

New ways of working

Participant contributions

Participants in the forum contributed a wide variety of ideas for achieving real change:

1. Embracing change
2. Supporting quality teachers and school leadership
3. Pedagogy, curriculum and assessment
4. Social justice and community

1. *Embracing change*

Be ready for radical change

Policy that ‘tinkers’ and isn’t truly ‘revolutionary’ and doesn’t take the time and other resources to do the job properly—i.e. plan an education for the future and not remould the industrial model of ancient history.

We need to find ways to overcome the ‘politic of the *status quo*’—let us ‘burn the bridges’ and make schooling as good as it can be,

Ways of working follow from conceptual frameworks. I missed the understanding that, genetically speaking, we are still hunter-gatherers that work best in family-sized groups (c.f. committee or board size in NGOs or corporations), then clan-sized groups of 30-70, say. Educational structures and practices must take this into account.

We need fundamental changes in the structure of schools and the roles of teachers—‘*at the bottom of the ocean*’.

Funding for innovation is needed and essential—with the inclusion of experts with a proven record of success. *Not* media politicians—running curriculum wars, literacy wars, etc. etc. Freedom from intervention for political agendas is essential. Political will/interference can make or break models of excellence. Funding alone will not mean success—political will/capacity/knowledge at the organisation level is the key factor for success. For example: NSW → ANSN; bilingual education in the Northern Territory; contract principals in the Northern Territory.

Expressions of Interest for Innovation Grants to ferment, develop new approaches in teaching and learning that meet students’ needs and interests—a No. 1 priority.

Fund a range of pilot programs. Research them. See what works, develop and share best practice models and knowledge.

Widen our horizons

Teachers must have opportunities to get out of their classrooms to know what best practice looks like and what is expected. The motivation, desire and enthusiasm that teachers need to work with kids is essential. What does that look like in practice?

Teacher exchanges within Australia—between educational institutions, States and Territories and internationally—need to be much better resourced, publicised and funded, as well as recognised for their professional development benefits.

Provide more opportunities for sharing effective leadership and classroom teaching practices—preferably on a national basis, with opportunities provided by the ANSN.

Create an environment for teachers to work together and have discussions with other teachers about the work their students are doing and to balance that with ideas (from outside their school) which provide a chance to challenge the work they are doing.

Provide mini-sabbaticals/forums where teachers are exposed to new ideas (e.g. Daniel Pink) and to other disciplines to inform the development of new ideas, innovation.

Encourage creativity and innovation through community grants/funding and sharing experience/learning across states and nationally.

Build structures where ongoing professional learning is encouraged, rewarded and supported. Perhaps 1st year [teachers should have a] 0-8 load [and a] mentor teacher in school. Year 3 [teachers should be] allowed part-time release for professional learning opportunity meeting with others more widely and further academic and external input looking at research and its impact. Ongoing possibilities for professional learning with encouragement.

Take risks with your visions—‘do it’ and then ask for forgiveness if you break rules or forget to get permission.

Build trust and common purpose

Sustainable improvement demands TRUST between all involved—all need to be accountable—we need responsive, focussed systems.

Breaking down barriers—to ensure that there is a sense of common purpose, rather than division (so that we aren’t hearing references to ‘rich private schools’ etc.) Avoid stereotyping and clichés—acknowledge our common needs and what we are all trying to achieve. Also important with students → making connections.

Consult with teachers

Consultation and conversation—the ability of government to see and hear the challenges on the ground in schools—not just ‘pretty’ snapshot visits. Come to the local level and talk to practitioners about real challenges and how they might be overcome.

Share stories of the great happenings at Big Picture Schools both with government and the broader (media) community to enable more people to engage with the notion that schooling can be done differently.

Install a rigorous, transparent and honest approach to consulting with teachers before deciding the best way to ‘revolutionise’ our education system—e.g. *Teach for Australia* is an insult to all trained teachers in our country.

Fully value, support and promote the teaching profession. Engage teachers and teacher unions in consultation around the direction of education in Australia.

Increase the representation of principals and teachers on the boards and committees of ACARA and AITSL.

When setting up advisory boards, institutions, committees for National Curriculum, etc, representation should encompass a broad recognition including for example the Indigenous community; recent migrant community (real NESB); many education institutes; classroom teachers; and education academics who are still actively involved with teacher education. Is there a way also of involving the broader community—‘ordinary people’?

Consult with students

Make a difference in your school and ask your students—students need to tell us what they want and need.

Involve students in a forum on the education revolution and what it has meant for them/their schools/their learning.

Any work that excludes students’ participation will be missing an important view. Work needs to be done *with* children as opposed to *for* them.

Involve students in the consultation/evaluation process of designing the learning environment.

Find ways of involving students directly in decision-making day-to-day about their own education—passing over some control of learning and responsibility.

2. *Supporting quality teachers and school leaders*

Support professional networks and collaboration

Collaboration—to ensure that all voices are heard (a sensitive issue for the ACT (a small jurisdiction!) While it has been good to see the consultation in terms of the National Curriculum, the largest states should also listen, not dominate the dialogue. Collaboration is also essential in schools—at all levels.

There must be more opportunities for teachers across the country to network with each other and be supported by the federal government to do this and to support the work of the ANSN.

Greater team teaching within disciplines and across disciplines.

‘Professional dialogue’—provide the time to enable this to occur, then the time and resources to implement the strategies and pedagogy then time to reflect on this practice.

Teaching needs to be a more collaborative approach. They need time discuss ‘the work’ with colleagues.

Move from the ‘privatised’ to the team-based, collegial, collaborative and reflective approach to teaching practice.

De-privatise teaching. Enhance collaboration focussed on learning outcomes and provide teachers with dedicated time to work together to enhance practice and examine evidence of effectiveness.

Free up teacher allocations/admin in schools to allow greater flexibility to work across faculty areas and other programs.

Simplify the lives of teachers to allow their motivation/desire and enthusiasm to remain alive. Resource their lives with time and funding to connect with others to discuss practice.

Teachers need the training to manage student learning and to have the opportunity to develop ongoing relationships with students and to have discussions with other teachers who also teach those students.

Create support ‘on the ground’ for teachers. They do not have to be islands—need to develop ‘trust and honesty’ of all staff for open discussion and strategic planning.

We need to fund partnerships in schools—not one size fits all! Support diversity—but a central platform of developing relationships and connecting networks between schools and community. Allow diverse approaches!

Encourage collegiality between teachers now divisiveness and competition. If any type of performance pay is used it must reward group effort not individual—and not limited to only a few groups.

Support leadership growth and learning

Encourage and support leaders to lead whole school change and connect them with other leaders doing the same.

Principals need to have a deep understanding of how classrooms operate and to ensure that all decisions reflect the centrality of teaching and learning in the school.

There needs to be a business manager role and an educational leadership role clearly defined at school level.

Insist that jurisdictions increase the local authority and autonomy of principals and their school communities.

Improve pre-service teacher education

Better quality education/training to produce teachers (e.g. Dip. Eds). More practicum! Less waffle.

Take measures to attract quality applicants to teacher education courses and ensure there are sufficient quality graduates to fill teaching vacancies.

Pre-service teachers—more practicum time with university people as mentors. Stronger programs—NOT quick fix, short-term solutions.

Publicise the work of the Kingston [Primary School] project in WA—‘internships’ for grads rather than practicum.

Improve explicit training for pre-service teachers. Make their last year of training (their 4th year) an internship year for the whole year. Assign them only to best-practice teachers.

Have better pre-service teacher education, with more opportunities for mentoring by highly accomplished teachers.

Ensure that teacher education courses and pre-service experience is of high quality (pedagogy, curriculum, school experience, etc); is innovative; provides experience and explicit teaching of classroom management, working with parents and community; supports understanding and working with a diverse range of students (i.e. Indigenous, inclusive of students with disabilities, disadvantaged students, ESL students, etc)—so they are ‘classroom ready’ as stated today.

At the moment documents and materials provided to schools are not always provided to institutions who are training the teachers for these schools. It is important that all are working together.

Work in partnership with universities

Partnerships could be made with universities and schools to assist with the training programs of pre-service teachers.

Support new and early-career teachers

There needs to be programs which give teachers adequate time to develop new teachers through induction and mentoring.

We need to be strategic in supporting our newly appointed teachers. We need to stop throwing them in at the deep end!

Additional support for new educators—professional development, mentoring, release.

Mentoring/assistance for teachers in their early years of teaching.

Release time for beginning teachers but also for their mentors → so that relevant teaching and learning can occur within schools.

Serious ongoing P.D. at all levels but particularly during the first five years of teaching experience.

Invest in support for new educators especially in the first 3-5 years.

Encourage mentoring

Experienced teachers working with those new to the profession to provide the benefits of learning other ways of doing things. Teachers who are taking on new roles or new areas of teaching and learning should also be supported, at different times in their working life, to achieve to their potential.

Teacher education—while it is good for student teacher to spend more time in schools, universities have difficulty finding teachers/schools to take the students. There needs to be a structure not dependent on universities where teachers are rewarded for the mentoring role, given time and 'kudos'. Encouraged/required also for training is mentorship roles. Unless the system commits to pre-service teacher training and works towards real long-term systems that work, it leaves a lack of stability and less-than-ideal professional experience for pre-service teachers.

Build a professional learning culture

Create opportunities for teachers/leaders to engage in quality professional learning/collaboration with capacity-building to self reflect, and access to recent works on pedagogical and curriculum change ideas.

Reinforce and reward effective 'teaming'/'networking'/'building of community in learning'—so that teachers can continue to work together to improve practice.

Teachers networking—sharing their best practice, opening up their classrooms to work together, working in teams, mentoring pre-service teachers.

Teacher knowledge includes knowledge of subject, pedagogy, pedagogical content, children, how children learn, etc—and all of these are integrated with things such as classroom management etc. Professional learning needs to incorporate all and be ongoing, be supported, rewarded, encouraged, valued by all—including governments and systems.

Teachers working together on pedagogy. Schools that enable this, systems that ‘support’ through policy, funding, etc.

Tag extra funding for teacher education in universities—to make sure it ends up supporting teacher education.

Focus professional learning on how to improve outcomes for all students.

Find ways/have professional learning in building professional learning communities within schools or networks.

We need to have planned sustainable continuous professional learning that works to enhance teacher practice through the creation of learning communities—communities that are maintained because the participants have a commitment to the action learning that is making a difference to their pedagogy.

Make training on quality teaching compulsory for classroom teachers and quality leadership for principals universal—not just for new teachers and new leaders. This would take effect rapidly and not at some distant future time.

If governments and organisations are serious about making a real difference to and with teachers, real time and money and effort have to be devoted to quality teacher training that is developmental, ongoing and cohesive. People are talking about it but **DOING NOTHING**.

Invest in high-quality (i.e sustained, high transference, well mentored) professional development for teachers in schools on a regular basis.

Diverse and targeted professional development for teachers and principals (executive) to stimulate thinking and opportunities to expand their horizons.

To improve teacher capacity and change practice they must be given space, supportive environment, time to reflect and to have conversations about their work with colleagues.

Put a strong emphasis on continuing professional learning for all teachers, and support it appropriately with expertise from schools and associations.

Recognise the importance of resourcing

Invest in teachers—in salary and in professional learning. Invest also in their innovation and creativity around teaching and learning.

Time: schools are very busy places. Too busy! More time is needed for planning (even to the level of lesson planning, for reflection, for professional conversations. Too much face-to-face teaching → not enough time for collaboration and working together to produce the best for students. At the end of a school day, a teacher's work is really just beginning. Valuing the expertise of teachers means providing sufficient opportunity to do the important tasks. More time would allow more individual attention for each student—instead of many students and not enough time.

Reduce the over-accountability, over-compliance on teachers and school leaders; increase the support and admin staff in each school.

Pay teachers more. They have significant impact on student outcomes. Society values salary = respect. Increased salary = increased social value of the profession → respect as a profession and scope for professional enhancement.

Funding is needed for time for staff to undertake roles such as mentoring.

Good family-school partnerships throughout children's education are supported by children having books to refer to (so parents can help them—particularly in primary school). Lack of books is a great source of inequity in our school systems (books being just one of several resources that should be available to students.)

All children should have access to 'Mathletics' and IT resources developed by the Learning Federation.

Trade Training Centres—need funding for curriculum development, teacher professional development, time to build industry links and money for staffing. One centre just built is talking of an \$800 student fee—how *equitable* is this?

Staffing schools not linked to formulas such as the number of students. Needs analysis to include para-professionals allocated as support and psychologists, youth workers and social workers based on school needs.

Ensure every school has a full-time counsellor, qualified ESL teachers, experienced 'learning support', a teacher coordinator (focus on quality teaching, mentoring, and ensuring all students' needs are addressed across the school).

Special assistance/intervention for needy students should be provided at all levels of education—not limited to only some year levels.

Ageing workforce

Need to address 'ageing' teaching stock. How can we 'use' the post-60 year-olds rather than losing them?

Undergraduate students in the classroom would be a beneficial way to tap into the experiences of those teachers who are about to retire.

3. Pedagogy, curriculum and assessment

Quality Teaching

We need to avoid this [the 'Education Revolution'] becoming an 'Education Repetition'—and that change is considered real and implemented. Successful change lies in making teacher quality and quality teaching our top priorities.

Invest in high quality teaching—this means money to schools for teacher release and funding for teacher professional development opportunities. Without direct support for the classroom teacher to learn new approaches that meet student learning needs/styles and allow them to reflect, participate in professional conversations—nothing will really change. The buildings, the digital technologies and the Trade Training Centre infrastructure will achieve little if anything if CLASSROOM teachers are not equipped with the knowledge, skills, motivation to design and deliver curriculum that engages and inspires our young people.

Increase the value of university education and align it to the Quality Teaching Model (QTM) and effective classroom practice.

A new paradigm in schooling—not revisiting 'State of the Art' 1990s thinking that does not look at pedagogy (explicit instruction). It's not just social capital—it's also individual capital (teacher quality).

Build the capacity of the teaching progression from within—leave the curriculum debate to the curriculum developers (ACARA?) and let us talk about teaching.

'Quality teaching' suggests quality teachers. What about those teachers who are not capable of quality teaching? There are issues of under-performance that also need to be addressed.

Focus on teacher quality and most importantly teacher accountability with set 'performance indicators' to measure their accountability.

Define what a 'good teacher' quantifies and qualifies. Along with the National Curriculum, set these qualities of outstanding teachers as a set of 'standards' that are expected of all teachers that support delivery of curriculum.

Build competence and confidence in teachers and school leaders with descriptive practices as the platform for reflecting on the learning that happens in classrooms daily.

Establish systematic, cohesive methods for the development and implementation of standards, policies, training and development, and appraisal of teaching. My 15-year-old saw a history textbook and exclaimed 'Why can't we have books like this in class so I don't have to rely on the quality of the teachers?' Employ teachers who want to build relationships with students who teach children creatively and engage children, not teach a 'subject'. Teachers need to learn to be engaging otherwise they cannot compete with all the wonders of the world—outside the classroom!

Ensure schools support teachers in the classroom.

Tackle the blessed issue of unsatisfactory performance. Don't have the discussion behind closed doors: OPEN them. All 'good' teachers (read 'quality') will join in. No argument – the [?] of the lemon and defending the indefensible cannot be tolerated any longer.

Structured, streamlined methods to deal with underperforming staff – centralised or collaborative tribunals set up with union support – not driven by colleagues or principals. A neutral panel to hear cases and deal with issues. We employ and promote via panels – why not deal with underemployment this way?

Improve outplacement processes for teachers who no longer enjoy teaching.

In developing teachers for the future the control of the 'registration' etc has to be established in a way that does not re-create what was regarded as good in the past – i.e. not creating a mirror of what already exists but rather looking ahead to the future.

To enhance the quality of teaching (and thus improving student learning), rethink the work of teachers for the new generations! This is urgent – i.e. the one teacher, one space, one class is a highly redundant concept in this age. P.S. The Teachers Registration Board needs to hear this!! The group who is plotting away while all the discussion occurs – is the registration authorities. They hold teachers and teacher education to ransom. They use legislation to control the agenda and they dis-empower those who speak out. If a federal agency for teacher registration will address this—fine!! But before they write standards, why don't they think about reconsidering the way teachers work. Why are we writing standards for sector-specific teachers ... let's write standards for quality teachers giving them space to 'become' the type of teacher best for their unique collections of students. (*Prof Tania Aspland, University of Adelaide*)

When there is a breach in human rights in regard to the delivery of education for students, there needs to be industrial action to expose those patterns that deny students effective education and teacher professionalism.

Unions and teachers/practitioners need to take action when professionalism is undermined. What's worth fighting for = professionally and industrially.

Pedagogy

Review all practices and behaviours in schools (or beyond) in terms of impact on learning—student learning, teacher learning, school leaders learning, others' learning.

Personalising learning! For years we have talked about catering for individualised needs—about being student focussed. We really do not achieve this. The 'role' of the teacher is centuries old.

Fully personalised programs for every student—tailored to address their needs and interests.

More attention to the individual learner—every learner: not individual learning plans, but quality time—one-on-one with an educator on a daily basis to cater to his/her unique academic and/or emotional and/or social needs.

Curriculum needs to promote the 'what'. The challenge is the 'how'—any work needs to engage with children individually—time and space is needed for this.

Personal motivation of each student is essential. This must be based on relationship building and mentoring. These in turn must be resourced.

Personalising learning represents a significant change in pedagogy for many teachers. How do we build teacher capacity to personalise learning in an engaging, relevant and authentic way?

Provide ways to work differently with different kids—a range of models is required. Structural change is needed.

Ensure that programs we develop link into the learning styles, interest and motivators of a generation that needs a very different paradigm of education.

We need a systematic approach to the teaching of comprehension across all disciplines and age levels.

An Action (Research) Learning Model should be used across the school—led by students and staff and engaging all stakeholders in the process. A Participatory Planning and Accountability Framework for all stakeholders, understood and practised by all.

When a speaker says teachers teach behind closed doors it may be because of the NOISE in schools and teachers attempting to gain students' attention—it is not an indication of 'privatisation. So please don't think 'open plan' means de-privatisation.

Recognise the importance of early learning

All of the evidence around brain research is clear: the early years are critical to the development and capacity of children to learn into the future. Schools need to engage with their communities before children start school. For some children if we intervene when children start school it will be too late. If you want to change schools and improve the outcomes of children, you need to change the environments from which the children come.

Provide instruction for parents in oral language for 0-4 year-olds. Too many early patterns for learning are set, established and developed before children arrive at school. It is too late for real improvement once children are enrolled in Prep classes.

Increase funding in the early years of schooling.

Improve management of disengaged/disruptive students

More training/support to help teachers to engage disengaged students. Most people who go into teaching 'got' school, so we don't really relate to students who don't 'get' it.

Look at alternative education models for students who don't cope with traditional systems, to retain them in education.

Recognise that for many high school students, disengagement and the disruptive behaviours that go with them, is at least partly a function of cognitive immaturity and hormonal change. For some of these students, out-of-classroom community service or 'boot camp' programs can give a sense of self-worth and an opportunity to mature. When the return to the classroom (after perhaps a semester out of it) they may be better able to see the value of education, and therefore not disrupt their own—and others'—learning.

Think about school design

As long as school design remains 'balkanised' then we will be limited in the way we change our work.

Think about technology

Embedding IT as a teaching tool (like chalk, and latterly, whiteboard markers) will enable us to develop individualistic programs for every student, to engage and motivate 'connected' kids and to work in 21st century ways.

Basing an educational revolution on a roll out of computers and online communities is fraught with uncertainty—see Michael Hall's speech. By the time the computers come they are 'old technology' and the kids we are teaching have moved on to the latest social network or technology—e.g. why not learn your tables on a Wii or DSM?

National curriculum

Make the national curriculum an imperative that gets or uses true collaboration (including serious Indigenous engagement) and not one that is being driven by timeframes that can't deliver something better.

Engagement (genuine) of Indigenous voice/representation in curriculum development with a view to integrate Indigenous perspectives and stand-alone curriculum.

Representation of ATSI curriculum experts on all curriculum panels and committees.

Including Aboriginal perspectives in all possible areas of the national curriculum is not about addressing inequity and giving a feeling of inclusiveness to Aboriginal students. It is about increasing cultural knowledge for all Australians.

A multi-disciplinary framework for a national Indigenous Studies curriculum. National curriculum if this is to be fast-tracked.

Need for adequate lead time for introduction of national curriculum.

Implement a national curriculum before implementing national testing—not the other way around.

Divert resources to the generation of work programs that complement the national curriculum to alleviate time and focus to writing teaching and learning materials and give teachers the space to dedicate to their craft: the art and science of teaching.

ACARA needs to develop resources to articulate and support National Curriculum to produce real change in education throughout Australia.

Languages

Develop a National Umbrella Distance Learning School for Languages.

The individual community language schools could be responsible for delivery and assessment (very inexpensive).

So any child in any school can pursue the language of their personal interest and receive credit for it throughout school.

Mathematics

Reform curriculum in collaboration with parents, teachers, employers and post-compulsory educators. They want children to be able to multiply, divide, subtract, add and move a decimal point. There needs to be more ‘time spent’ consolidating these skills in the classroom. Parents shouldn’t have to take their children to tutors or Kumon to gain these skills. Such a system is totally inequitable and leads to large SES gaps. Lack of consolidation of skills in primary skills also means that fewer students pursue maths. There is not nearly enough focus on number in the curriculum—it’s crowded out by space, chance and data at every year level. The children complain about ‘doing shape again!’ etc and spend too much time doing surveys for data (a worthwhile activity—but we need to get an appropriate balance).

Grade 5 students can do very well on NAPLAN tests without competent number skills of subtraction, multiplication, division or moving decimal points. Parents are confused—they were not alerted to their children’s lack of number skills by the NAPLAN as their bright child has been able to use their high general ability and reading skills. We need to have two parts to the NAPLAN numeracy test:

- Numeracy (existing)
- Number (more focussed).

If students don’t become more competent, understand and automate their number skills they won’t go on with maths in secondary school.

Streaming of mathematics classrooms must become consigned to history. Research is clear it harms kids. Our country can’t afford it—we are losing too many students as more and

more get excluded from mathematics as they move through schooling. Instead, we need to do all we can to keep learners in mathematics for as long as possible so there will be enough leaving Year 12 with sufficient mathematics to study to be teachers and return to the classroom.

The environment

There is a fundamental need to have an understanding and teaching of ecology and its principles suffuse the educational system from the kindergarten through to post-graduate study so that the unprecedented changes facing this planet can be appreciated, understood and if possible—which is now increasingly doubtful—averted to the maximum extent possible.

The arts

For low SES schools in particular the Arts (Music, Visual Arts, Drama, etc) and community involvement can provide a real motivation for students which can then lead into and incorporate important aspects of literacy and numeracy.

Career education

Ensure 'Career Exploration Experience' is available for all students and valued by DEEWR and their evaluation of schools across Australia.

Life-long learning

In a nationally-changing world, life-long learning is an essential survival strategy for every individual. This must therefore form an underlying perspective, value and goal of every education system.

Rethink our approach to assessment and evidence

We need to establish some priority areas for research in education in Australia and fund them so good Australian research is sufficient to really provide data and knowledge to drive the future—using this research based on our community.

For system or organisational change, the voice of educational experts must be respected, listened to and embraced. Politicians, policy makers and bureaucrats must accommodate this information. Professional education experts need to lead change—not politicians, and not politically-appointed principals.

We have to have models of best practice that have worked and share across other schools. We have to have highly effective, sustainable models (Australian) we can look at and adopt if they suit our setting and community.

When we compare ourselves to other countries like Finland we look at students and education but not adults—are they happy, employed, etc? I believe Finland has the highest levels of drink driving, alcoholism, etc. What's the point if unhappy adults—we need to

connect young communities of learners to adult communities—‘educated and happy’ should be our aim.

Stop using models such as those in place in New York and look at what countries like Finland are doing in such a successful way.

Encourage schools to draw on the Finnish example of supporting 30% of students with additional support, including high-performing students.

Schools need to understand they work in a system. If they are truly open and transparent to their community and public of all facets of education, the ACARA website will be not threatening. They are threatened as some of them have hidden not only from parents but also from teachers’ relative performance of students in system and national tests.

How to measure? Please reduce compliance procedures for schools—self-generated data to make decisions. This creates a risk-averse environment. Move the debate to pedagogy and the art of teaching instead of curriculum and assessment.

Define what we value in schools—it seems to be NAPLAN results and the aim to be No. 1 in the world is the ‘value’ our system holds dear. We need to ensure communities feel valued—for their intangibles as well as results.

What does ‘success’ mean for students? Identify various examples.

To prepare students for the future they need to know how to learn and be able to control their own learning—but this does not show as important in the assessment regime. Perhaps some of the assessment money could be spent on rich approaches sampling students to focus this aspect.

Establish and fund ‘sampling’ of students to assess through alternating rich approaches that focus on thinking, problem-solving, learning and other big-picture important aspects that are lost with national testing approaches. This is to complement the data that is now being collected.

Assessment /as/of/for learning—using portfolio presentation as part of reporting to family—a three-way conversation where the student leads and demonstrates how they have achieved targets of their personal learning plan. Parent – Student – Conferencing! △

Scrap NAPLAN in its current form and replace it with rich, authentic and effective assessment tools that provide information that reflects student achievement over time and informs future teaching.

Rally together and don’t implement NAPLAN! What will ACARA do then? There is an accumulation of authentic assessment strategies that will provide the data we need.

Measurement of success is critical—but teaching for the test is not the goal. We need to develop ways of measuring the school environments for kids—perhaps the answer lies in the participation of kids. If the kids are able and encouraged and provided with

opportunities and experiences to participate, then schools are engaging with them—surely a major goal.

Redirect the massive funding investment away from National Assessment strategies and inject it into lowering class sizes, teacher training and initiatives that actually improve student outcomes.

Change the mindset of governments away from an obsession with comparing school ‘results’ towards a focus on investing in teaching and learning.

Broaden the criteria used to compare ‘like’ schools.

4. *Social justice and community*

Social justice/inclusion

Make sure the disadvantaged do get the high quality education they deserve. Resource-rich it may be, but the benefits for our country will be enormous. So fund directly people and programs (e.g. Big Picture schools) to the extent that is required, to ensure ongoing (and evidence-based) success.

When we understand the effects of poverty on learning (Professor Eric Emerson, Professor of Disability and Health Research at the University of Lancaster, has demonstrated the causal link between poverty and developmental delay)—we will begin to be able to make a real difference. At this stage it seems to me that we know poverty affects learning detrimentally but we don’t understand the mechanism involved. We can’t fix poverty but we can ameliorate the effects—perhaps through hope in the future.

Inclusive education for all—no more special schools, no more special education units—but inclusion in the learning of the general classroom. Modification of learning outcomes but still working on the same objectives is the way of working that will make a difference.

Resource the education of kids at the bottom end, including Indigenous students.

To address ‘equity’ and hence under-performing areas of education, offer great incentives to teachers to be engaged in these schools. Offer these ‘great incentives’ to recognised excellent teachers and use them as a team to work with existing staff.

Focus on ‘needs’ and target resourcing and professional support.

More equitable funding for our schools. More equitable appointment for principals and quality teachers.

Counter the mantra of CHOICE—and resource/build/promote/empower community-based education.

It has come out strongly that 'choice' does not lead to equity—we need also to look at social purposes, national good, etc—where the choice is within a structure that provides real equity with choice.

We need to get recognition that the language around 'choice' is really about choice for some and little or no choice for others. There is a need to ensure that all public schools are adequately resourced.

Indigenous students have to know that the schools they attend are recognisable, familiar. Schools have to accept that their role is not just to promote academic success for Aboriginal students but also to enhance their identity as Aboriginal Australians. Aboriginal perspectives, event, etc need to be part of the ongoing life of the school.

The teaching in low SES schools has to be based on using the students' (and the community's) knowledge and experiences as the basis for the classroom curriculum content. This includes close engagement with parents, caregivers and communities.

Make real state education funding. The private sector continually receives so much funding [to] the big private schools (not so much the poorer Catholic schools) is simply wrong and obscene. State school children simply have to be worth more. This is not equity. We are in real danger of residualising state schooling.

Ensure that all regional and remote Indigenous students have full access to P-12 schooling—i.e. modern infrastructure, transport, qualified teachers, assistant, culturally-sensitive inclusive curriculum, etc and high quality childcare facilities, parent programs

If schools are to be the driver in youth programs to engage and retain all young people, then why is there so much emphasis on funding outside organisations/agencies to engage young people at risk of not completing school?

The importance of family and community

Involve families more in kids' education.

Provision of greater resourcing and targeted support for low SES schools to enable them to plan for 'real', meaningful links with family.

Create systems which develop the community spirit—rather than creating 'choice' which marginalises some schools. Revert to the ideology: 'It takes a village to raise a child.'

Ensure there is an emphasis on shared responsibility for our children and young people (i.e. 'it takes a village to raise a child'.) In particular, targeted early intervention strategies are absolutely vital in addressing inequity and disadvantage from birth (and maybe before!)

We need to establish processes to engage and celebrate community partnerships—as schools wrap around services and improve outcomes for young people in our modern society. Partnerships—linking with agencies/families/other government departments to make a difference and to enhance equitable access for all. They create synergies.

The structure of schools and educational systems needs to be refocussed to enable:

- (a) a coordinated approach to 'wrap around' services
- (b) arms-length mechanisms to enable industry to have sustained connection and the flexibility to meet both stakeholders' needs. Currently there are Local Community Partnerships (LCPs) working in this area and it is vital that we ensure this work is ongoing and further enhanced to meet the needs of the individual and in turn the community as a whole.

Consider programs such as service-learning and fund them—connecting students to community through delivery of curriculum.

Enable organisations such as ours to engage parents more fully with their schools and highlight their value to the community, etc.

Education is not solely the place of schools. Community partnerships and mentors need to be available to work with schools—ASCN for example.

Build the capacity of parents to be informed partners with schools in their child's education, drawing on research, ACSSO, etc.

Involving parents and community (proactively) in partnerships for young people's learning.

Put schools back as a central part of their community.