

AARE NEWS

ON-LINE Edition

RQF SPECIAL ISSUE

AARE NEWS No. 54
May 2006
ISSN: 1324-1214

RQF DEBATE CONTENTS

**President Michael Singh -
“Another chance to improve
education research” – p1**

**Simon Marginson & Allan Luke
– “We need a research quality
roadmap but this is not it.”
– p 6**

**Peter Goodyear – “Research
Assessment Developments,
Home and Away” – p 7**

**Alison Lee – “What were the
big questions and how did we
address them? Some
questions for the future of
educational research in
Australia” – p 8**

**Jinghe Han – “Research
Higher Degrees and the RQF”
- p 10**

**Jan Wright – “From the
Research Development
Coordinator” – p 11**

Also in this issue:

**Recent Doctoral Theses
[the work continues]**

**Marie Brennan – Adelaide Conference
opportunities for networking, debate
and quality presentations.**

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Another chance to improve education research

Leadership is needed for problems that do not have easy answers. The big problems of the day are complex, rife with paradoxes and dilemmas. For these problems there are no once-and-for-all answers. ... “we can call for someone ... who can make hard problems [mistakenly seem] simple [or] leadership that will challenge us to face problems for which there are no simple, painless solutions—problems that require us to learn new ways” (Heifetz cited in Fullan, 2001: 3).

The complex, paradoxical dilemmas facing education research have been around for many years. Consider, for a moment at least, the following problems:

1. the way in which an uncritical celebration of unplanned “diversity” has unintentionally given license to poor quality, individualistic research.
2. the parochialism of so much research, such that even nationally-focused research is being challenged by the need to think (and act) beyond the national boundaries.
3. that education research has not produced any consistent findings, so it is only a matter of choosing the right researcher to give legitimacy to whatever policy-makers require.
4. that education research is merely a ‘talkfest’ of little interest or use to people outside the education research community.

...continued

From the President continued



The work of scholars such as Lyn Yates (2004) has made valuable contributions to addressing such concerns. Likewise the RQF provides the education research community an important moment for addressing these basic problems concerning the quality, standing and impact of the field. The anxieties attached to the RQF arise from long-term concerns about its reputation, status and visibility. The RQF provides an opportunity for education research leadership to address the fields' challenges, mindful that new ways of doing research and being a researcher will involve complications and pain.

On the 28 April, Jan Wright, AARE's Research Development Coordinator, convened a meeting of education research leaders from universities around a country to explore these issues. This report summarises and elaborates on the points canvassed at that gathering.

Questioning the history of the RQF

The delayed implementation of the RQF is expected to be announced later this year. Despite the unsettling conversations around the RQF we now await the Minister's thoughtful and considered announcement of the decision to delay its implementation.

The RQF initiative was announced by the Prime Minister in May 2004 as part of the Government's part of the \$8.3 billion *Backing Australia's Ability* package.

The Australian Government's initiative to evaluate research quality, esteem and impact through the RQF has as a key aim assuring taxpayers that their money is being invested in research which delivers real benefits to the wider community.

2005 began with the then Minister for Education wondering, publicly whether Australia should fund research in one research university. As the debate evolved this was extended to thinking about providing block grants to a dozen or so research intensive universities. All the universities marginalised within these imaginings would have to find their own way.

As the debate broadened the humanities and social sciences were given Ministerial support. *Backing Australia's Ability: Building Our Future Through Science and Innovation* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001) was always about more than just research in science and technology. For instance, while scientists have knowledge about how to deal with sustainability issues, they also recognise the need for other knowledge about how to get people involved in doing sustainability.

Researchers in the social sciences and humanities also took the opportunity to argue that the RQF should consider these different disciplines in ways appropriate to these fields. AARE members were represented in these forums by the President, Trevor Gale. Together they made the point that the humanities and social sciences are not like astronomy or biomedicine.

It was also argued, successfully that there was a need for an "Australian RQF" and not just another British import. The desire for Australian research to be internationally competitive

drew it very close to adopting the UK RAE model. There are many reasons for cautiously learning from the UK's RAE experience (Ribbins, Bates and Gunter, 2003). After twenty years, the British had established a different system of higher education to that found in Australia, and are now at different points in the process.

Universities, responding to the RAE in the UK, did so in ways that narrowed their research focus by concentrating resources. They marginalised some researchers by denying them promotion and resources. Education seemed to have suffered due a lack of clear expectations as to what is quality research in this field.

However, *Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003) meant that the RQF had to be seen as part of the policy suite governing research, innovation, education and training in Australia. For instance, the ARC Linkage Program, which is not evident elsewhere, is a flagship of Australian research.

Moreover, the Linkage Program has been formative in developing researchers' skills to undertake partnership-based research whose impact can be readily documented. It was also argued that careful consideration was needed as to what was meant by "research impact" and what evidence would be required to judge it.

The consultations and negotiations around the RQF produced a group of research leaders who knew a great deal about its principles and the processes involved. This work helped pin-point where the agreements and disagreements arose. One important source of agreement was the value of moving from a quantitative measure of productivity to peer assessment of evidence of quality, esteem and impact.

There was also much consideration given to identifying the wrong drivers for producing the wrong behaviours in researchers. Alternatively, if the RQF was just a matter of finding a funding formula then there might be far cheaper ways of making these re-distributions.

However, it was agreed that the RQF needed to be situated within the national government's policy framework for research and development. There was also agreement that there was an appalling lack of funding being provided for the implementation of the RQF. This led to requests for additional funds, rather than the redistribution of existing monies.

The new Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, released the advisory paper, the *Research Quality Framework: Assessing the quality and impact of research in Australia – Final Advice on the Preferred RQF Model* (Endorsed by the Expert Advisory Group for the RQF, 2005).

The Minister, however, did not endorse the Model. Instead, she announced the establishment of the RQF Development Advisory Group to provide advice on the models implementation, should the Government adopt it. This is a prudent decision the decision in the UK to discontinue the RAE. However, the RQF-DAG does not formerly include university representatives, nor necessarily people intimately involved in the RQF developments to date.

The RQF proposes to test the quality of research using as evidence four pieces of research provided by named researchers presented as a group.

Underdeveloped and unresolved issues facing the implementation of the RQF concern the evaluation of peer esteem, including whether this will be based on judgements about individuals or the groups. Similar problems exist in relation to research impact. How will the research impact of four pieces of research be ascertained? Will it be the impact of the group's publications? Or does impact refer to something else?

This snapshot of the history of the RQF suggests that its future is not predictable. The stripes on the RQF beast have already changed. We should expect the future development of this technology to change. And it will do so in ways that are not evident in current trends, because unexpected, unanticipated events will occur.

Questions concerning the impact of the RQF

Some Australian universities have adopted a 'wait-and-see' position with respect to the RQF. It could be that the RQF proves to be a distraction or a costly undertaking. A few are focusing on the next RQF round, not the first round, which is expected to be delayed for at least a year. Others have quickly jumped to implement the RQF policy during the consultative process as a way of giving it form and substance. They have been quick to ensure their university is RQF compliant.

While they may have done a good job under the old rules of the game most find they do not measure up to the requirements of the RQF. An effect of this has been to create a feeling across all universities that none really measure up to the standards required by the RQF.

Most faculties across universities have a sense that

they meet the minimal definitions for research quality, esteem and impact as defined under the RQF. Some researchers now see themselves as having published in the wrong journals. However, this negativity might be due to an inflated sense of international excellence. It could be more appropriate to construct a sense of what is an achievable level of international excellence.

If members of the RQF Evaluation panels think that quality education research is only published in journals appearing in the ISI Citation Index then they have problems, as does the education research community generally.

Securing compliance with the RQF has brought a very hard edge to university performance management and the disciplining of academic staff. Indices of research activity are being used in some universities to allocate funding to research active staff. This includes funds for study leave, conference presentations and research grants. It is dependant on academic level.

Enterprise Bargaining Agreements are being developed using the RQF to govern the recruitment of research-active staff. Likewise, such EBAs propose the use of the RQF to secure the retrenchment of under-performing staff. Some universities' researchers are being allocated to RQF research groupings according to centrally prescribed criteria and decisions.

Problems with the use of citations to measure research performance have been identified. ISI citations can not be taken as the single metric for judging research quality, especially in fields such as education. The ISI Citation

Index is a commercial a product that thus carries it own inherent bias. Taylor and Francis, perhaps the biggest publisher of education research journals, does not get many articles in this citation index. Few Routledge journals are in it. Another commercial company acts as gatekeeper. Other companies' journals are not included in the ISI Citation Index if they are already covered by its publishers.

Major knowledge breakthroughs come from the crossing of disciplinary boundaries. This requires researchers with an in-depth knowledge in their field, the capacity to engage other disciplinary knowledge, and a community that recognises the advances in knowledge that are being made. To seriously affect change this requires assembling an interdisciplinary research team to address these problems. These broad cross-disciplinary teams have the capacity to refer back and forth to each discipline, building an integrated research environment. Likewise, to develop a national research platform there is a need to extend research collaborations through cross-institutional, trans-national research nodes.

The RQF needs to recognise and support such cooperation, rather than dismantle it. The tensions between competition and cooperation are a dilemma the RQF must manage, as the system reveals the limits to collaboration. The competitive battles can be expected to become bitter and intense, if not nasty as researchers are poached by competing institutions. Cooperation and competition will have to be negotiated.

The ARC provides an institutionalised mechanism for judging what counts as research quality. The RQF is likely to have contributed to this year's increase in ARC applications. However, given the same available pool of

funds for ARC grants, this means that the success rate will be driven down. In turn this will create considerable despondency among those education researchers who will miss out. It will not necessarily be the case that all of these are poor quality research applications; some will miss out because of the increased competition this year for limited funds.

Questions of benefits

The RQF presents hard problems that have few, if any easy once-and-for-ever answers. As members of AARE find in their efforts to promote really useful and good research, the RQF is also replete with complications, dilemmas and paradoxes. The challenge is to make benefits of the RQF for as long as it on the agenda and share our leanings about what the quality, esteem and impact of education research mean.

The introduction of the RQF is a time of considerable opportunities. Education research leaders have the opportunity to work out how to solve the problems posed by the RQF for this field, rather than letting others "solve" them.

There is a need for universities administrators and RQF policy-makers to understand the perspective that the education research community has to offer on what is quality, esteem and impact. What are the metrics by which the education research and its community could be measured? These metrics will drive changes in the behaviours of education researchers. Is it feasible for the education research community to develop the metrics for use in this field?

Points to consider:

- Education researchers might use the RQF as a device to change and improve their research culture; so they can achieve a new level of research quality, esteem and impact.

- The RQF has provides a stimulus for education researchers to review the criteria for deciding what is education research, how education researchers are positioned and might position themselves in terms of their status, and how they might secure funding for really useful research.
- To the extent that the education research community has agreement about what matters in the field, it will be able to demonstrate the quality, esteem and impact of its research.
- The RQF has helped lift, and can be used to improve the profile of research within Faculties/Schools of Education. By building on strengths in research in schools, VET, adult and community education, the RQF might be used to support the growth of large-scale education research and consultancies.
- The RQF has focused attention on issues of succession planning. What is to be done to enable early career researchers can contribute immediately at a higher level of research performance? This means changing how education researchers see themselves and their work.

Questions about strategies

To deal with the likely impact of the RQF and to leverage opportunities for the field that it presents a double barrelled, tension-ridden response might be considered. This involves getting on with doing high quality research that has a significant impact, and learning about the new RQF system. One tactic for staff development is to establish re-visioning working parties to explore understandings of the RQF and ways of better positioning themselves for its challenges.

Working definitions of key words

The RQF provides another opportunity for the education research community to engage in public discussions about a range of key issues which have been of long-standing concern in the field. Through such discussions there is an opportunity to generate shared definitions of key ideas that are central to education research in the world of today:

1. What is education?
2. What is education research?
3. What is quality education research?
4. How do we prove the quality of education research?
5. How is, and might the esteem of education research be judged?
6. What is the impact of education research?
7. What evidence is, and might be used to demonstrate research impact?

The uncoupling of education from schooling, as illustrated in Bernstein's (1996) argument concerning the "totally pedagogised society" (see also Bonal and Rambla, 2003) means that education must speak to a even wider range of interests or stakeholders. Schooling is part of the agenda for education research. Other forms and sites of education are now on the research agenda. There is a need to think beyond schools to other education and training providers. How might these be addressed?

A useful reference here is the statement from the UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE, 2001) produced by the Education Panel. It provides an important statement about what is quality research in the field of education. This statement could provide a useful focus of discussions about how comfortable education researchers are with this definition, thereby providing a common reference point for consideration and community building.

Quality publications

The RQF has stimulated interest in the tiering of journals and commercial publishers. In which journals might education researchers publish?

This might be answered by documenting where education researchers in Faculties/Schools of Education and members of AARE publish. Staff could work together to identify for themselves the quality of journals. It may be possible for education researchers to identify the top 20% of journals, as a basis for encouraging publications in these, so as to reflect RQF expectations governing quality, esteem and impact. Discussion could be had as to whether internal funding should be allocated proportionately to tier 1 through to 5 journals, with tier 1 journals receiving the largest proportion, and tier 5 receiving minimal funds.

Impact of education research

What credible evidence can education researchers produce to demonstrate the beneficial impact of our work, for instance at different levels and/or across various settings?

The influence or take-up of research is unlikely to be achieved through a single report. One approach to evaluating the beneficial impact of education research for the community may be to nominate three examples and to give demonstrable account of their impact (or socio-economic benefits). Issues that might be considered about how to demonstrate impact include the character of the evidence (e.g. participation in public debates), time-lag for impact, and expertise. For instance, expertise might be demonstrated by invitations to talk about research related matters or to participate in certain events.

A researcher's expertise is itself an important attribute in having their research being studied or taken-up. The question of impact might be explored through the character of research leadership within the Australian and international community at large. "Client impact statements" might provide a way of documenting the impact of education research, for instance in regional/community engagement.

The RQF is an opportunity to do the hard learning that comes from addressing real world problems.

**Michael Singh
UWS**

References

- Endorsed by the Expert Advisory Group for the RQF (2005) Research Quality Framework: Assessing the quality and impact of research in Australia – Final Advice on the Preferred RQF Model. (Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training. http://www.dest.gov.au/sector_s/research_sector/policies_iss ues_reviews/key_issues/rese arch_quality_framework/final_a dvice_on_preferred_rqf_mode l.htm (dated accessed 4 May, 2006)
- Bernstein, B. (1996), Pedagogy, Symbolic Contrain and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Bonal, X. and Rambla, X. (2003), Captured by the totally pedagogised society: Teachers and teaching in the knowledge economy. Globalisation, Societies and Education. 1 (2), pp. 169-184.
- Commonwealth of Australia (2001), Backing Australia's Ability: Building Our Future Through Science and Innovation. <http://backingaus.innovation.g ov.au/default2001.htm> (date accessed 4 May, 2006)
- Commonwealth of Australia (2003), Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training.
- Fullan, M. (2001), Leading in a Culture of Change. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Oancea, A. (2005), Criticisms of educational research: Key topics and levels of analysis. British Educational Research Journal. 31 (2) pp. 157-183.
- RAE (2001) – Overview Reports from the Panels (Higher Education and Research Opportunities in the Unites Kingdom. <http://www.hero.ac.uk/rae/over view> (dated access 4 May 2005). Ribbins, P., Bates, R. and Gunter, H. (2003), Reviewing research in education in Australia and the UK: evaluating the evaluations. Journal of Educational Administration. 41 (4) pp. 423-444.
- Yates, L. (2004), What Does Good Education Research Look Like? Situating a Field and Its Practices. Maidenhead: Open University Press.



We need a research quality roadmap but this is not it.

Allan Luke and Simon Marginson

[A version of this article was published in the *Financial Review* 3 April 2006. This version varies a little from the one published in the *Financial Review*.]

University research badly needs reform if Australia is to compete in the global knowledge game.

Education Minister Julie Bishop was right to block the implementation of the draft Research Quality Framework prepared by the expert group led by Gareth Roberts of Oxford University.

Doubts about the scheme are deep and widespread, while the political and institutional conditions for its implementation are simply not there.

An RQF is vital for Australian universities if we are to improve our competitiveness as measured by the Shanghai Jiao Tong and other global research indexes. How to get there is the problem.

The minister's decision followed a long gestation cycle for the RQF. This was the result not of departmental incompetence, nor even the ministerial transition from Brendan Nelson to Bishop, but genuine problems with the RQF.

Too many potential losers would be written out of the research game, including the large and influential universities of technology. There are no extra research dollars on the table to

buy policy consensus, or boost the stocks of the main research universities, which is a pressing national policy priority.

There is no international agreement on the complex mechanisms for assessing research quality and impact. Research impact is difficult if not impossible to turn into metrics, especially as much of the impact of basic research and publication is long-term and indirect.

Perhaps the most telling criticism of the proposed RQF is that it generates a dead weight of micro-management at all levels. It would sidetrack researchers and scientists from the core business of high-quality relevant research, and at a regulatory cost that must unnerve Treasury. This has been a telling criticism of the British research quality scheme.

The Roberts scheme was modelled on the UK Research Assessment Exercise, a William the Conqueror-style Domesday Book census of every research product and every researcher in the UK.

British research assessment has survived for over a decade because it underpins a level of research funding that is generous by Australian standards. This in turn sustains the outstanding performance of UK research universities.

But the UK government announced two weeks ago that the British research assessment exercise was likely to be phased out after one more round in 2008.

UK Chancellor Gordon Brown believes the scheme has fulfilled its objectives of improved research focus and efficiency. This makes the ongoing costs of assessment harder to justify.

It looks like the UK will now dump the Domesday Book census and return to measuring research outputs using publication and citation data.

Bishop has now passed the Roberts proposal to another committee, chaired by chief scientist Jim Peacock, for further consideration and "development". But there has been no change in the underlying conditions that

would suggest a consensus is any closer.

The danger is that the effort to devise a research-quality road map will be abandoned as too difficult, and the default position will be the status quo. This has the potential to be an even worse outcome.

Australia's present system for evaluating and rewarding research gives undue emphasis to research income (undifferentiated by source or by quality) as distinct from PhD programs and publications. Publications constitute only 10 per cent of the block grant for research performance. This is way out of line with international practice.

Remarkably, the quality of publications and citation impact are ignored. As a result, researchers chase money and more money and are often distracted from bringing high-profile, scientifically significant projects to fruition. Meanwhile scholars chase volume (and redundancy) of publication.

These are the wrong incentives. It is a recipe for "publish or perish" style inflation of research outputs and measured incomes, at the expense of quality and the cutting edge. Over time it pushes us further and further below comparable countries such as Canada and new competitors in Singapore and China.

But if the Domesday Book is dumped, with a bit of lateral thinking Canberra can devise an RQF that satisfies the different and sometimes competing policy needs.

We suggest that a viable RQF would include three elements:

1. An allocation of baseline research funding on the basis of research quantity, using a formula similar to the present institutional grant scheme but with more weighting for publications and less for income. This keeps all universities and younger researchers in the game.
2. A first-tier top-up determined by journal quality and citation impact, which would reward excellence and impact, and modify the quantity distribution under 1.

3. A major second-tier top-up in which resources would be allocated to leading research centres and teams, on the basis of portfolio submissions, chosen by international peer panels.

If the government wants to reward research that meets specific needs, this could be handled by a separate bid-based scheme.

Mechanisms 1 and 2 would be relatively inexpensive to implement. Over time, mechanisms 2 and 3 would distribute a growing share of activity to the top research universities. If total funding for research output were increased, our best research could flourish at the same time as across-the-board capacity is maintained.

Simon Marginson and Allan Luke



Research Assessment Developments, Home and Away

Peter Goodyear

Since the last *AARE News* was published, the minister has released, but not endorsed, the final advice of the Research Quality Framework Expert Advisory Group (EAG), chaired by Gareth Roberts. The document is available on the RQF website, as is a useful RQF Fact Sheet. We had been expecting the work of the EAG to be continued in 2006 with some detailed planning, establishment of subject panels and trialling of methods, prior to submissions of evidence portfolios in April 2007. It is now pretty clear that the exercise will be delayed. The minister has appointed a new RQF Development Advisory Group – I guess we will have to call it DAG – chaired by the new Chief

Scientist, Dr Jim Peacock. After the delay in publishing the EAG report, it now appears that the DAG is taking some time to get up and running, with a first meeting scheduled for June (six months after the EAG report was ready) and with some tricky problems to sort out in the area of assessing research impact. 2008 now looks more likely than 2007.

Meanwhile, changes are afoot with the mother of all research assessments, the UK RAE. It has long been expected that the 2008 RAE would be the last of its kind. After 22 years and six implementations of the exercise, there's a strong view that the RAE has delivered what it was intended to deliver – a concentration of funding around those departments and universities deemed to be internationally excellent in research, a more planful and managed approach to research, a demonstrable improvement in the quality of research and a consequent increase in the Treasury's allocation of funding for university research.

News of the 'death of the RAE' has been welcomed by some in Australia. It's worth looking at the metrics-based approach that is being proposed in its place. UK Treasury is in favour of a single metric – research income. Under the UK's dual support system, each university receives research income (1) in its block grant at a level determined by the RAE results of its constituent departments (this is known as QR income) and (2) through project-based funding from the research councils, charities, industry, etc. There is now a very strong correlation ($r=0.98$) between the income a university receives from the UK research councils and the income it receives as QR. The same figure applies if one correlates QR with research income from all sources (HM Treasury, 2006, pp31-33). The Treasury argument is simple: why run two exercises (research council peer review of project proposals; RAE) when they come to the same conclusions? The counterargument is that the RAE is not just about the distribution of funds – and reputational advantage - between universities, it is also concerned with distributions between disciplines. While a shift to research income

as the single metric might make sense across the HE system as a whole, it will disadvantage those institutions that have done better with QR than they have with the funding councils. Typically these are institutions with a higher than average proportion of their work in the humanities and social sciences. Depending on institutions' internal allocation policies, it could also be expected to disadvantage humanities and social sciences departments vis-à-vis those in science and technology. Recognising these difficulties, the UK Department for Education & Skills (c.f. DEST) has set up an enquiry into the use of metrics for assessing research quality, co-chaired by the outgoing head of the UK Arts & Humanities Research Council and due to report by October.

So...let's not look to the UK for salvation. We already have a dual support system in which the bulk of research 'block grant' is given pro-rata research income. We're trying to improve on that, in particular by including some assessment of research quality and impact that will encourage us to produce more research that people want to read, think about and use. The present system encourages us to publish more stuff, not better stuff.

Suggestions from closer to home are worth considering. Simon Marginson and Allan Luke recently made some proposals about university research funding in the *Financial Review* (3 April 2006). They celebrate the scrapping of what they call the UK RAE's 'William the Conqueror-style Domesday Book census of every research product and every researcher in the UK' and encourage the minister and the DAG to consider shifting emphasis to the quality of publications and selective peer-review:

1. An allocation of baseline research funding on the basis of research quantity, using a formula similar to the present institutional grant scheme but with more weighting for publications and less for income. This keeps all universities and younger

researchers in the game.

2. A first-tier top-up determined by journal quality and citation impact, which would reward excellence and impact, and modify the quantity distribution under 1.
3. A major second-tier top-up in which resources would be allocated to leading research centres and teams, on the basis of portfolio submissions, chosen by international peer panels.

(Luke & Marginson, 2006).

In weighing up their analysis, we ought first to note that the UK RAE, unlike the DEST annual publications data collection round (HERDC), is *not* an exhaustive exercise. The only publications considered by the RAE panels are the 'four best' submitted for each researcher. 'Domesday Book census' is what we currently endure in Australia. It was only tried once in the UK (in the 1992 RAE) and was found too expensive to be worth the bother.

Allan and Simon's proposal comes down to (a) a shift in the weight attached to the volume of publications (b) the introduction of additional funding based on measures of publication quality, (c) further additional funding based on selective international peer-review of cases made by 'leading centres and teams'. It would be good to hear some more detail on this – more than the *Financial Review* can afford – but I have two main worries. First, any attempt to increase significantly the funding that flows from publications counts will raise the stakes of the HERDC exercise, strengthening temptations to inflate the counts and bringing down on us a heavier auditing process. My guess is that the internal costs to Australian universities of the annual HERDC are greater than the internal data-gathering costs to UK universities of the (roughly quinquennial) RAE. Any 'top up' funding would need to be large enough to outweigh the increased compliance costs. Second, the top-up based on

review by international peer panels looks dangerously like an RAE or RQF, but with less money to distribute. Who gets to decide which research centres and teams are 'leading' (and eligible to submit a portfolio)? If it's open to everyone to submit a portfolio, how does this differ from an RAE/RQF?

A final point. It would be great to be able to 'keep everyone in the game'. The distribution of funding in the current system patently fails to do this.

Peter Goodyear,
University of Sydney
AARE Executive Member
P.Goodyear@edfac.usyd.edu.au

References

HM Treasury. (2006). *Science and innovation investment framework 2004-2014: next steps*. London: HMSO. Accessed 28-4-06 at http://www.ost.gov.uk/policy/science_consult.htm

Luke, A & Marginson, S (2006), Quality quest fails many tests, *Financial Review*, 3-4-06. [Also in this edition of AARE NEWS No.54].

RQF website:
http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/research_quality_framework/

+++++

WHY DID THE CD 2005 TAKE SO LONG?

It was a messy business with too many people putting in their papers late [not at the conference desk as requested] and far too many file faults [not pdf, read-only, missing author names] and files not on the disks handed in!

Then there was the business of checking for bad debtors. People who attended conference but didn't pay were not entitled to the CD and will not get it.

Bad debtors are not allowed to present at future AARE conferences till the debt is settled.



What were the big questions and how did we address them? Some questions for the future of educational research in Australia

A discussion paper for the AARE Meeting of Australian Research Directors in Education, UTS, April 28, 2006.

Alison Lee, Faculty of Education, UTS

I first presented some of these questions at the Research Directors Symposium titled *Positioning for the RQF; what can education researchers do?* chaired by Terri Seddon at AARE Conference 2005 in Parramatta last December. My current title is posed as a hypothetical question posed to research leaders, asking us to engage in a fictional retrospective imagining of the futures we are currently planning and debating. I've done this by way of an adjustment to the focus of many of the discussions about the RQF in my own institution and more broadly within the educational research community. My aim is to find ways to raise our eyes and look critically to the road ahead at the same time as keeping a careful eye on the urgencies and uncertainties of the present.

The RQF is an immediate concern in policy terms, as many aspects remain unresolved. However, the need for a strong and coherent voice and position from within Education has never been more urgent. The lines of questioning I have put in these recent discussion forums have been shaped by this concern. It seems to me that there is currently a

needs-driven opportunity to engage in strong discussion about imagined and desired futures as the RQF scenarios roll out during this year and the next. I write from the position of someone working in an Education Faculty with its own specific history and ecology and set of questions and this constructs the particular angle from which I view the developments but I believe there are many shared across the sector.

My first and general question concerns the future of the 'reputation issue' for educational research within policy and the media and the popular imagination. There has been a tendency perhaps to telescope the 'problem with educational research' as being generated from and by the RQF. Yet education has suffered from a reputation problem in this country and elsewhere at least from the time of the rise of post-positivist epistemologies, the 'qualitative revolution' and the post-Dawkins UNS and attendant expansion of doctoral education and research activity. Internationally, educational research has been charged with an 'awful reputation' for over a decade (Kaestle, 1993) and the debates go on. The present anxieties about research assessment, funding and standing are situated within that history. My question is directed to the need to remember and better understand that history in order to position the field differently for this imagined future.

My second, more specific question concerns the rhetorical celebration of 'diversity' in educational practice and research. What are the consequences of continuing to affirm our diversity as a research field? What would it mean to question it? In *Higher Education at the Crossroads*, in 2002, Brendan Nelson drew attention to the problem of 'unplanned diversity' across the Australian higher education sector and argued for a more planned and principled diversification. A few years earlier, Stephen Kemmis and colleagues outlined a set of 'dilemmas of diversity' (Kemmis et al 1999) that might be helpful for thinking about questions of homogenisation and convergence vs scale and focus in the future decade or so.

My third question relates to the problem of parochialism and the need to think beyond the nation state in imagining where the research field of education might sit at the end of the next decade. Much Australian educational research remains strongly defined by the conceptual and political boundaries of the nation state. How might a program of research be imagined in terms that intervene in that? How does the field engage in local and policy-relevant research while engaging in the imagining and creation of other possibilities that generate tools for the construction of different futures?

My fourth question concerns the growing role of education and learning in the organisation of social life and the need to disengage the question of education from that of its traditional home in the schooling sector. What might it mean to think about the increasing reach of education and learning into all domains of social life – what Bernstein has called the 'pedagogisation' of the social? What is the particular expertise of Education as a research field in this radically shifting social climate and how do we know? In my own Faculty we have been engaging closely with learning in sectors other than the school for most of our history, based on our earlier history as an amalgamation of a vocational teacher education college and a more traditional school-based CAE. Workplace, organisational and professional, as well as higher education contexts are the settings for research into the changing nature of post-school and non-school learning. How might the agendas of different sectors within the educative project be brought together more strategically and productively?

A related question is what might be a changing role for education in the university? As the university gears up to more critical engagement in its educative role through the policy engineering of the Teaching and Learning Performance Fund and the establishment of the Carrick Institute, as well as an increasing need to educate students for mobile careers and life-long learning, where will the specialised expertise of educational researchers reside in the changing

scene and how do we know and communicate the relevance of our knowledge in these different settings? (Lee 2005)

My final question relates to the engines for the shaping of educational research futures. The decade or two in which the current generation of research leaders received their intellectual trainings were times of both expansion in the scale of doctoral education and educational research and also major shifts in the paradigms for research. It may or may not be a matter of chance that the era of 'de-sciencing' of educational research coincided with its great expansion. Whatever the cause, the shaping of dispositions to knowledge making through doctoral education has taken a distinctly qualitative turn. Recent policy-driven and other intellectual pressures for a 'return to science' have also coincided with the increase in government intervention in research directions, currently through the RQF. What kinds of skills and dispositions are being produced through the doctoral programs and pedagogies currently at work in Education faculties around the country? What consequences might these trainings have for the ability of educational research to respond to the changing environment?

What capacities and dispositions are needed in researchers to meet the challenges of the next decade? How are they different from the capacities and dispositions produced in us and our current doctoral students?

Thinking about the assessment of the educational research that will have been produced over the next decade is a tool for assisting us to look ahead. We have been charged with the task of building a coherent face to enter into dialogue with the shapers of the assessment tools for the present. I would suggest that these, or other, big questions for the near future are questions for debate.

References

Kaestle, C (1993) The Awful Reputation of Educational Research, *Educational Researcher*, 22 (1), pp, 23-31.

Kemmis, S. with Marginson, S, Porter, P & Rizvi, F (1999)

Enhancing Diversity in Australian Higher Education: A Discussion Paper. (paper commissioned by UWA and conducted by Stephen Kemmis Research & Consulting, http://www.acs.uwa.edu.au/open_discuss/)

Lee, A (2005) *Knowing our Business: the role of education in the university*, 6th discussion paper of the Australian Council of Deans of Education, <http://www.acde.edu.au/discussion.htm>

Nelson, B (2002) *Higher Education at the Crossroads*, Ministerial Discussion Paper



Research Higher Degrees and the RQF

Jinghe Han

Several key questions need to be asked regarding the RQF and RHD degrees (and education research more generally) Questions which might be asked of RHD proposals, thesis proposals include:

1. is this an uncritical celebration of unplanned "diversity" that unintentionally gives license to poor quality, individualistic research?
2. is this an instance of parochialism in education research, limited to nationally-focused research and failing to take up the challenge to think (and act) beyond national boundaries?
3. has this RHD proposal been re-shaped so that it moves away from an individualistic focus; too a more rigorous stand on expected quality and impact?

4. does this proposal heighten the aspirational level for this RHD degree student?
5. does this project markedly enhance the research expertise of this RHD student?

Those who gained their doctorates in education in the 1980s and 90s did so during a quite different era to now with the RQF. Their sense of education research was formed and informed according to the conditions prevailing at the time. This was a time when there was an expansion in education research and increasing studies in research higher degrees. It was an era which institutionalised the hegemony of qualitative research methods, at the expense of developing expertise that could mix quantitative and qualitative research at the micro and macro levels. PhD training tended to emphasise one-to-one supervision; and research projects were largely concerned with the pursuit of individual self-interest. Even then education research had problems with its standing in terms of quality, peer esteem and impact value. Lyn Yates (2005) has provided a valuable resource for the education research community to elaborate upon in addressing the debate about the quality of education research.

Strong indicators of quality research include the capacity to attract research income and timely PhD completions. [reference?] The linking of these two aspects may have important implications for the future of education research under the RQF. At the moment many PhD students in education are part-time. Consideration might be given to how much of a problem is their relatively high attrition rate and their unavailability to work on funded projects.

Tackling research quality means ensuring a much better clarification of research expectations and research paradigms; addressing the quality of research proposals/applications, and improved participants' understandings of the research assessment process.

Research significance

What were the big questions that education researchers have dealt with? What were the big things that education research missed out addressing? What are the big things that now need to be addressed?

There are problems with the narrow or limited horizon of the research questions being tackled by education researchers. Thus, for instance, if education researchers want to ask questions about problems which governments now have to deal with, then they might consider questions of the order of: "What happens when you have a global water shortage?" Research applications need to be written in ways that explain and justify themselves in less parochial terms than merely what the present government is interested in.

Would it be possible, if desirable, for a Faculty/School of professional association to publish briefs reporting it research findings in ways that members of the research community would find agreement?

At a recent AARE Conference [AARE Focus Conference 2005], Pat Thomson suggested the production of research briefs which could be agreed upon by the education research community. Maybe these would tend to be statements about what does not work. They could also be records of debates of research-based findings, that draw nuanced conclusions and judgements. These could be part of the record demonstrating expertise within that education research community. Such policy briefs could document what is agreed upon in the research literature, what the key debates are, and what judgement might be made about the current state of knowledge.

Reference

Yates, L Is Impact a measure of quality? Producing quality research and producing quality indicators of research in Australia. Keynote address AARE Focus Conference 2005.



From the Research Development Coordinator

On Friday 28th April AARE hosted an Australian Research Directors in Education (ARDE) Workshop at University of Technology Sydney.

The purpose of this meeting was:

- to determine interest in the formation of an ARDE group much like the DDOGS (Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies) to share information, provide support and assist in AARE's quick response to requests for input into the RQF process and other policy processes;
- to discuss recent developments re the RQF and specifically to prepare responses to questions for any representative from education at the next RQF workshop on criteria for quality and impact;
- to discuss other matters of interest to people in this position; and
- to set an agenda for a September mini-conference/workshop

Participants were invited via the Australian Council of Deans group email list and through some web searching. This process has provided a list of around 40 interested people, 32 of whom attended the workshop.

After a brief overview of the day, participants introduced themselves and described their role and how their institutions had responded thus far to the RQF. This was a telling indication of the ways the RQF has been interpreted and

anticipated variously by institutions – some institutions have had quite sophisticated mock audits and others were willing to wait and see; some had already defined staff as research active or inactive and instituted measures such as performance based funding and others had engaged in a development strategy – this was particularly the case where Early Career Researchers made up a considerable proportion of staff. In general, however, the feeling seemed to be that for all of its problematic features, the RQF has the *potential* to lift the profile of research and to foster discussions of quality and what is worth doing in terms of research. A particularly pertinent comment from my perspective was made about the various ways our universities have pre-empted the RQF policy, and how education faculties have moved into defensive mode because of some anticipated (and not necessarily actual) fear of not measuring up. This led naturally into the later discussion of some of the criteria currently being used and how relevant these are as indicators of quality and impact for education.

The rest of the morning was taken up with presentations to lead into a workshop at the end of the day where we considered key questions about educational research, its quality and impact.

Professor Sue Rowley, Pro-Vice Chancellor Research at UTS, provided a very useful perspective from her experience as Chair of the Humanities ARC Panel and as a long time researcher in Creative Arts. She underscored the importance of education informing the assessment process by identifying the metrics that would work for the field in determining quality and impact. She set a number of challenges for the rest of the day: education needs to be clear about what works for us, while at the same time being clear that whatever is decided will drive behaviour.

In her presentation, *Educational Research 2006-2116: What were the big questions and how did we address them?*, Alison Lee urged educational researchers to raise their eyes 'beyond current preoccupations with threats from RQF formulae [and] to consider what we might want to stand for as

a research field over the next decade or so.' She posed several key questions that the group as education research directors could be thinking about in relation to a hypothetical review in ten years time:

What will have been the big educational issues over the decade that the educational research field needed to have been grappling with? What has 'diversity' meant in relation to the shaping and positioning of the field, what has been its value and how would we measure that locally, nationally and internationally? What kinds of new researchers, with what capacities and are being produced through this next generation of doctoral trainings? How has the last generation of doctoral graduates shaped the next decade of research? What will have been the role of Education within the changing university? What new questions are emerging that require a coherent response from the educational research field?

Peter Goodyear then talked about lessons to be learned from the UK RAE exercise Key points from his presentation are taken up in his contribution to this newsletter and in his paper with Derrick Armstrong in the RARE publication, *Counterpoints on Quality and Impact in Educational Research*.

After lunch, Terri Seddon made links between the research quality agenda and ARC. She suggested that 'in a higher education research environment focused (and funded) on the basis of research quality and impact, the ARC is a key agency in recognising and institutionalizing definitions of research excellence.' Yet a diverse research field, like education, she argued, tends to rub up against the grain of this institutionalized definition relative to other, more homogeneous research fields.

The interfaces between the education research community and the ARC's peer-review process (at the points of application, assessment and definitions of quality) are sites where there can be translation of these discourses – where the education research community

can speak back to nuance the definition of excellence that has been institutionalized through the peer-review process and where understandings of what counts as quality in education research can be generalized amongst education researchers. The Arts community, for instance, has strengthened understandings of research in the Arts by identifying indicators of quality in terms of types of exhibitions and gallery hierarchies. These indicators have in turn been taken up and used by the Arts research community to justify the kind of research they do and to inform research training. While there were differing points of view on this position, there is scope for further discussion of these issues in the field.

One of the contentious RQF issues on which researchers in education need to have a position is journal rankings. Do we want to use 'impact' factors as an indicator of research quality? If not what other measures might we propose and would these include tiering journals? The answer to the first questions seems to be a resounding 'no', however the second is more difficult. Some universities have already developed a hierarchy of education journals, clustered in tiers. It does seem that some kind of ranking may be necessary if as field we are to provide a metric indicator of quality. To help the participants in their thinking about this issue, Allyson Holbrook was asked to describe a project being conducted under the auspices of SORTI at the University of Newcastle which has developed a list of 1000 journals for a commercial venture called the International Guide to Publishing in Education. Their brief has been to provide all the information that academics might need about journals to choose potential sites for publication: e.g. information on the refereeing process, numbers of issues, turn around times, preferred page lengths of articles and so on. It is hoped that the SORTI group will work with AARE to use this information to develop tiers of journals which can then be refined in consultation with the education research community.

The remainder of the day was spent considering issues that had arisen in the earlier discussion: the use of bibliometric indicators in the

assessment of research quality; representing the scope and internal structure of educational research; making defensible claims about the quality and impact of educational research. Working groups made some progress on these issues and, in particular, identified some action points for ARDE network task groups to tackle in the next few months. A progress report will be given in the July AARE News.

A listserv will be established by AARE of all participants at the workshop and those who have already expressed an interest but could not attend. It is not intended that the listserv or the group that participates in the workshops and listserv discussion be exclusive. Anyone who is involved in research leadership at their institution and wants to be included on the listserv should send their email address to the AARE Office (aare@aare.edu.au). One of the main purposes of the listserv, in the near future, will be to enable the education research community to be responsive to the RQF process.

Jan Wright
AARE Research Development
Coordinator, President-Elect.



AARE is setting up a listserv for the ARDE group. We have several list services that were set up for various SIGs but they are seldom used.

Mechanisms for conversations outside of the proximate work environment exist but they are not being used. What is the problem?

Asynchronous technology such as email list servers are not active.

Synchronous technology such as webex is not yet used interactively.

Not only are we not communicating with each other

outside institutions and world wide but I am informed that there is now much less informal discussion within institutions – everyone is busy teaching or beavering away on their research in their offices.

Can we try to break that up to let education use modern speedy debate and discussion methods? Do we need facilitators, mentors, initiators, change agents, irritating active agitators -- to set up and press people into communicating frequently and often in a timely manner using technology?

Peter Jeffery
AARE Website Manager
pjeff@aare.edu.au



AARE has a “media weapon” in the fight for immediacy

AARE can make an immediate response to government moves or media hype of concern to us by using WebEx. At any time we can do a real-time meeting and share documents, vision and sound for up to 125 participants - completely free of charge.

Meetings can be set up within minutes or pre-scheduled for particular times. They can be done from your desktop without the need for special video conferencing equipment.

One member planning a symposium for Adelaide 2006 that includes some American colleagues, is planning to have them in the symposium “live” from the USA, presenting their work personally although they can't come to Adelaide physically.

Contact me if you want an introduction to this simple technology that I do from my home office. I have a seven year old boy that I'm tutoring in reading via webex. He is a dab hand at webex from his home to me in mine! What about you?

Peter Jeffery
pjeff@aare.edu.au



Early Career Researcher News

Joanne Dwyer

Early Career Researchers and Today's Competitive Research Context

Australian universities as we know are highly competitive funding environments. For those new to academic life, it is difficult to compete with those researchers who are well-known and well-established when it comes to grant funding. As funding dollars are tight, not only are we competing against with researchers from other universities but often with those from our own. The RQF appears to be exacerbating this issue.

The many discussions I have taken part in in my own university, discussion papers I have read from other universities as well as publications in the area have commonly raised the awareness that early career researchers need support in breaking into this current research environment.

There are however some issues regarding early career researchers that appear to be working against this openness for support.

Firstly there appears to be a lack of agreed term of what defines an early career researcher. We may be defined as "within five years after the completion of a PhD", or "in the first five years of your first academic appointment, whether you have a PhD or not". There's a marked difference here. There are a substantial number of people who identify themselves as early career researcher; there were 205 of us at the 2005 AARE conference. It appears that this lack of agreed definition is one that needs to be clarified if early career

researchers are to be identified and supported. Furthermore, a person's stage of career is not easily identifiable on grant submissions. In this way we are competing directly against those who have had many years of research success, particularly in the prestigious research finding schemes. As Pat Bazeley (2003) states, those who win large ARC project grants almost always have a strong publication record, a history of involvement in previous ARC grants and are of full professorial status, or collaborating with someone who is. This is difficult and disheartening for new researchers. If we are to be supported as a group, special consideration needs to be given to early career researchers so that we are not up for direct competition.

There is the expectation that all researchers whether they are early career or well-established conduct quality and meaningful research. If the research context is increasing competitiveness amongst researchers then supporting early career researchers and potential future research leaders requires affirmative action within institutions.

Reference

Bazeley, P. (2003). Defining "early career" in research. *Higher Education*, 45:257-279. workshops.

+++++



Message from the Adelaide Conference convenor: Marie Brennan

This is a really critical time for educational researchers to stick together, to practise our scholarly community via presentation and peer discussion – I can't think of a time in recent years when this has been so important as right now. The annual conference is our best means for promoting debate, keeping our focus on research

(and not just managing it!) and advancing our field's knowledge production. Many countries are going through assessment exercises and quality control of educational research. Our international colleagues who attend – or read our papers online – will have much to share on this, as well as on their substantive areas of research.

We have a great line up of keynote speakers: Professor Pat Thomson – Nottingham University; Professor Maggie MacLure, Manchester Metropolitan University, and Professor Fazal Rizvi, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. In addition, our presidential address from Professor Michael Singh, will be a drawcard. Already the numbers of paper submissions is high. 270 early in the week ahead of the deadline. Most of the early birds have already been reviewed and processed. It will take a few weeks to finish processing the usual heap that arrive on the deadline (Mine I think was after 11pm on the last night!), so it promises to offer a wide range of papers and symposia. We will be offering some important symposia on a wide range of topics – Literacies, Indigenous Knowledges, VET, HOT pedagogies, research quality, to name only a few.

In case you haven't got the details right to hand, put the Adelaide conference link: <http://www.aare.edu.au/conf2006/index.htm> into your favourites! Dates: Sunday November 27 – Thursday November 30. Stay for the whole time to capitalise on the investment, do good networking, engage in critical debates, attend book launchesand eat, drink and be merry. The conference dinner on the Tuesday night is at the National Wine Centre, and we'll be offering Haighs Chocolates for dessert after the entrée and main course. In addition, we are placing eminent researchers at strategic dinner venues on the Monday to encourage people to mix, meet their particular colleagues, or the person that has written so much on x, y or z..... You'll get your chance to book into these other dinner venues closer to the conference but book early for the Conference Dinner as space is quite limited. Accommodation will also need to be booked as early

as possible. The Ashes are on and we can expect the POMS to be here in force this year. So visit the links provided on the conference site – South Australian Tourism especially has some good deals, along with the rest of the search engines. Serviced apartments are often a good way to go if you book early. There are quite a lot within an easy walk of the venues on North terrace, just up the road from the library, museum, gallery and so on.

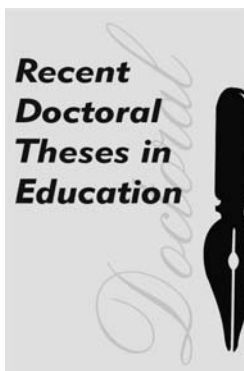
Adelaide gives you a great venue: it's only 10 minutes taxi ride from the airport; accommodation in the city or North Adelaide is relatively cheap; city restaurants are within a few minutes walk and have a great deal to offer. It will be a comparatively cheap as conferences go, so please book now! book your students; your colleagues and your own time. Educational research is part of what makes work worthwhile. Please help keep it that way.

Submission of abstracts is now closed, and fully refereed papers need to be with the Secretariat by the end of May. I think Peter Jeffrey has found us all fans for our satchels in case summer comes early but it is usually gorgeous early summer weather at that time. If you are refereeing, please get the responses back in time: it doesn't take that long, really, and adds to our conference rationale for many members.

I look forward to a splendid time and welcoming as many of you as possible to Adelaide.

Marie Brennan
Convenor AARE 2006
Conference.

The next AARE Executive meeting will be held in Sydney on 19th June. All members having business for AARE may contact the Hon. Secretary to suggest agenda items.



RECENT DOCTORAL THESES IN EDUCATION

RECENT DOCTORAL THESES IN EDUCATION

The column in AARE News dedicated to publishing news on recent doctoral theses in education. The Education Research Theses (ERT) available at ACER can be accessed via <http://www.acer.edu.au/library/catalogues/theses.html>.

Stuart Hughes from ACER contacted me recently to notify some changes. I've included the information below.

As of April 2006 there are 73 new records for theses, and there are some new enhancements with the ERT database for institutional subscribers being upgraded. New ERT features include:

- A Quick Search.
- A Latest Additions page: sign up for alerts when new theses are added.
- A Theses by University page: an easy way to check whether we have the latest theses from your institution.
- An about page: info on submitting, obtaining, and digitizing theses, and theses links.
- Search results can now be sorted by year, author or title.
- Improved date searching.

The site also has added new access points on the theses entry page - if users happen to be browsing our site or otherwise find their way to the URL above, we direct them to their institutional authentication points for access to ERT, ensuring they can make the most of their access privileges, even if they haven't come from a resources pages at their own institution. Please check your

access point and let us know if there are problems. We've already noticed an increase in ERT usage as a result of this. ERT feedback - and tip-offs about new theses - is always welcome.

The abstracts below have been taken from the Cunningham Library. I have not been able to include names of supervisors because these are not listed on the database. Abstracts of completed doctoral theses can be sent to me at:

vharwood@uow.edu.au

Guidelines for your submission can be found in AARE News Issue 42 (available on AARE's website). Please note that *we are now publishing the names of candidates' supervisor(s)*, to include them in the celebration of the work completed.

Some key points to remember are:

- the abstract must be no longer than 300 words
- the thesis must be recently conferred by your institution (last 6-12 months)
- the abstract is from a doctoral thesis (PhD or EdD), and from an education faculty/department/school in an Australian University
- Include your name, postal address, email, and the name of the conferring institution
- Include your supervisor(s) names

Valerie Harwood
Executive Member

Dr M. McMaster
A theory of the university organisation as diarchy : understanding how deans and faculty managers in Australian universities work together across academic and administrative domains.

DEd
University of Melbourne
2005

Abstract

Changes in higher education have given rise to new management roles in Australian universities. These include the emergence of the professional university administrator and new

responsibilities for senior staff such as deans and faculty managers. The thesis contends that these changes have led to increased role conflict between administrative and academic staff and the evolution of dual authority structures in universities. It demonstrates that existing theories are not adequate to explain practices, relationships, and roles in contemporary universities. The study proposes a new theory of the university organisation as a diarchy. This theory is derived from an analysis of interviews with deans and faculty managers in seven Australian universities. The theoretical framework used for this part of the study, the layered systems model, emphasises the need to consider multiple perspectives in any organisational analysis. The empirical study finds evidence from multiple sources to support the existence of the diarchy: an administrative and an academic domain with distinct assumptions about the nature of work, structures and processes, and the basis of authority. The diarchy is most evident in informal structures such as the working relationships between pairs of deans and faculty managers. The study finds that partnerships between these pairs vary in ways not related to their formal responsibilities nor the particular faculty or university environment. Three models are identified: the nested partnership, the conjoint partnership, and the segmented partnership. There is a positive correlation between identification of deans and faculty managers with either the administrative or academic domain and the partnership style of a particular pair. The findings of the study provide new insights into the debate about collegial and managerialist models of universities, and suggest strategies that could be used by universities to support the professionalisation of administrators and to shape work cultures to align with institutional goals.

Dr J. Mitchell
EdD
The management of flexible learning in vocational education and training.
Institution
Deakin University
2005

Abstract
This research shows that, to function effectively in a changing environment that includes the convergence of online learning and e-business, managers in the vocational education and training sector need an increasingly sophisticated conceptual framework and set of business skills that appropriately draw on contemporary business management theory and practice.

Dr M.C. Haseloff
Aligning disparate practical theories for pedagogic change.
PhD
University of Adelaide
2005

Abstract
Amidst intensifying demands for simultaneous improvement of current performance, adoption of priorities relinquished by other community organisations, and innovation to meet future educational challenges, schools are being urged into a paradigm shift in pedagogy. Despite the rich resource of the literature of educational change, deep and sustained change remains partial and scattered. This research examines whether it is the existing individual practical theories about learning, teaching and managing change, and the collective codes held by participants in pedagogic change, that facilitate or block innovation and, if so, what factors shape the outcome. In a qualitative study, participants in structured programs of pedagogic change at the secondary level have described their own experiences. A total of 183 trainee teachers provided reflective written comments on their intensive one-year course, and 36 established teachers and 10 groups of students from two secondary schools were interviewed. The responses have been matched with principles asserted in the literature. Memoirs and transcripts displayed practical theories and collective codes that were firmly grounded in early experiences, prior training and embedded values. They clearly facilitated pedagogic change for some, but blocked it for others. Change, if it occurred at all, was a process of learning to do familiar tasks in a different way. Participants preserved compatible practices, or assimilated new pedagogic knowledge and skills easily, or struggled to accommodate, or

resisted strenuously, according to the practical theories and collective codes that were determining their current practices. Regular and sustained mentoring in an accepted alternative theory within a proximate group brought partial implementation, but contradictory theories amongst participants created serious time barriers and resource poverty. Aligning the disparate theories is the first priority of any plan for innovation.

CRUNCH TIME?

AARE runs on membership funds.

RARE free for FINANCIAL members

AARE is publishing RARE #6 very soon. This 200pp book [a special issue of the AER] is **only going to be available in hard copy**. It will be sent free to all FINANCIAL members. If you have not renewed your membership then you will not get a copy of the RARE sent to you.

RARE #6 will be sold to libraries and individuals for \$44.00 including GST. [An order form is on AARE website.](#)

DON'T USE THE ORDER FORM IF YOU ARE A FINANCIAL MEMBER.
Just sit back and wait for your free copy to arrive by mail.

+++++

Keep your email up to date with AARE Office

We progressively issue information via the email broadcasts. The list is growing as proposals are processed.

SOME IMPORTANT DATES

Proposals [abstracts] for 2006 conf. CLOSED	30th APRIL
Full papers for refereeing final submission	31st MAY
AARE Executive meeting	19th JUNE
Student Travel Awards application CLOSE	30th JUNE
Early Bird [discount] registration CLOSE	31st August
All PRESENTERS wishing to remain in the Program must pay by	30th SEPTEMBER
End of "withdrawals" period. NO SHOW CATEGORY BEGINS	1st OCTOBER

Forthcoming AARE publication

'Counterpoints on the Quality and Impact of Educational Research'

This is a Review of Research in Education (RARE) which will be published as special issue of the Australian Educational Researcher. It draws together key local and overseas authors and commentators to provide a range of views on the public assessment of quality and impact of educational research. It is designed to provide information for those involved in education research to assist in formulating individual and institutional responses to the proposed Research Quality Framework exercise.

This book will be distributed free to all AARE members and sold to non-members.

AARE NEWS 2006

NEWS #	Copy Date	Web Publication	Distribution
# 53 March	1 March	8 March	11 March
# 54 April	1 April	10 April	11 April
# 55 July	1 July	8 July	11 July
# 56 October	1 October	8 Oct	11 Oct

NOTES