

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Volume 2 Number 41, 11 November 2008

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THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

2008 Curriculum Corporation Conference

Speech, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, 10 November 2008

This is an exciting and challenging time in Australian education.

We came to office promising an Education Revolution and work is progressing on many fronts.

We have made significant progress in what will be a sustained, long term agenda.

Over the previous 12 years, under the Howard Government, our education system had been allowed to fall behind. It has suffered more than a decade of neglect.

Lack of investment in early years and in tertiary education became a national embarrassment when Australia was compared to the rest of the world.

National schools policy encouraged division and stagnation, exacerbating the public-private divide and diverting attention from deeper issues of quality and equity.

We have set a different course. Our argument was based on two principles.

First, the world is changing in ways that make education more vital than ever. Reform and innovation, supported of course by investment, are urgent priorities.

Second, our approach to education is about excellence and equity, productivity and participation.

Read more at

<http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/2008CurriculumCorporationConference.htm>

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TOWARDS A NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Building lessons

Farrah Tomazin, Education Editor, The Age, November 3 2008

ENGLISH teacher Tony Thompson has corrected his fair share of assignments over the past 15 years. Some are clear and concise - the work of students highly proficient in constructing sentences and analysing texts. Others are not quite as impressive - words are wrongly spelt, punctuation is patchy and meanings are mixed up.

Yet Thompson remains unconvinced that standards are slipping in schools - or that the solution, at least in part, rests with the creation of a new and more robust national curriculum.

"Most of the students that I teach have fairly solid literacy skills, and I think Australia as a country has very high literacy rates," says Thompson, an English co-ordinator at Princes Hill Secondary College.

"Of course, as an English teacher, I wish all students could read and write well - and of course I have strugglers. But that's what I'm here for. I'm certainly not at panic stations about literacy levels."

Some, however, disagree. A national literacy and numeracy test of more than 1 million primary and secondary students earlier this year showed one in five could not do better than the minimum standard for reading and writing. The same figure applied in maths. In the area of science, a report released by the Federal Government last week showed student participation had dropped markedly over the past 30 years, while in history, only around 50% of secondary students are interested enough in the past to take on the subject.

It is within this context that state and federal governments have embarked on the ambitious task of setting up a new curriculum for kindergarten to year 12 in each of those four key subjects.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/building-lessons-20081102-5g8e.html?page=-1>

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DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Education in 2015: Cyberlearning for digital natives

John Knox, Techworld, 3 November 2008

Almost hidden by a boxy lectern, researcher and author Christine Borgman stood before a couple hundred college and university education IT professionals and gave them the Vision Thing.

At last week's annual Educause conference in the US, Borgman outlined what learning might look like in 2015, just seven years from now, if educators, teachers, researchers and policy makers systematically leverage emerging technology trends.

Those trends include pervasive high-bandwidth wireless networks; cloud-based processing; and fast-growing repositories of digital information, including a rising tide of data from networked sensors and information analysis tools.

Her presentation was based on the recently released report by the US National Science Foundation's Task Force on Cyberlearning, which Borgman chaired. The report, "Fostering Learning in the Networked World: The Cyberlearning Opportunity and Challenge" is available online.

Read more at

http://www.techworld.com.au/article/265684/education_2015_cyberlearning_digital_natives

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

ABC Learning - Administration and Receivership

Media Release, 6 November 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard has welcomed the receivers of ABC Learning Centres, McGrathNicol, commitment to keeping the child care centres open and that they would continue to operate as usual.

The Australian Government has been in discussions with creditors, particularly the banking syndicate of international and Australian banks who have appointed the receiver, to support continuity of service delivery to provide some comfort to parents and employees.

Read more at

<http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/ABCLearningAdministrationandReceivership.htm>

Radio National Breakfast Interview - Fran Kelly

Transcript, 7 November 2008

FRAN KELLY: Will there be another injection of funds beyond that general subsidy per child to keep these child care centres? Is that was the receiver has asked you for? Is that what the Government will have to do?

JULIA GILLARD: Well the Government is in discussions Fran and those discussions will continue. What's our priority? Make sure centres are there giving care.

FRAN KELLY: I know. You seem reluctant to answer this, I'm not sure why. Don't taxpayers have the right to know whether taxpayers' money will be used to basically essentially bailout a private company, even though we might all be supportive of trying to keep these child care centres going?

JULIA GILLARD: Well, there are discussions to be had here Fran, and they will be had.

Read more at

<http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/RadioNationalBreakfastInterviewFranKelly.htm>

ABC Learning Centres - Ten News

Transcript, 7 November 2008

BILL WOODS: There are reports in the industry today, the administrator is saying the Federal Government needs to kick in \$60 million just to keep the centres open until Christmas, is that the sort of contribution you are prepared to make if not to go as far as ownership?

JULIA GILLARD: I have seen those reports. What I can say is we are in discussion with the banks, who are creditors of ABC Learning and with the receiver. We are working with them and we want to make sure child care centres are there for people to rely on.

Read more at

<http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/ABCLearningCentresTenNews.htm>

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Government delivers \$22m to ensure child care centres remain open

Media Statement, 7th November 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard has today announced that the Australian Government has reached an agreement with the receiver of ABC Learning and the lending syndicate to provide certainty for affected parents, their children and employees until at least 31 December 2008.

The Australian Government has committed up to \$22m conditional funding to ensure that all ABC Learning child care centres remain open and providing care until 31 December 2008.

Read more at <http://www.alp.org.au/media/1108/msed070.php>

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ABC Learning

Transcript, ABC Radio National Life Matters, 11 November 2008

RICHARD AEDY: Looking a bit more broadly at how this happened and perhaps at the future of child care of Australia, ABC Learning still does account for a quarter of the private child care sector. How healthy is that?

JULIA GILLARD: Well I've indicated publicly, I'm very concerned about how we got to this situation. And I think we got here because in 1999, the former government took the caps of child care off the number of places.

Now taking the caps off the number of places was not an error. Obviously we needed to respond to growing demand.

What was an error though was taking the caps off the number of child care places and then not closely managing the development of the child care system afterwards.

So when we came to Government there were no National Quality Standards for child care, there was no national workforce plan, although centres around the country were telling us they couldn't get the qualified staff that they needed.

There was no view about bringing child care to places that were undersupplied. There was really no view about how this system was going to be managed and developed and kept sustainable for the long term.

And since our election, we've worked through those issues one by one.

We're working through National Quality Standards and Maxine McKew, the Parliamentary Secretary, is leading that endeavour.

We've introduced new workforce measures - paying the TAFE fees of people who want to be child care workers so they don't have to pay; making sure that there are more university places for the people who do early childhood education; and we've got our policy to develop up to 260 new centres around the country.

Now, of course, we need to also respond to these circumstances with ABC Learning.

But what's it telling us generally?

What it's telling us generally is this has been an unmanaged system with a national government that wasn't keeping its eyes on the situation and wasn't working through the policy issues.

This Government takes a very different view. There's nothing more important to us than early learning and child care.

Read more at <http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/ABCLearning.htm>

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SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

Why don't you understand?

Dorothy Lepkowska, The Guardian, Tuesday November 11 2008

Teachers' tolerance levels were never very high where Ieuan Pakenham was concerned. The boy, who has autism and dyspraxia, was noisier than many other children with his condition and would become frustrated easily, especially in a confined space.

"Ieuan was perceived as being badly behaved and I would receive phone calls from the school telling me what he had done now, rather than asking me for advice on how to deal with it," says his mother, Deborah Pakenham.

"He had a statement of special needs from the age of four and was assigned a learning support assistant when he went to primary school, but she was more like a babysitter who was there to control him and take him out of lessons if he got disruptive."

The Pakenhams' story is fairly typical of the experiences of thousands of families with autistic children.

A report from the University of Birmingham's Autism Centre for Education and Research, published today, shows that too many teachers and support staff are unfamiliar with the needs of autistic children and struggle to teach them effectively.

"Teachers expected him to behave like everyone else, which was impossible," says Pakenham. "Even though his primary school had a resource base for children on the autistic spectrum there was a fundamental lack of understanding of the condition. It wasn't the fault of the staff. They just didn't have the training."

The Birmingham study is thought to be the first to examine jointly the experiences of families and schools in dealing with the condition.

Read more at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2008/nov/11/special-needs-autistic-children-education>

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AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

NSW: Phantom bus rides cost \$100m

Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, 7 November 2008

MORE than \$200 million of the State Government school transport subsidy is spent on unused bus rides and providing free bus travel for students who bypass public schools to attend private schools, an analysis of Department of Transport figures shows.

The analysis indicates that of the \$470 million it spent on the transport subsidy scheme this year, the State Government paid school bus operators more than \$100 million for student rides that were not taken.

The Greens MP John Kaye said an estimated \$125 million was spent on students riding past their nearest public school to attend a private school.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/phantom-bus-rides-cost-100m/2008/11/06/1225561044316.html>

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NT: NT teachers set to vote on new offer

NT News, November 11th 2008

THE Territory Government's latest pay offer will be put to the teachers' union general membership for a vote.

But Australian Education Union NT branch president-elect Rod Smith said the executive was not recommending the offer.

"We're not going to recommend anything," he said.

"Even if they were offering immortality we won't recommend or reject it."

Read more at http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2008/11/11/15231_ntnews.html

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SA: State Government exceeds \$75,500 in fresh offer to teachers

10 November 2008

Most South Australian teachers would receive over \$75,500 a year under a fresh offer made this afternoon by the State Government.

Announcing details of the new offer, Industrial Relations Minister, Paul Caica, says the State Government has rejected the AEU's revised log of claims seeking an 18 per cent salary rise and has communicated this advice to the Union this afternoon.

"The AEU have been calling publicly for most teachers to achieve a \$75,000 salary and this offer meets that call," Minister Caica said.

Read more at <http://www.premier.sa.gov.au/news.php?id=3922>

VIC: Nominations Open for Excellence in Education

3 November 2008

Principals, school and kindergarten teachers and staff across Victoria are encouraged to highlight their commitment to education excellence and innovation by nominating for the 2009 Victorian Education Excellence Awards.

Education Minister Bronwyn Pike and the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development Maxine Morand today announced nominations are open for the seventh annual Victorian Education Excellence Awards.

"A high quality school education and excellent early childhood services give every child, every opportunity in life, and the Brumby Government recognises that Victoria's education services play a vital role in helping children reach their full potential," Ms Pike said.

"The annual Education Excellence Awards offer an exciting opportunity to recognise and encourage the inspiring, passionate and committed people who help our children and students to thrive, learn and grow," Ms Morand said.

Read more at <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/minister-for-education/nominations-open-for-excellence-in-education.html>

WA: Agreement reached over teachers' pay

3 November 2008

The Western Australian Government and the executive of the State School Teachers' Union have reached a new agreement on a salaries and conditions package for more than 21,000 Government school teachers and administrators.

The agreement, which is subject to acceptance by union members, includes the Liberal Party's pre-election commitment to spend an extra \$120million on teacher salaries.

Premier Colin Barnett said the agreement was reached following the Government's endorsement of further salary increases, in addition to the six per cent increase paid last month.

<http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Lists/Statements/DispForm.aspx?ID=130824>

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Bridging Divides

9-12 July 2009, Wrest Point Conference Centre, Hobart, Tasmania

The organising committee of the 2009 National Conference of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE) and the Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA) invites English and literacy educators to this major event.

The conference title is Bridging Divides: ensuring access, equity and quality in literacy and English education. It will be held in Hobart at the Wrest Point Conference Centre, 9-12 July 2009.

Five outstanding international speakers will deliver plenary addresses at the conference, which will also include presentations by high profile national academics and teacher educators, teachers, authors and students.

The program consists of three and a half days of plenary and keynote presentations and a diverse range of concurrent workshops. A number of Pre-conference Institutes will be held prior to the conference opening. The professional program will be complemented by social activities including a welcome reception, a conference dinner, farewell drinks and other formal and informal activities.

Read more at <http://www.englishliteracyconference.com.au/index.php?id=28&year=09>

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REMINDE RS

17-19 November - International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation - Madrid, Spain - <http://www.iated.org/iceri2008/>

24-26 November - International Conference on Distance Education - Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic - <http://www.icde.org/oslo/icde.nsf/id/05C3211E27B0737DC12573E100405E7F?OpenDocument>

25-28 November - Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future - Geneva, Switzerland - <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/ice.html>

30 November-4 December - Australian Association for Research in Education International Education Conference - Brisbane - <http://www.aare.edu.au/conf2008/index.htm>

7-11 December - World Indigenous Peoples Conference: Education - Melbourne - <http://www.wipce2008.com/>

8-12 December - International Consortium for Experiential Learning - Sydney - <http://www.education.uts.edu.au/icel/index.html>

4-7 January - Hawaii International Conference on Education - Honolulu, USA - <http://www.hiceducation.org/>

18-21 January - Summer School For Australian Teachers - Canberra - <http://www.anu.edu.au/hrc/freilich/>

15-18 April - International Outdoor Education Research Conference - Beechworth, Vic - http://www.latrobe.edu.au/oent/research_conf_2009.htm

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RESOURCE LISTINGS

Passport to Australia: The Australian Travel Game

Find out more about our amazing country the fun way:

Strap yourself in for a learning adventure like no other with Passport to Australia, the new board game from Brisbane based company Barker Boys (Australia) Pty Ltd

This is a fresh and exciting way for players of all ages to learn about Australia – the ultimate board game that takes players on a fantastic journey to every state and territory

The game is a brilliant way to improve your general knowledge on places that are in our own backyard. Though you hardly notice you're learning because it's so easy to get carried away with the thrill of the chase.

New questions will be added to later editions of the game and supplementary question packs will be available online and through recommended retail outlets.

"Best of all, with every purchase of a Passport to Australia buyers will be contributing to the establishment of a school camp to provide learning and recreational experiences for young people," said Managing Director Bruce Barker.

"Our intention is to continue to create opportunities to share knowledge and learn in fun and interesting ways."

Passport to Australia is available through ABC shops, selected retail stores and online at www.passporttoaustralia.com.

For more information: <http://www.passporttoaustralia.com>

LOTE@HOME – Learning languages at home from the early years

"Children who have grown up learning two or more different languages are better problem solvers"

[LOTE@HOME](http://www.lote-at-home.com.au) is an innovative way for parents to participate with their kids as they all learn a second language.

[LOTE@HOME](http://www.lote-at-home.com.au) packs are not intended to replace formal LOTE lessons, however they are intended to build an "in country environment" in the home that will support the formal learning of a second language.

Devised by a parent who was unable to identify an approach to learning a language other than English that focused on a home, family-based setting, these family-friendly kits are now available in five community languages (including Japanese and Mandarin) with others to follow shortly.

By using the cards, and reinforcing words around the house, kids will learn a new language in exactly the same way they learned English - by immersion and absorption.

Find out more: <http://www.lote-at-home.com.au>

Educational Experience

Educational Experience began its operations in Newcastle NSW in 1977 and today is Australia's leading supplier of educational resources and equipment to child care centres, preschools, OOSHs and primary schools. We remain dedicated to the supply of creative and practical ideas to help children learn and develop and are the Teacher's choice for variety, quality and customer service.

At present **Educational Experience's** product range consists of over 8,500 product lines showcased in our annual Teachers Catalogue. Our speedy delivery is recognised as being the most efficient and reliable service offered in the industry. The products sold by **Educational Experience** are sourced from Australian suppliers where possible or imported from reputable international suppliers. To ensure

all our products are of the highest quality and meet safety standards, our suppliers must show product compliance testing to Australian standards.

To view our product range please visit www.edex.com.au

Educational Experience initiated our generous Toys and More fundraiser to help Australian children's education. Early childhood centres and schools who participate in this fundraiser, are rewarded with a credit voucher valued at 20% of the total value ordered by parents and friends and may qualify for additional resources. For more information please visit www.toysandmore.com.au

Educational Experience remains committed to the educational needs of all Australian children.

Educational Experience, PO Box 860, Newcastle NSW 2300

Telephone 02 4923 8222 Fax 02 4942 1991 Toll free 1300 134 211 Email hotline@edex.com.au

Fundraising Directory - www.fundraisingdirectory.com.au Also: www.fetesandfestivals.com.au

Drug Awareness Website - www.drugawareness.com.au/

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ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- **Australian Education Digest** : <http://www.acsso.org.au/aed.htm> (weekly)
- **International News Roundup** : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup.htm> (monthly)
- **Values Education** : <http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- **Languages Education** : <http://www.languageseducation.com/news.htm> (monthly)
- **Ensemble - Music Education** : <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- **Public Education Voice** : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (quarterly)
- **Family School Partners** : http://www.familyschool.org.au/?page_id=6 (quarterly)

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