



RESPONSE TO THE SENATE INQUIRY

Teaching and Learning (maximising our investment in Australian schools)

INTRODUCTION

Haileybury is one of the largest and most successful independent schools in Australia with more than 3,500 students (boys and girls) on three campuses (Brighton, Keysborough and Berwick) in Melbourne. In 2012 Haileybury is in its 121st year. Haileybury is a high-fee school but has the lowest socio-economic status (SES) or Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) score of any comparable school in Australia. The Haileybury community is largely made-up of hard-working aspirational families who come from very diverse cultural backgrounds, and value education. Haileybury has a significant number of means-tested scholarships and has 12 students at the School on an Indigenous scholarship program. Haileybury is an education innovator. The School runs a Parallel Education model whereby boys and girls from Year 5 onwards attend the same campuses but go to predominantly single-gender classes. Haileybury pioneered the delivery of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) in China and currently does this in six schools, graduating around 160 students each year who go directly to Australian universities. In 2013 Haileybury will commence the delivery of the VCE in East Timor.

Haileybury is very pleased to make a submission to the Senate Inquiry. Given the limited time frame we have chosen to comment on questions (a), (c), (d) and (e). We particularly draw the attention of the members of the Committee to our response to (a) *the effectiveness of current classroom practices in assisting children to realise their potential in Australian schools*. This is an area where we feel we have particular expertise and have demonstrated success.

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In response to the Terms of Reference, Haileybury notes that we have had considerable success with the following:

- An explicit teaching phonics-based approach to literacy in Junior School
- An explicit teaching approach to numeracy in Junior School
- Engagement of parents in understanding the language of education
- Support for parents in understanding optimal learning environments at home
- Support for parents in helping to build aspirations for their children
- The development of a professional learning culture
- A focus on collaboration and collective responsibility amongst the teaching staff
- A professional learning focus on teacher performance
- Strong use of data to reflect upon teacher performance
- Peer coaching and peer observations to improve teacher performance.

Terms of Reference:

(a) the effectiveness of current classroom practices in assisting children to realise their potential in Australian schools

Education in primary schools in Australian schools underwent a significant pedagogical change which began more than three decades ago. The change has not been married to evidence-based research and this has created problems with both teacher- training (particularly for primary educators) and the delivery of effective programs in our schools, most notably with literacy.

Primary education moved from teaching children skills relevant to particular year levels to the concept of students learning at their own pace. This has been accompanied by teacher training emphasising the whole language model for literacy acquisition and teaching approaches that advocate teachers as guides or facilitators of student learning.

These approaches, however, are not backed by the significant research into education undertaken over this same period. No significant research supports the use of the whole language approach to literacy. The major international research clearly depicts skills-based approaches as the most effective. This includes the sequential and structured teaching of phonics as being absolutely essential in the teaching of reading.

This research includes the National Reading Panel (US, 2000), the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (AUS, 2005) and the three Rose Reports (UK, 2007 to 2009). These major pieces of international research all highlight the same conclusions. Our teaching should be based on explicit instruction whereby we teach students the key skills in a step-by-step teaching approach. This approach must formally and sequentially teach the key skills within that curriculum area. This research, unfortunately, has been ignored by many teacher training institutions and has not been distributed effectively to schools by our State education systems.

The result has been a decline in literacy and numeracy standards over at least the last decade. This has clearly been highlighted by the Gonski Review. The depicted decline in student achievement has not been challenged by any educational group in Australia as the trend in the data is very clear. These data include annual Statewide testing as well as Australia's position in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test results.

The decline is clearly related to the immersion-based approaches (such as Whole Language) introduced across Australian States over the past three decades.

In contrast, the explicit instruction approach has achieved excellent results.

John Fleming introduced the explicit instruction approach to address a serious decline in standards of literacy and numeracy at Bellfield Primary School in the 1990s. Bellfield was an exceptionally disadvantaged low socio-economic Government school serving the inner-northern suburbs of Melbourne. The transformation of this school's results has been well documented. The 2005 National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy, led by Ken Rowe, visited Bellfield several times and it is highlighted in the Report. The Boston Consulting Group in 2003 conducted an extensive review into the success of Bellfield and declared it the "only transformational school" in Australia. Similarly, The University of Melbourne conducted an extensive review into Bellfield and this is also well documented. Professors Lawrie Drysdale and David Gurr studied Bellfield as part of an international study into high-performing schools. Professor Brian Caldwell, former Dean of Education at The University of Melbourne, has also studied and extensively written about the Bellfield story.

The explicit instruction model was introduced to Haileybury in 2006. The introduction of explicit instruction has resulted in a significant increase in the performance of Primary School students as measured by a range of student achievement data. Coming off a sound base in 2005, the results are amongst the very best in Australia on raw score measure. If SES or ICSEA score is taken into account, Haileybury would probably be the best performed non-select-entry school in the country in value-add terms.

Explicit Instruction is a strategy for effective classroom curriculum delivery that emphasises the step-by-step teaching of skills in all subject areas – but especially the core areas of literacy and numeracy. At Haileybury in Year P to Year 6 it follows a consistent format that ensures all students are continuously developing their skills in reading, spelling, writing, speaking and mathematics. Teachers break-up the key skills into the component parts and formally instruct students so that they reach their individual potential. It is based on two mantras at Haileybury:

- 1 Every child matters every day and
- 2 All students can be high achievers.

It is not to be confused with **direct instruction**. Direct instruction focuses on teachers teaching skills by reading instructions from texts. In contrast, explicit instruction revolves around skilling teachers up to understand how students best learn and how to plan effective teaching strategies to develop the key skills. Explicit instruction values teacher professional development as a key ingredient in effective curriculum delivery.

Haileybury has adopted explicit instruction over the past seven years with exceptional success resulting in **outstanding National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results** at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. These results are clearly evident and available on the *MySchools* website. However, to highlight the level of achievement, the Year 3 results from 2012 indicate the levels of student performance. In Year 3 the National Minimum Benchmark is Level 2 in all curriculum areas. At Haileybury 51.7% of our Year 3 students achieved Level 6 in reading while 27.5% achieved Level 5. Nearly 80% of our students are, therefore, at least two years above Year level. The results in writing were a staggering 95.3%, in spelling 79.5%, in grammar/punctuation 79.6% and in numeracy 80.5% – of our students are at least two years ahead of expected levels. The increase in student performance over the past seven years is directly attributable to the introduction of explicit instruction.

The explicit instruction model at Haileybury uses the “I do, We do, You do” approach to individual teaching of skills. “I do” is where the teacher clearly outlines and demonstrates the skill to be taught step-by-step. In the “We do” section the teacher devises activities to ensure every child understands what has been taught. In the “You Do” part of the lesson every student experiences success due to the explicit approach adopted in the first two parts of the lesson. The “You Do” section is also where differentiation occurs to cater for the range of students. Most schools in Australia simply follow the “I Do and You Do” approach. The significant advantage of adding the “We Do” is that it alerts teachers to the requirement that all students need to be experiencing success in picking-up the key skills. Furthermore, this approach is supported by the use of the ‘Warm Up’ which consolidates and ‘automatises’ these skills on a daily basis so that they move from short-term to long-term memory.

The Haileybury curriculum clearly details day-by-day, week-by-week the skills that are required to be taught at each Year level. Extensive support is given to teachers in terms of moderating expectations. It is not left to chance and individual teacher judgement. Quality control in terms of coaching and the regular review of individual student data are key ingredients of the success story at Haileybury.

In his role with the **Haileybury Institute** over the last two-and-a-half years, John Fleming has helped schools across Australia develop effective explicit instruction programs. These schools are demonstrating significant improvements in student achievement. In over 100 schools in Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland student achievement is being significantly improved using explicit instruction. Individual schools that can be highlighted include Ballajura Primary School in Perth, Fisk Street Primary School in Whyalla, South Australia and Goondi Primary School in Innisfail, Queensland. All three have shown significant improvements in NAPLAN. The success of explicit instruction is, therefore, being demonstrated to be replicable in, and transferable to, schools throughout Australia. Furthermore, remote Indigenous schools, such as Northern Peninsula Area College in Far North Queensland, have had success as well with the model.

Interest in the model is significant throughout Australia. John Fleming has presented seminars in these States each term to service a growing interest in the effectiveness of explicit instruction. **Haileybury** also runs seminars in Terms 1 and 2 each year to demonstrate effective explicit instruction practice in the classroom. These are always very well attended by teachers from across Australia who spend time observing Haileybury teachers in action delivering classes using the explicit instruction method.

Haileybury, as depicted by its results, is a leading light in the implementation of effective explicit instruction in Australia. The development of teacher effectiveness in delivering outstanding curriculum that meets the needs of all students is a high priority. The emphasis on effective quality control processes ensures all students meet the high levels of achievement expected.

The Grattan Institute released a report into the East Asian education systems that are currently producing the best results in the world according to PISA studies. An analysis of this report clearly shows the key role explicit instruction plays in these systems as well as the systematic implementation of coaching in schools. Haileybury is a clear example of an Australian school using these world’s best practices to achieve outstanding results. The approach clearly demonstrates how Australia can improve literacy and numeracy basics and get our students back to the very top of international comparison tables.

In terms of effective classroom teaching practices, this submission clearly believes that explicit instruction is the approach that will most clearly benefit all Australian students, no matter what their background. Furthermore, the updating of teacher training strategies, as highlighted in the 2008 Senate Inquiry into teacher training, is of paramount importance.

(c) the influence of family members in supporting the rights of children to receive a quality education

John Hattie's research (2008) investigating the influence of the home on student achievement identified three areas that demonstrated high-effect sizes on student achievement; socio-economic status, the home environment and parental involvement.

First, socio-economic status had an effect size of 0.57 (advancing a learner's achievement by over six months). One of the ways in which the influence of socio-economic status manifested was through parental understanding of the language used in schools, in which many parents, particularly those from lower socio-economic status are not familiar. Like any language barrier, an inability to understand the expressions, expectations and importance of the issues at hand, devalues the conversation being had. Without knowledge of different educational policies, procedures and curriculum matters, the positive impact the family members may have on their child's education is somewhat lessened. We need to find strategies to lessen the divide in academic outcomes that are a direct result of an inability to understand the language used in communication with parents.

Part of this involves skilling the parents in discipline-specific terminology, but we can also bridge this gap from the other side. One of the most prevalent forms of parental communication is through school reporting. We need to encourage staff to be explicit and direct in feedback; giving directives and suggestions instead of using generalised education-specific terminology. In reporting to parents, and students alike, teachers need to focus on explaining what the actual problem is and then giving tangible strategies for improvement. Instead of reporting that "Mary has trouble thinking about a particular unit of work in a holistic manner and needs to improve her skills in conceptualisation", we need to encourage teachers to identify the specific problem; "Mary has difficulty working out the order in which events occurred, she could improve in this area by recording all of the important facts on a timeline". Not only does language hold the key to identifying the problems but also to finding the solutions.

Secondly, the home environment had an effect size 0.57 on student achievement (Hattie, 2008). Gottfried (1984) conducted studies using the Home Observation Measurement of the Environment (HOME) scale in which he looked at a series of factors that were prevalent in the home, dependent on the age of the child. Some of these factors included intellectual stimulation in the home, variety in learning materials and working space. Again, teacher expertise needs to be called upon to help parents in their plight. If teachers are knowledgeable on how students most effectively learn, then they must ensure that their instruction extends past the classroom. Teachers cannot assume that parents and students have the expertise to set up optimal learning environments in the home as are created within the school grounds. Of course, the biggest advantage of the home environment is that it can be individually tailored to the student and hence is more optimal for learning than any shared classroom space. Guidance in creating the optimal home working environment for parents should be a part of information disseminated through all schools.

At Haileybury we discuss homework and study recommendations from junior years of schooling to VCE. We provide guidance in creating the optimal home environment. Our use of iPads is not used as a means by which students take notes but as a window to a range of varied opinions, resources and viewpoints both nationally and internationally. They allow for the variety in resources that is needed while maintaining consistency from the school environment to the home. Essentially what is required are very simple recommendations for parents to help create a work environment conducive to work.

Finally, parental involvement had an effect size of 0.51 on student achievement (Hattie, 2008). The most important point from Hattie's findings on the effect of parental involvement was in terms of which aspects of parental involvement produced the most positive effects and which produced the least. Amongst the parent involvement techniques that produced low to negative effects were supervising students completing homework, parent participation in school activities and communicating with teachers. The findings into communication do not come as a surprise, considering the aforementioned discussion on the difficulties encountered with language barriers. Parent participation in school activities, however motivated it may make a parent appear, has very little to do with improving the instructional core. Elmore (2008) refers to the instructional core as that which is focused on how teachers understand the nature of knowledge and their student's role in learning, and how the ideas about knowledge and learning are manifested in teaching and classwork. Essentially the "core" is about the student, the teacher and knowledge and anything that does not seek to improve these relationships will have little effect on academic outcomes.

The factor which had the largest effect size (0.80) was parental aspirations and expectations (Hattie, 2008). One of the secondary findings from research into the effect of parental involvement was that the effects were greatest from kindergarten to Grade 3 (Crimm, 1992). It appears that, as children enter formal schooling, the most important influence from home is the expectations set by the parents in those early years. Families should be encouraged to set goals for their children's learning from an early age. These parental goals should be shared with the school and then reported on at the conclusion of each term.

It appears that parental expectations lower as the children get older. Clinton, Hattie & Dixon (2007) found that when children started school, two-thirds of parents expected their children to attain diplomas and degrees, however, as they left primary school they mainly wanted their children to be able to eventually get a job. The importance of parental expectations must be valued throughout schooling. Teachers often ask why is it that the 'good kid's parents' always come to parent-teacher interviews. Essentially this is no accident, they are the parents who set expectations and are interested to find out if these expectations are being met.

In the final years of schooling at Haileybury we involve parents in early career planning, meeting with every student in Year 10 with his/her parents to plan a desired career pathway. This provides an opportunity for parents to clearly outline their aspirations but also encourages student-parent communication, an important factor in assisting parental expectations (Hattie, 2008).

Of course at Haileybury there are many other initiatives that seek to capitalise on the profound influence of the parents in their child's educational pursuits that are not already discussed; from an open-door policy at ELC, where parents can come and drop-in to watch the students learning, to active involvement in parent-and-friend support groups within the School. The main push needs to be in having parents taking an active role in their children's learning, not just their school.

In essence, the key ideas for schools to embrace are to adopt a unified, uncomplicated language for communication with parents and to educate parents about optimal learning environments and the importance of voicing their expectations for their children. Parents need to familiarise themselves with the language of schooling, create a home-learning environment with variety and stimulation and set clear expectations for their children throughout their time at school.

(d) the adequacy of tools available for teachers to create and maintain an optimal learning environment

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Charter for Professional Learning is a policy document that has, like John Hattie's research, been produced as a result of a meta-analysis of a significant amount of quality teaching and learning research. It is a useful document in the sense that schools can measure their current professional learning and staff development practice against the recommendations that are made within the charter. Such documents are always idealistic in nature; however, this is in no way a weakness. Education always needs a degree of idealism attached to it, and if the Australian education sector can move towards a universal state which is closer to that painted within the charter, all schools will be better off. What follows is an extract from the charter and discussion regarding Haileybury's current, and potential future practice, in our attempts to provide our staff with the ideal environment and set of tools to maximise their teaching performance; thereby enhancing our student outcomes. We make no claims to being the best at this – but we do know what has worked for us and are willing to share it.

“A Professional Learning Culture

Professional learning will be most effective when it takes place within a culture where teachers and school leaders expect and are expected to be active learners, to reflect on, receive feedback on and improve their pedagogical practice, and by doing so to improve student outcomes.

A high quality professional learning culture will be characterised by:

- *a high degree of leadership support for ongoing adult learning and risk taking*
- *collective responsibility for improving practice*
- *disciplined collaboration aimed at specific and relevant goals that relate to the learning needs of students*
- *high levels of trust, interaction and inter-dependence*
- *support for professional learning through school structures, explicit planning and the allocation of time*
- *a focus on the professional learning that is most likely to be effective in improving professional practice and student outcomes*
- *a focus on changes in teacher and leader practice leading to improved student outcomes*
- *tracking change over the short, medium and long term.”*

From the AITSL Charter

Lifelong Learning at Haileybury

All Haileybury staff have ongoing access to university courses which will enhance their qualifications. The School will pay the total cost of a Master of Education for current staff members if they are willing to complete the degree via research at Monash University. Alternatively, Haileybury pays staff members who complete a higher degree a substantial bonus upon completion. We currently have more than 30 staff members completing Masters degrees and aim to have one-third of our 420 full-time equivalent teaching staff members holding a degree of this level by 2015. Much of the research completed by Haileybury staff members is done within the School, as both staff and educational leaders are encouraged to propose and then research areas of education that they feel will enhance the Haileybury program.

Big picture innovation at Haileybury

Throughout the past 13 years, Haileybury has fostered a series of innovative programs such as the ground-breaking VCE-in-China project, the introduction of a genuine Parallel Education model and the deployment of iPads. By attempting such programs and having the fortitude to see them through, Haileybury creates an environment where staff feel comfortable to propose and explore new ways to enhance school and student performance. It is important to note that the impetus to continually improve practice and innovate is modelled not only by staff but by Haileybury's educational leaders.

Collaboration and collective responsibility

AITSL's "Characteristics of Effective Professional Learning" note that a high quality professional learning program should be relevant, collaborative and future-focused. A clear trend which runs through the recommendations in each of these sections is the idea that, for a professional learning culture to be highly successful, the staff members of the school must spend significant amounts of time working together to identify the learning needs of their student body, design and facilitate the delivery of professional development activities to help teachers meet those needs and then internally measure, and reflect upon, the effect that the professional development programs have had on teaching quality and student achievement. The common denominator in each phase of this process is time-on-task – the task in this case being professional learning for quality teaching. For these goals to be achieved, the school must clearly outline the expectations in terms of both the time-on-task and the level of input required from its staff. The development of a culture where all staff know when they will have time to work collaboratively, and are secure in the thought that each of their colleagues will meaningfully contribute to the activities they undertake, is essential. These expectations should be published within the school and explicitly referred to by school leaders within collective meetings. The opportunity for small groups of staff to work on curriculum or pedagogy-based projects and then receive recognition for the work that they do is endorsed by current research as essential to the development of a collaborative and vibrant professional learning program.

Focus on professional learning that will enhance teacher performance

Heads of School, Heads of Department and Curriculum Coordinators must be constantly encouraged to maintain a degree of professional connectedness to the subject or curriculum authorities and associations which are pertinent to their area of the school. While it is expected that all teachers will do likewise, these educational leaders have the added responsibility of keeping abreast of, and sharing, the latest research-driven practice that is relevant to their area of the school. It is, of course, always difficult for these professionals to sort between the competing theories which relate to their area of the school; however,

constant engagement in these debates and the ability to lead staff to work collaboratively in support of a common practice are essential. Haileybury's success with explicit teaching practices (detailed elsewhere within this proposal) is a prime example of a school committing to a particular pedagogical methodology and providing the systematic support necessary to ensure that all staff have both the skills and knowledge to implement it to its fullest. As the teaching areas become more diverse within secondary schooling some diversity in approach is necessary but it is important that school leaders constantly reflect upon and assess the relative merits of the pedagogical strategies that are being employed.

Reflection upon accessible data and subsequent planning

As standardised testing becomes both more prevalent and reliable as a measure of student achievement, it is essential that teachers be given access to data that will help them reflect upon the outcomes of their students and implement changes to their practice to enhance future outcomes. The data that are currently available from curriculum authorities, examination boards, NAPLAN testing and companies such as Australian Council Educational Research can and should be made available to the teachers within each school. There are companies who are realising the potential benefits of schools being able to compare and manipulate this data for professional learning and staff evaluation programs. By putting these data into a useable format, these companies are enabling schools to meaningfully analyse the performance of individual teachers or groups of students like never before. While this type of analysis is sometimes daunting for teachers who have not been objectively measured for many years, the information that it provides can enable them to meaningfully reflect upon, and subsequently improve, their teaching practice. This process, however, must be handled with care and consideration. If there is the feeling that such end-goal or value-adding data is the be-all and end-all of teacher evaluation and performance within a particular school, there is the potential for the narrowing of teacher focus on to only those pedagogical tasks which will purely enhance performance on standardised testing.

Measurement of teacher effectiveness within the classroom

Of all elements of potential professional learning frameworks, the idea of direct observation and measurement of teaching performance causes the most anxiety. Teaching has traditionally been a profession where its practitioners have been able to close their classroom door and let the results of their students, whatever the method of achieving them, do the talking. Before the inception of standardised testing, however, there was really no way for schools to objectively measure the effectiveness of the teaching process that went on within any one classroom. Throughout the years there have been many different forms of performance measurement which usually came down to some form of school inspector, usually from outside the immediate school staff, coming in to evaluate individual teaching practice. Such processes have always caused paranoia at an individual-teacher level or at a whole-school level as per the Ofsted system employed in the UK. They have also been universally ineffective in terms of causing long-term meaningful change to individual teacher practice or school culture. There is always the Hawthorne effect in play which suggests that individuals and groups will naturally enhance their performance if they feel that they are being assessed but if assessed on the basis of the AITSL guidelines above, such invasive systems will not transform schools or school systems into the ideal.

One of the most heartening themes to emerge from the AITSL Charter for Professional Learning is the notion that individual schools must have some control over the judgement of the needs of their learning communities and the potential pathways to improve upon their current situation. Direct teacher evaluation is a valuable tool if it is implemented with care and the appropriate and necessary feedback is provided. While AITSL's "National Professional Standards for Teachers" are a particularly useful tool for tracking the necessary

skills and knowledge that a teacher should have when transitioning from a **provisionally registered to fully registered**, the complexity and ambiguity of the criteria that are proposed for the movement into the levels of “Highly Accomplished” or “Lead Teacher” are so complex in application that they are of little use in working with teachers on a day-to-day or year-to-year basis in an attempt to incrementally improve their teaching practice. As with any apprenticeship, there are certain given skills that one must have to be considered competent; however, such descriptors as “Highly Accomplished” or “Lead/Master” are significantly harder to quantify. There is also the issue that has been identified by some independent educational institutions who already have “Master Teacher” levels within their pay scales that when teachers manage to tick all of the boxes to achieve “Master” status they cease to develop further due to the lack of external financial motivation to enhance their practice.

Haileybury’s teacher evaluation program has been labelled the “Professional Recognition Process” and aims to give all staff clear and meaningful feedback, on a yearly basis, which they can use to reflect upon, and enhance, their professional practice. Haileybury staff are visited by a series of school leaders throughout the year who arrive at their classroom unannounced to view short sections of the lessons that they are teaching. The teaching practice that is observed is graded based upon generic teaching and learning criteria and there is the opportunity for the person evaluating to make qualitative comments on any of the criteria that they evaluate. These data are stored electronically and are accessible by the staff member who has been evaluated to, reflect upon. This can also lead to discussions between the observer and teacher who has been observed about the pedagogical processes that occurred. At the conclusion of the school year, staff members are asked to reflect upon the comments and assessments that have been made about them and then provide a series of evidence detailing their performance on a set of criteria similar to those used within AITSL’s professional standards. This information is then used as the basis for a professional conversation between the staff members and their Head of Campus to evaluate their performance and set a series of goals for the coming year. Our process is not perfect; however, it is constantly improving and the one thing that it most definitely does, is to provide both teachers and educational leaders with a common and useable language to discuss performance.

Initiatives to enhance teaching performance

In addition to our standard mentoring and induction programs for new staff members, Haileybury uses two programs in particular which are designed to give teachers access to the expertise and guidance of their colleagues. Both programs are proving successful in developing a collaborative culture and giving staff a fuller understanding of the whole educational process.

i Peer Coaching

Haileybury has a set of trained coaches who use the GROW coaching model to help their colleagues reflect upon and enhance their practice within the classroom. Staff participation within this program is completely voluntary, and while pick-up within the first year was not exponential we are at the point where, two years in, 25% of Haileybury teachers have voluntarily engaged in coaching. The information that is shared between coach and the person who is coached is completely confidential and the focus can be on any aspect of the teaching process that the coachee wishes. This is seen as a non-invasive alternative to the formal professional recognition process that staff can use to enhance their professional practice.

ii Peer Observation

A series of research from around the world has suggested that an important tool in developing teachers' professional knowledge and practice is the ability to observe their peers teaching. This is something that very rarely happens once teachers graduate from their university training course. Haileybury has done this informally throughout our Junior School for a number of years; however, we have instituted this as a formal process for all teaching staff from 2012. The early indications are that this process is something that both observers and even those being observed enjoy. Teachers are learning from one another and perhaps more importantly are having more meaningful conversations about what and how they teach. We have given specific instructions within this process for people to focus on elements of the teaching process rather than the curriculum being taught. In essence, we want to move teachers away from conversations about what is being taught, and towards conversations about how it is being taught.

(e) factors influencing the selection, training, professional development, career progression and retention of teachers in the Australian education system

Factors influencing selection

Demonstrated academic success is extremely important for any selection process although alternative experience should count. This is particularly important as for many undergraduate teacher education programs only 50% of commencing students are Year 12 leavers; many have started and often completed other things like another course, TAFE course and/or experience. Interviewing is not really feasible given the significant numbers of applications for positions and now some evidence from the medical selection process that it does not necessarily capture a different audience. Measures to support higher-achieving academic students entering teaching are important.

Training

Producing exceptional teachers is not about training – it is about education. This is an important distinction as we do not want trained teachers, but rather educated teachers who can make the best possible decisions – the same would be said for doctors.

The building of a knowledge base in education and teaching is important – it can never be an apprenticeship model as teaching requires much more than the reproduction of someone else's practice. The building of a knowledge base that can be applied in multiple ways is what is important and so the notion of theory and practice are fundamentally important. You cannot have one or the other. Universities are in the knowledge business – this is what they do best; schools are in the practice business and do this best.

One of the important factors in the education of teachers is the imperative (that currently does not exist) for the profession to work in concert with universities to educate pre-service teachers. It is not enough to mentor them in the beginning only; mentoring into the profession should be from pre-service entry through to career conclusion. Continuous learning is essential and is everyone's responsibility. Our response to section (d) outlines this in some detail.

Professional Development

Professional development/learning will become even more important as many beginning teachers will enter the profession with Masters degrees. They have achieved high levels of academic achievement and will look to their leaders (who in many cases will not be as well educated, but may have different experiences). Career development and progression need to focus on quality rather than experience and be more multi-faceted in nature. Quality, in this instance, needs to have a wide evidentiary base rather than a narrow assessment of student performance.

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