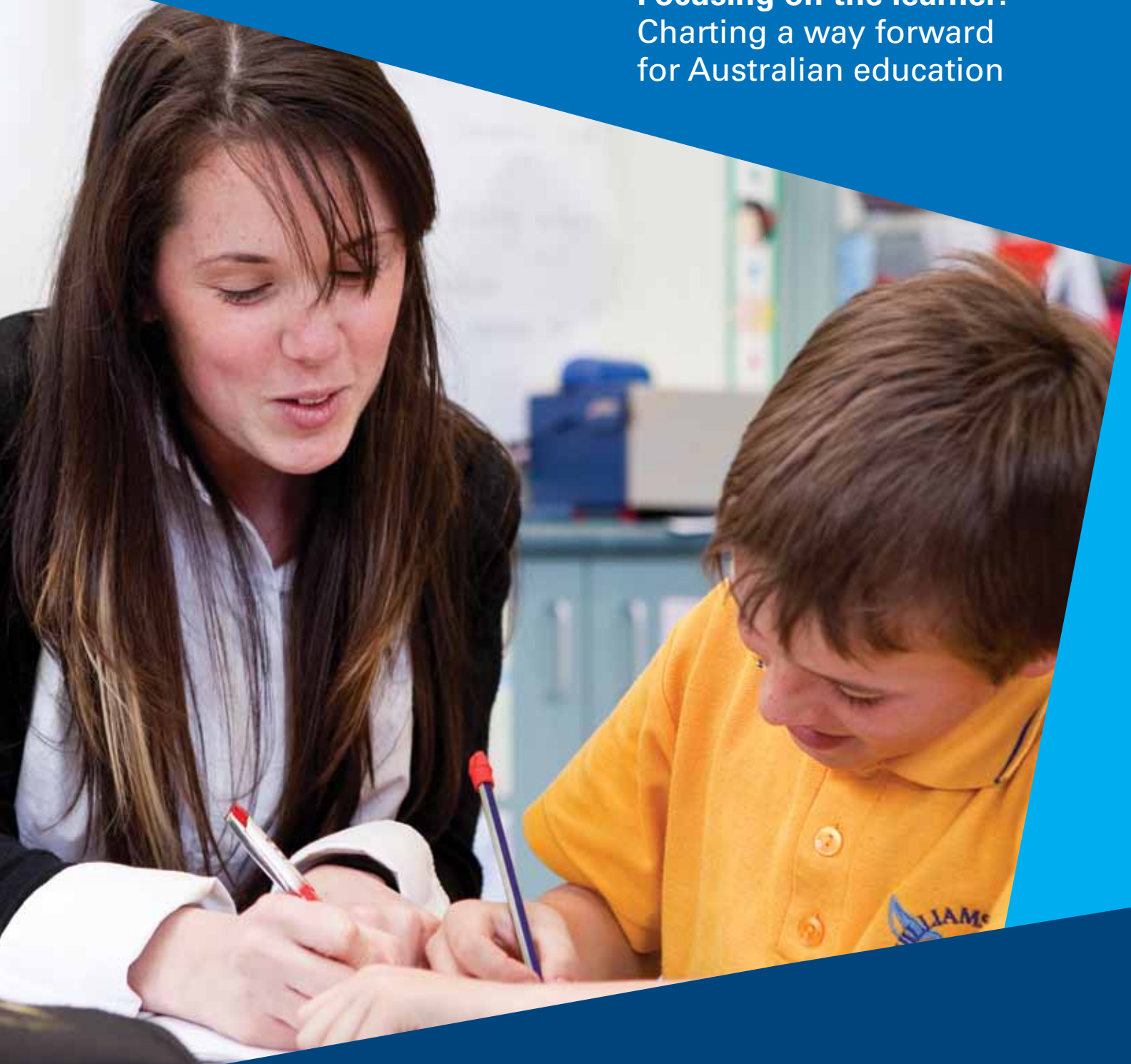
THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

GRADUATE
SCHOOLS

MELBOURNE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

Focusing on the learner:
Charting a way forward
for Australian education





Foreword

Australian education is shown by most international comparisons of student learning to be high performing but there are countries in our region as well as countries very like Australia, in particular Canada, that outperform us. We ought to aim higher.

This green paper draws on the extraordinary capacity of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) and its extensive track record in research to chart a way forward. The paper takes a realistic account of the complexities of a federation with eight government school systems, more than a third of students enrolled in non-government schools and a higher education system, of which teacher education is a part, that is almost the sole responsibility of the federal government.

Australia does not have the ready access to clear policy levers in the way in which single, comprehensive education systems such as Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong and Finland do. It needs to work either exclusively at the state and territory level as Canada does, without a national perspective, or to negotiate effective ways of working collaboratively across federal, state and territory authorities and also, on many issues, with the non-government sector.

The recommendations in this paper are of relevance to all school jurisdictions. I commend them as a productive contribution to policy debate and development.

Professor Barry McGaw AO



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From the Dean

Like many others in the education sector, the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) feels a sense of national urgency about addressing the educational challenges Australia faces; the unacceptable equity gap; the falling performance of Australian schools in the international comparisons; and the provision of a challenging 21st century learning environment for all students. The available evidence suggests we are failing on these counts.

The MGSE has prepared this paper with these challenges in mind, focusing our efforts where most value can be added: on quality teaching in Australian classrooms.

21st century learners

We need to work with teachers and teacher education institutions to ensure true clinical professional practice and a focus on student growth are adopted and integrated throughout our system, rather than existing in their current isolated pockets of excellence.

True clinical practice offers teachers the most effective model for making a significant impact on student learning. It is a data-driven, holistic teaching practice, based on ground-breaking research from academics including Professor Patrick Griffin, Professor John Hattie and Professor Linda Darling-Hammond. Importantly, it is evidence based and proven to work – it is not another ‘fad’.

The role of teachers is to deliberately intervene to ensure every student achieves their highest possible learning outcome. All students should achieve at least one year’s learning growth in return for a year of school education input. There is accumulating evidence that clinical practice enables teachers to do this because it focuses on the learner and what happens in the classroom - it is all about the interaction between teacher and student.

Importantly, a clinical profession does not use demographic factors to explain or excuse reasons for differences between student performances. Rather, clinical teachers use these factors to inform appropriate intervention strategies that promote intellectual growth for every student. Factors like socio-economic status become drivers of intervention rather than explanations of differences in achievement levels.

Political priorities

While it is important for Australia, with its mix of Government/Catholic/Independent schooling, to find its own solutions, other high performing countries can assist in pointing the way.

Countries such as Finland, Singapore and Korea have among the top performing educational systems in the world because they take a targeted, long term approach to reform. They are characterised by outstanding public education systems and their systems are underpinned by principles of equity and excellence. They invest in and train a teaching profession that is highly skilled and valued throughout society. Above all, these systems work collaboratively with all stakeholders and take a generational approach to investment.

It has taken more than three decades for these countries to reap the rewards of their reforms. Australia is more advanced than Finland, Singapore and Korea were thirty years ago but there are no short term fixes and a strategic commitment to change is needed.

There has been a large amount of education policy activity in Australia in recent years. While aspects have lacked clarity and bipartisan agreement, there has also been significant progress. This includes the establishment of strong institutional frameworks through the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA), and the notable successes achieved through National Partnerships funding. Australia now needs to build on these successes, while responding to the challenges the 21st century presents.

Too many policies impact factors outside the classroom, leading to many millions of dollars spent for little gain in student or teacher learning. Instead, we need to focus on building a profession of teachers, esteeming excellence and asking teachers to be critically involved in building their profession so change can be successfully implemented within the classroom.

This paper will contribute to the contest of ideas around education, and teaching in particular, and we hope it will stimulate debate.

Field Rickards

Dean, Melbourne Graduate School of Education

Executive summary

The *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* has set the laudable goal that: "By 2025, Australia will be ranked as a top five country in the world for the performance of our students in reading, science and mathematics literacy and for providing our children with a high-quality and high-equity education system". This is a challenging goal and it demands that every child receives a first class education; however, this paper argues that the policies currently on the agenda will not deliver the standard of education required.

The big picture for Australia's education system is being held back by a confused and often incoherent debate. While discussion at the political level focuses on issues such as funding, public/private schooling, principal autonomy, performance pay, student and teacher tests and sector comparisons, policy makers risk oversimplifying teaching and missing the most important point.

When it comes to achieving the *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper's* goal, these issues are relatively irrelevant and lacking a strong evidence base on how they make an impact on student learning. Moreover, they imply a simplistic view of teaching as nothing more than information transmission and behaviour management, with an underlying message that for Australia's education system to improve, teachers just need to work harder.

This paper argues that teaching is far from simplistic but rather a complex, challenging, clinical practice profession that requires high calibre individuals. It outlines a way forward that has the potential to make a significant impact on the learning outcomes of all young Australians, focusing on the issues that matter: teachers and teaching.

Clinical teaching and student growth: two important concepts

There are two important concepts underpinning this paper: clinical teaching and student growth.

Clinical teaching

Clinical teaching focuses on growth and development to ensure every child excels. Clinical teachers are capable of using data and evidence to meet the needs of individual learners. They determine what each student is ready to learn; have the capabilities to support learning; and are able to evaluate the impact they have on the learner.

Student growth

Student growth simply refers to how much a student's learning has grown over any given period. Fundamentally, every student should receive at least a year of learning growth in return for a year of schooling input.

Australia's current focus on standards, as evidenced through national tests like NAPLAN, ignores the important measure of growth. Students may meet or exceed the 'standards' set for their age, but their learning may not have sufficiently grown over their last year of schooling. We argue for a shift in focus to growth *and* standards.

Assessment for accountability, which is driven by reporting on scores and standards, is a distraction. Our emphasis should instead be on assessment for teaching, which is the means by which teachers can focus on and measure student growth. That is, devising assessment reporting that assists teachers to make decisions about optimal teaching for their students.

Our recommendations

The quality of schools is, above all, shaped by the professional skills of teachers. Therefore, our recommendations fall into the following areas:

Pre-service education

- invest in graduate clinical teacher education for early childhood, primary and secondary teachers at zero net cost (by reducing the number of teacher education Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) offered in areas of over-supply)
- allocate CSPs in teacher education degrees to match national supply and demand data
- introduce primary-level specialist teachers, particularly in mathematics and science
- broaden selection into teacher education courses, to include non-academic attributes (e.g. communication skills and resilience)

Professional development

- set up early learning networks led by clinical Early Learning Specialists, to give staff and parents the skills to support quality early learning
- include more professional development for school teachers based on interpreting assessment data, targeted instruction and collaboration

Professional leadership

- introduce effective instructional preparation for leaders and aspiring leaders, based on the Australian Professional Standard for Principals
- develop school dashboards to support and promote data-informed instruction

Professional governance

- broaden the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's (AITSL's) powers, or create a separate national body, to accredit clinical teaching practice and advocate on behalf of the profession
- differentiate teacher pay according to levels of expertise

A note on school funding

Notably, we do not mention school funding in this paper. While we acknowledge that Australia's school funding system does require attention to address its complexity, opaqueness and unfairness, we feel there is little to add to the excellent work undertaken by David Gonski and his panel. Their focus on shaping a more equitable education system for Australia is commendable. Our focus is on the best way to allocate resources.



Introduction

The international education data paint a stark picture. While Australia currently has one of the world's top performing education systems, it is a system with low equity when compared to other developed nations. Moreover, our ranking is slipping and our top 30 – 40 per cent of students are slipping the most. Our governments need to make some bold decisions to address these issues.

More of the same will not reverse the decline and game changers are required; Australia needs a break from past practices and non-productive thinking. This paper argues those game-changers are clinical teaching and a renewed focus on student growth.

What does not work?

First, it is important to address some of the issues currently on the agenda that we consider a distraction.

Much of the current educational debate follows what Pasi Sahlberg (2010) has characterised as the 'Global Educational Reform Movement'. This agenda, which is informed by market-based notions of choice, competition, accountability and standardisation, has been replicated unsuccessfully by a number of Western countries, none of which are high performers internationally.

These policies are based on an argument that schools, like businesses, should thrive depending on their ability to meet or create consumer demands. This leads to providing autonomy to local schools, enhancing choice for parents, and the provision of more information, so that consumers can drive out the bad schools and support development of good schools. While this approach may seem logical, it has a number of issues.

- **Autonomy**

There is a belief that by locating responsibility at the local level there will be incentives to improve the quality and accountability of each school. However, arguments in favour of autonomy ignore that Australia already has high levels of autonomy in our system, and this has not addressed many of the issues our schools face. Indeed, for some schools the biggest problem is the autonomy of individual teachers – who should instead be working collaboratively with colleagues.

- **Test-based accountability**

While there are a number of reasons for introducing national testing, including providing data for the Government's school improvement agenda and offering accountability to taxpayers, national testing has not yet driven any improvements in student learning. Assessment for accountability does not improve student outcomes.

The focus on scores generated by tests like the NAPLAN diverts attention away from what should be measured: how much students' learning has grown. Now NAPLAN data for individual students in more than one year are available, MySchool does provide measures of growth. More attention should be focused on them.

Summative claims like much of the reporting from NAPLAN are not enough to inform assessment for teaching. They do not provide enough information for teachers to use their adaptive expertise in a timely manner – it is too late, too broad and too oriented to reporting student performance in a narrow range of subjects. Furthermore, teachers need to be able measure their students' progress in all areas of the curriculum, not only in the basic skills in which governments and the international organisations choose to measure performance. A shift in focus to assessment for teaching is required.

- **Promotion of choice**

The promotion of school choice initiatives overseas, such as charter schools in the US and free schools in England and Wales, have failed to make the improvements promised. Instead of focusing on autonomy, choice and creating a 'market' of schooling (which entrenches disadvantage), Australia should focus on making every neighbourhood school excellent.

The promotion of choice quite deliberately promotes competition among schools, guided by the mistaken belief this will drive up quality. However, competition undermines a fundamentally important aspect of teaching – collaboration. The importance of collaboration in highly effective teaching should not be underestimated, or undermined.

The magnitude of the 'top 5' challenge

The *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* has set the goal that Australia will be ranked as a top five country in our students' performance in reading, science and mathematics by 2025. This is a worthy ambition, but MGSE takes the view that the country will not get there with either policies rooted in the above agenda, or a lack of bi-partisan agreement.

Our estimate (based on Program for International Student Assessment, PISA, data) is that the average Australian student is one year behind the top performing nations in reading and science, and two years behind in mathematics.

Assuming top-performing systems will continue to improve in coming years, this means each student needs to make appreciable gains for Australia not only to retain its current position, but to also out-perform other countries.

The international data from PISA, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) show that:

- The gap between our highest performers and our lowest performers is greater than the OECD average (Thomson et al., 2012, Thomson et al., 2010)
- One quarter of Australian Year 4 students do not meet the minimum standard of reading proficiency (Thomson et al., 2012)
- Australian Year 4 and Year 8 students have remained static in mathematics and science performance over the past 16 years, during which time the performance of other countries has improved (Thomson et al., 2012)
- Australia's overall ranking in 15-year-old attainment is significantly behind nations that were equivalent to us 9 years ago (Thomson et al., 2010)
- Our brightest 30 – 40 per cent of students are falling behind the fastest (Thomson et al., 2010)

Australia's performance in Year 4 reading, as outlined in PIRLS 2011, is particularly concerning. This was the first time Australian students sat these tests, which have a higher minimal acceptable level of performance than the NAPLAN. PIRLS showed that only 10 per cent of Australian Year 4 students are reading at the advanced level, compared to around 18 per cent in top-performing countries. Worse still, 25 per cent of Australian Year 4 students are not reading at the intermediate level, compared with fewer than eight per cent in top-performing countries, and seven per cent of Australian students do not even meet the lowest benchmark.

Given the performance of our current cohort of Year 4 students in reading, mathematics and science, Australia is unlikely to address its declining performance among 15 year olds in coming years. Furthermore, our most able students not achieving their potential is particularly concerning for the country's future prosperity.

Moreover, the proportion of students educated in the Government system has dropped from 74 per cent in 1985 to 65 per cent today, putting our Government school sector at risk of becoming a residual system. Notably, the world's top performing countries in education have top performing public education systems. Strengthening and championing success in our public schools must be a priority, otherwise we risk becoming like many US states and some countries, where there is one system for those who can afford it and another for those who cannot. This would significantly undermine the egalitarian and civil society that generations have strived to achieve in Australia.

Finally, the top-down, compliance-driven approach to education policy taken by Australian Governments is at odds with how the world's top performing education systems are managed. These systems do not hold educators accountable using administrative, standardised mechanisms, but rather work in partnership with educators, who are held in high esteem and regarded as expert professionals.

Countries with top performing education systems employ a very different mix of policies than those currently implemented in Australia. Quality teaching is their platform for success. Too many of Australia's education policies are devoted to matters that ultimately have little impact on student learning. The MGSE argues that, instead, Australia should focus on what matters most: the quality of teaching and its powerful effects on student learning – from very early childhood through to the end of the schooling years.

It's all about the teaching

Teaching is by far the most crucial adjustable driver of student outcomes.

- Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin (1998) found that teaching is the most significant factor influencing the variance in student performance, and its impact is more significant than all other school inputs combined.
- Rowe (2004) concluded that the quality of teaching and learning provision are by far the most salient influences on students' cognitive, affective, social and behavioural outcomes, far outstripping other factors including socioeconomic background and gender.
- Hattie (2003) undertook a synthesis of a plethora of studies to identify the magnitudes of the major sources of explained variance in students achievement outcomes, and found:
 - 50 per cent was due to the students (ability)
 - 30 per cent was due to teachers
 - 5-10 per cent is due to school effects (finances, size, class sizes, buildings, and the effect of principals)
 - 5-10 per cent is due to the home, including the extent that parents encourage their children and set high expectations (although Hattie notes that much of this is already accounted for in the attributes of the student)
 - 5-10 per cent is due to peer effects.

He concluded that we should therefore focus on the greatest source of variance that can make a difference - the teachers.

This paper therefore argues that the place where the greatest gains can be made is in the classroom and among teachers themselves. That is why it focuses on the following areas:

- pre-service education
- professional development
- professional leadership
- professional governance

Our vision is for teaching in Australia to be transformed into a clinical practice profession, which focuses on student growth. This is a long term goal, but with advances in assessment research which inform teaching interventions, it is achievable. It will require a generational shift within practice and within teacher education, bi-partisan support and a consistent policy environment.

Clinical practice is based on teachers' use of evidence to:

- **analyse** where a student is most ready to learn
- **intervene** to support learning
- **evaluate** the impact of the intervention on the learner.

Specifically, clinical teachers do this by:

- monitoring and evaluating their impact on learning and adapting the lesson to meet the needs of each student - rather than expecting the student to keep up regardless of their circumstances
- using evidence about what each student knows and understands at the start of the teaching period to inform their teaching interventions
- targeting their assessment and teaching practices to maximise the information obtained about their impact and optimise the chances of improving student learning
- on the basis of the above, constructing appropriate teaching and learning environments for every student, whatever their developmental stage and current abilities
- continuously evaluating the impact of their teaching, to inform next steps.

Importantly, embedding clinical practice and a focus on growth throughout our system will help address the key challenges the Australian education system is currently facing:

1. Children entering school below the expected level of capability

Education is a vital part of young children's wellbeing and development, yet many of the young children who really need access to a high quality learning environment are not receiving it. Indeed, few Australian toddlers and three year olds experience validated high-quality early learning programs, despite fifty-seven per cent of three year olds attending some form of childcare in 2011-12 (Productivity Commission, 2013).

2. Top students' underperformance

Our most able students are not meeting their potential. If left unaddressed, this failing will have significant consequences for our nation's economic development – particularly when Australia eventually exhausts its mineral resources. The failure of any country to realise its intellectual capital is a failure of leadership.

3. The gap between our highest and lowest performers

Australia has one of the widest gaps of all developed nations between the achievements of our highest and lowest performers. The opportunity gap needs to be closed and there should be nothing but the highest expectations for every single Australian student, but currently many of them are let down.



Pre-service education

Australia is not producing graduate teachers that meet the education system's needs.

Our country has an over-supply of teaching graduates (particularly in primary and secondary humanities), which is being exacerbated by the demand driven system for undergraduate university places. This higher education policy is contributing to the steady decline in the average ATARs of undergraduate teaching students nationally, in turn lowering the esteem in which society holds the profession and deterring high performing students from studying teaching.

This oversupply could also be viewed as a waste of valuable public money. While undergraduate teacher education places are perceived to be relatively inexpensive to provide, there are many more being offered nationally than necessary. At the same time, graduate clinical teacher education, which is more expensive, is underfunded. Reducing the number of undergraduate teacher education places could free funds to offer a smaller number of graduate clinical teacher education places.

Recommendation 1

Invest in graduate clinical teacher education for early childhood, primary and secondary teachers at zero net cost (by reducing the number of teacher education Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) offered in areas of over-supply).

We recommend that every school have a core staff of clinical teachers in its workforce to lead learning interventions. Networks of early childhood centres should also have access to clinical Early Learning Specialists who have been trained in instructional leadership and family skills development.

To meet these workforce requirements, a smaller number of universities should be accredited to run graduate clinical teacher education, to produce clinical Early Learning Specialists and clinical school teachers who can work throughout the education system. While many excellent teachers in our education system already teach clinically, clinical teaching degrees are needed to ensure clinical practice is embedded in every school.

Clinical teaching is intellectually challenging, requiring advanced levels of analytic thinking and clinical judgement. As such, it is best developed through graduate study and would be difficult to offer at undergraduate level.

Accredited university clinical teacher education programs would be characterised by:

- embedded clinical thinking throughout each program component
- advanced research on assessment, using data and pedagogy underpinning teaching interventions
- evidence of graduates attaining clinical competence, for example in the form of a clinical exam
- a clinical school/university partnership where:
 - partnership schools share a commitment to clinical teaching
 - expert clinical teachers in partnership schools are employed to link clinical thinking and clinical practice with the university program
 - candidates undertake regular, frequent placements which facilitate a developmental continuum
 - the design and review of the program is undertaken collaboratively with partnership schools
 - assessment integrates university and school experience, and assessors are drawn from both university and schools sites.

Institutions that elect to become accredited providers of graduate clinical teacher education should be supported to meet these standards over the next five years, so that accreditation can be implemented from 2018.

There is already a shift in the landscape towards graduate delivery of teacher education, with an ever-growing number of Master of Teaching courses on offer. These are unlikely to be differentiated in the public's mind. Our proposal would ensure those graduate courses accredited as 'clinical' meet rigorous standards and are tagged as such.

Note: The Master of Teaching at the University of Melbourne, introduced in 2008, provides a large-scale, working model that integrates these factors. Since its introduction, the quality of candidates entering the programme has seen a steady increase. All candidates are graduates and many of them are career changers with an average GPA from their previous studies at distinction level. The program has attracted many mature high achievers, who have made a carefully considered decision to become teachers and have already proven themselves academically and as professionals in their own field.

Recommendation 2

Allocate CSPs in teacher education degrees to match national supply and demand data.

Australia presently has shortages of teachers who are qualified in secondary mathematics, science, technology, languages and English, as well as a shortage of special needs teachers. At the same time, there is an over-supply of graduate primary and secondary humanities teachers (Productivity Commission, 2012). The national focus has rested in particular on the shortage of science and mathematics teachers, given Australia's slipping performance in these disciplines.

In 2009, PISA reported that around 30 per cent of Australian 15 year old students are taught by unqualified mathematics teachers and 24 per cent by unqualified science teachers, with the OECD average of each being only 18 per cent.

We recommend allocating CSPs for teaching based on national teacher supply and demand data. In particular, this would help control the present over-supply areas. This will require Commonwealth, State/Territory, profession and employer agreement on targeted CSP quotas for courses along with minimum entry standards, as currently occurs with professional training places in fields such as medicine and dentistry.

Recommendation 3

Introduce primary-level specialist teachers, particularly in mathematics and science

Research on the need for quality teaching of mathematics and science in the primary years is compelling in terms of student attitudes and later accomplishment in the secondary years. It is becoming untenable for generalist primary teachers to cover all aspects of the curriculum with expertise.

We therefore recommend introducing specialisation into primary teaching. The first step should be specialised primary teacher education in mathematics and science. Graduates of these programs can then work alongside existing generalist teachers both in team-teaching and release modes.

Recommendation 4

Broaden selection into teacher education courses, to include non-academic attributes

Academic achievement is not the only measure universities should use to select pre-service teachers. We recommend that other qualities we know excellent teachers possess (literacy, numeracy, cognitive ability, personality, relationship skills etc.) also be considered as part of selection processes.

For example, programs like Teach for Australia are effective in attracting highly talented students who would not otherwise enter teaching. Teach For Australia embraces the clinical methods championed in this report and also selects candidates on a wide range of attributes including critical thinking skills, communication skills and resilience. In similar programs overseas, these teachers have made a positive impact on student outcomes, spurred innovation in education and many have gone on to be leaders in education in fields including business, the bureaucracy and politics.

MGSE will be introducing an online tool later in 2013 that will enhance our selection processes into the Master of Teaching, enabling the consideration of non-academic abilities in addition to academic achievement. This tool will help us select applicants with the highest potential to become great teachers.



Professional development

Australia is currently brimming with unrealised talent – our top students are not achieving their potential let alone exceeding it. Our future prosperity depends on realising this potential; Australia cannot afford to not stretch its most able students.

The *Assessment and Learning Partnerships* project, a large-scale study from the Assessment Research Centre in the MGSE, found the top 25 per cent of students are not progressing as quickly as the bottom 25 per cent.

As part of this study, teachers work together to use data to establish students' readiness to learn and to inform their teaching interventions. The findings demonstrate that teachers can produce substantial gains in students' learning but that they do so most effectively with middle and low performers, not high performers. This finding is consistent with Australia's performance in PISA measures.

Recommendation 5

Set up early learning networks led by clinical Early Learning Specialists, to give staff and parents the skills to support quality early learning.

Quality early educational intervention makes significant long-term differences to IQ, social, educational and employment outcomes (Ramey, Sparling & Landesman, 2012). Children's early experiences determine:

- pathways for motivation toward school learning and long-term scholastic attainment
- pathways for emotional security, sense of agency, self-regulation and social behaviour.

To set the basis for Australia to become a top-tier system and to realise the potential of all students, children need access to high quality early learning programs from before they turn three until school entry. Excellent education supports should be provided to children through families and early childhood education and care services.

To deliver high quality early learning programs, early childhood education and care services staff require professional development that is based on the clinical teaching model. In a mixed market of early childhood services, an effective way of making this training available is through clinical Early Learning Specialists guiding and coaching local networks of early educators and families to advance infant, toddler and young child learning. Network members can challenge one another using directly observable evidence about what the children do, say, draw, make or write and assist in evaluating the impact of programs on young children.

Recommendation 6

Include more professional development for school teachers based on interpreting assessment data, targeted instruction and collaboration.

We recommend that a significant amount of teacher professional development focuses on preparing teachers to use data to assess the stage of each student's learning, and understand how to take them to the next level. This applies to students at all ability levels.

These professional development programs would have a particular focus on:

- teachers, school leaders and students interpreting assessment data to inform decisions about targeted instruction and student progress
- emphasising discipline skills and discipline-based pedagogy
- professional collaboration to identify appropriate assessment, teaching strategies, resource use and skill development for all levels of student ability to inform teaching impact and next steps.

The *Assessment and Learning Partnerships* (ALP) program may provide a useful model for such professional development. ALP teachers use precise assessment to inform teaching and improve learning, and focus on where the student is most ready to learn. Students are assessed in reading comprehension, mathematics and critical thinking, using assessments targeted at their current skill level rather than year level (notwithstanding the need for all students to achieve minimum standards).

The ALP is an example of a clinical teaching program making a positive impact in Victorian schools, and as it is online, it can be made easily available more widely across Australia. It advocates a collaborative approach, requiring teachers to work together to challenge one another using directly observable evidence about what students do, say, make or write. The ALP has evolved into a comprehensive three-year program that offers:

- an online professional development program for teachers at both the primary and secondary level
- an online student assessment system
- a Professional Learning Team model.



Professional leadership

School leadership will always play an important role in student outcomes. We argue that instructional leaders are far more successful than transformational leaders (Dinham, 2007, 2008).

Recommendation 7

Provide effective instructional preparation for leaders and aspiring leaders, based on the Australian Professional Standard for Principals

The capabilities defined by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Australian Professional Standard for Principals should be developed prior to and during the holding of formal leadership positions. This can be done through:

- evidence-based in-service and formal professional study
- coaching, shadowing, scenarios and hypotheticals (in particular, it is useful for aspiring and practising leaders to widen their experience in different school contexts including different systems)
- developmental feedback and personal reflection.

The Australian Professional Standard for Principals also provide an ideal opportunity for national professional development programs. We recommend leadership development programs and resources are developed collaboratively between systems, jurisdictions and sectors, along with an independent and robust evaluation of their impact. Such preparation will be most effective where sufficient time and space are made available rather than expecting self-directed learning on top of an already heavy workload.

We recommend national professional development programs for school leaders that focus on:

- building collaborative teams to critique, support, and provide expertise to one another
- breaking down isolation and individual teaching
- supporting the resources that provide evidence of successful impact on all students
- supporting the development of an evaluation 'mindset', whereby school leaders focus on evaluating the impact of programs, teachers, curricula etc. on the learning of all students within their school, considering:
 - the school's impact on students' engagement in learning
 - whether the school is an inviting place to learn
 - student retention and their desire to continue learning
 - surface and deep learning
 - whether everyone related to the school (including parents) are engaged in the language of learning
 - every child's annual growth.

Leaders should be proficient in ensuring teachers across the school engage in dialogue, debate, and evidence informed collaboration about not only the quality of evidence about their impact, but the messages from this impact evidence (the Melbourne Declaration (2008) provides a useful frame for the sorts of evidence of impact needed). To do this, new ways of evaluating school and student outcomes are required.

Recommendation 8

Introduce school dashboards to support and promote data-informed instruction.

To enable teachers to focus on growth, we recommend an emphasis on student growth targets as well as the more typical achievement levels. Governments should provide resources to school leaders so all teachers in their school can know their impact on student growth.

We recommend that each school has a dashboard of high level agreed outcomes (such as retention rates, growth rates, achievement standards, quality of learning, invitation to learn evidence etc.) and agreed levels of growth for all students. These outcomes should be linked to an Australian dashboard that allows comparisons with similar schools and has an emphasis on growth.

It is critical to note the purpose of this tool would be to enhance teaching, not to provide summative evaluations of student or school performance. School leaders need to be able to develop measures of teacher impact on learning and feed this information back to their staff in a timely and formative manner, so they can adapt teaching, set defensible targets for learning and see the success of their teaching – preferably in collaboration.

There are a few examples internationally of such development tools, for example, e-Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (e-asTTle) currently used in New Zealand.



Professional governance

Too often, decisions affecting the teaching profession are made about teachers and school leaders, rather than with them. Teaching has become disconnected from social power and is subject to ongoing, status-eroding criticism. In response, the profession has typically closed in on itself, literally shutting the classroom doors and often responding negatively to perceived external interference.

While doctors have the Australian Medical Association, psychologists the Australian Psychological Society and engineers Engineers Australia, teaching has no such comparable professional body. It therefore lacks a strong voice and a mechanism for determining its own professional standards.

Teachers have not seized control of their own profession, leading to what Harvard Professor Richard Elmore (2007) terms “a profession without a practice.”

At the same time, teacher pay across Australia is currently disconnected, inconsistent and ineffective. Salaries peak too soon and at too low a level, and are not suitable for a 21st century profession. In fact, their structures have barely changed since the 19th century.

While commencing salaries are comparable to those in similar professions, at around \$55,000 - \$60,000, they do not follow a structure or reach a level that reflects the kind of career-long development we expect from our teaching profession. There are no incentives within current structures for teachers to undertake further, graduate study; let alone to become clinical practitioners.

Addressing the low status of teaching requires a solution that offers professionalism, institutional stability and political authority and can be implemented over the course of a generation.

Recommendation 9

Broaden the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's (AITSL's) powers, or create a separate body, to accredit clinical teaching practice and advocate on behalf of the profession.

The introduction of more graduate clinical teacher education should be driven by more demanding professional and program standards. We recommend a parallel set of Australian Professional Standards for Teachers with stronger emphasis on clinical teaching is developed at all four levels from Graduate to Lead. Features of Practice demonstrating clinical teaching requirements for each standard, at each level, should also be developed.

Developing a set of Australian Professional Standards for Clinical Teachers will necessarily shape a parallel set of national program standards for graduate clinical teacher education.

To govern these new standards, we recommend expanding AITSL's responsibilities or establishing a new professional body to both accredit clinical teachers and clinical teacher education courses and to boost the profession's ownership of its own practice.

The additional / new responsibilities would be:

- accrediting clinical Early Childhood Specialists and clinical school teachers
- setting the standards for clinical teacher education programs and accrediting those programs
- endorsing professional development in clinical teaching and fostering professional collaboration
- lobbying Government on behalf of the profession
- measuring the impact of teaching on student learning.

This body would serve both a formal regulatory role (through the accreditation of teacher education courses, in partnership with Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities bodies, and the accreditation of Graduate and Proficient clinical teachers) and a voluntary certification role (through the accreditation of Highly Accomplished and Lead clinical teachers).

It would also be tasked with setting and maintaining high standards for the teaching profession and be run by teachers for the advancement of teaching and learning. In this way it would provide an effective mechanism for career advancement as well as the ability to exercise collective political influence.

Recommendation 10

Differentiate teacher pay according to levels of expertise.

At present, more than three-quarters of Australia's teachers are at the top of their salary scales where they earn less than 1.5 times the salary of a beginning teacher. This difference is too small and smaller than comparable countries and other professions where the difference is typically to the order of 1.75 to 2.25 or even higher (Dinham, 2011).

Whilst too high a proportion of beginning teachers resign in their first three years (up to 25 per cent) there is also a hidden resignation spike associated with teachers reaching the top of their salary scales after 8-10 years of teaching. At this stage in life, typically, salaries are rising steeply for the most able practitioners in other professions. Unfortunately, it tends to be the most able teachers who leave the classroom.

We recommend differentiating the teaching profession to recognise different levels of expertise. Salary progression should be attached to the level of expertise and professional competence demonstrated at each step. Clinical expertise should be recognised in its own right, given the more demanding standards required.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and our proposed parallel clinical teaching standards provide a framework that can be used to inform, develop and assess teacher expertise, particularly if certification at the various levels can be tied to salary and career structures. This would require:

- valid, reliable, developmental assessment processes inform, recognise and reward teacher accomplishment
- fully trained assessors
- assessment and certification of teachers meshed with salary and promotion structures and consistent with the Australian Performance and Development Framework.
- new industrial agreements and awards.

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