

Sustainable School Reform: What do we do after the test scores rise and threshold?

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- Cultural practice
- Taxonomy, classification, hierarchy
- Technical vocabulary, register and genre

An overview

- A review of lessons from a decade of Canadian, UK, US, Australian, New Zealand reform
- Successful 'first wave' systems
- A case study: a lower SES primary school 4 years into reform
- Upping the intellectual ante: 'second wave' reform - principles for sustainable achievement gains for 'at risk' students

The story so far...

- Narrow test-driven accountability, standardised curriculum and instruction will not 'close the equity' gap and will generate 'collateral damage'
- These effects include: narrowed curriculum, shaving off of the top end of achievement, deskilled and less adaptable teacher workforce, ignoring of digital, creative and social capacities, 'gaming the system' behaviour by all parties

(Berliner, Nichols, Ravitch, Cuban et al.)

Some further lessons

- Charterisation/privatisation leads to variegated, uneven effects (Ravitch et al.)
- Teacher merit-pay has not yielded systematic improvement (Ingvarsson)
- Streaming/tracking systems increase and exacerbate the equity gap (Oakes, Welner)
- Where test score rises in basic skills are generated – thresholds in higher order, critical and depth work across the curriculum may arise (Garcia et al.)

Principles of first wave success

- Policy balances of “informed professionalism”/“informed prescription” (Schleicher, OECD)
- ‘Cool’ versus ‘hot’ curriculum (Luke, Woods)
- Strong emphasis on initial teacher quality and ongoing professional development – ‘adaptive’ vs ‘routinised’ teaching (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, Cochran-Smith et al.)
- Professional learning communities/industrial settlement focuses on teaching/learning as well as traditional industrial issues (Levin)
- Testing and other forms of assessment used for developmental diagnostic, formative purposes and not for punitive high stakes purposes (Gipps, UK Assessment Reform Group)
- Curriculum/instructional focused school leadership (Robinson, Elmore)
- Supported and scaffolded school-level curriculum work program development (Sahlberg, Elmore)
- Accountability and the building of school/community cultural and governance relationships (Levin, Hargreaves et al)

Some issues facing 'successful' first wave systems and schools

- The fourth/fifth grade slump (Paris, Allington)
- Possible 'Top end' performance declines (McGaw)
- 'At risk' students' gains drop off at primary/secondary transition
- Secondary school teaching/culture remain fundamentally unchanged despite demographic/cultural/knowledge shifts
- Digital culture still perceived as 'threat' to print-based curriculum
- Issues around teacher classroom 'assessment literacy' and threshold content knowledge unresolved

A COMPOSITE AND ANON. CASE STUDY:

FOUR YEARS INTO REFORM



Context

- Low socioeconomic, indigenous, cultural/linguistic minority population
- Committed staff: official discourse on 'equity'
- Average experience in low SES schools 4-5 years
- No systematic curriculum planning
- Ad hoc professional development
- Deficit talk about parents, welfare, kids
- Little after school/extra curricular infrastructure
- High levels of special education ascertainment: problems coordinating 'pull out programs'
- Defacto streaming/ability grouping

First wave

- New principal: honeymoon period
- Professional development for a common vocabulary: 'productive pedagogies', '4 resources' and balanced literacy program
- Data analysis: student/staff audit
- Behaviour management/timetabling reorganised/staff movement

Using 4 resources for school planning (Luke & Woods, 2011 Theory into Practice)

- Audit of all data on student demography achievement
- 4 resources model (coding/semantic/pragmatic/critical) used in 2 hour curriculum session to generate overview of current school literacy program
- Hypothetical student walked through each year of existing program to check for balance and coherence
- Audit of staff expertise
- Begin whole-school curriculum conversation

Common vocabularies for teaching

- On models for pedagogy: see James Ladwig & Jennifer Gore - 'pedagogies' (New South Wales)
- Queensland "Productive Pedagogies"
- Singapore "Singapore Coding Scheme"

Next steps

- Some key areas identified for curriculum planning with outside assistance
- Prep/year 1: early literacy curriculum rollout
- Year 3/4: co-teaching and curriculum planning
- Year 5/6: scaffolded reading comprehension programs
- Data boards, test score analysis, tracking student progress

- Digital arts: video production, music production, after-school media club
- Aboriginal teachers/community-led after school homework club, Indigenous language and culture programs
- External 'system' audit/test score pressure
- Moderated assessment extended from year 2 to year 1 and year 3.

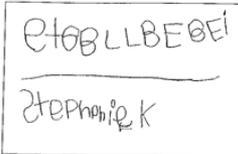
Overview of Writing Developmental Continuum

Teachers can identify a child's phase of development by observing that the child is exhibiting all the key indicators of that phase. It should be noted however, that most children will also display indicators from other phases

Phases

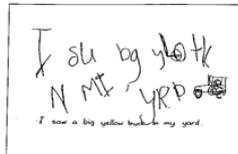
PHASE A: Role Play Writing

Children are beginning to come to terms with a new aspect of language, that of written symbols. They experiment with marks on paper with the intention of communicating a message or emulating adult writing.



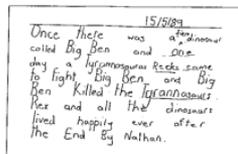
PHASE B: Experimental Writing

Children are aware that speech can be written down and that written messages remain constant. They understand the left to right organisation of print and experiment with writing letters and words.



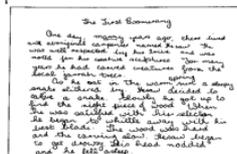
PHASE C: Early Writing

Children write about topics which are personally significant. They are beginning to consider audience needs. They have a sense of sequence but may only be able to deal with one or two elements of writing at one time, e.g. spelling but not punctuation.



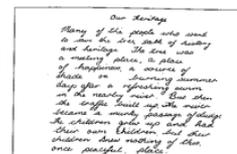
PHASE D: Conventional Writing

Writers are familiar with most aspects of the writing process and are able to select forms to suit different purposes. Their control of structure, punctuation and spelling may vary according to the complexity of the writing task.



PHASE E: Proficient Writing

Writers have developed a personal style of writing and are able to manipulate forms of writing to suit their purposes. They have control over spelling and punctuation. They choose from a large vocabulary and their writing is cohesive, coherent and satisfying.



Key Indicators

The Writer:

- 1 assigns a message to own symbol
- 2 understands that writing and drawing are different, e.g. points to words while 'reading'
- 3 is aware that print carries a message
- 4 uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language
- 5 shows beginning awareness of directionality, i.e. points to where print begins

The Writer:

- 1 reads back own writing
- 2 attempts familiar forms of writing, e.g. lists, letters, recounts, stories, messages
- 3 writes using simplified oral language structures, e.g. 'I got jobs'
- 4 uses writing to convey meaning
- 5 realises that print contains a constant message
- 6 uses left to right and top to bottom orientation of print
- 7 demonstrates one-to-one correspondence between written and spoken word
- 8 relies heavily on the most obvious sounds of a word

The Writer:

- 1 uses a small range of familiar text forms
- 2 chooses topics that are personally significant
- 3 uses basic sentence structures and varies sentence beginnings
- 4 explains in context, some of the purposes of using writing, e.g. shopping list or telephone message as a memory aid
- 5 experiments with words drawn from language experiences activities, literature, media and oral language of peers and others
- 6 begins to develop editing skills
- 7 attempts to use some punctuation
- 8 talks with others to plan and revise own writing

The Writer:

- 1 uses text forms to suit purpose and audience
- 2 can explain why some text forms may be more appropriate than others to achieve a specific purpose
- 3 writes a range of text forms including stories, reports, procedures and expositions
- 4 uses a variety of simple, compound and extended sentences
- 5 groups sentences containing related information into paragraphs
- 6 is beginning to select vocabulary according to the demands of audience and purpose, e.g. uses subject-specific vocabulary
- 7 uses proof-reading guide or checklist to edit own or peers' writing
- 8 punctuates simple sentences correctly
- 9 uses a range of strategies for planning, revising and publishing own written texts

The Writer:

- 1 selects text forms to suit purpose and audience, demonstrating control over most essential elements
- 2 can explain the goals in writing a text and indicate the extent to which they were achieved
- 3 writes to define, clarify and develop ideas and express creativity, e.g. stories, poems, reports, arguments
- 4 writes a topic sentence and includes relevant information to develop a cohesive paragraph
- 5 organises paragraphs logically to form a cohesive text
- 6 uses a variety of simple, compound and complex sentence structures appropriate to text form
- 7 uses a wide range of words that clearly and precisely convey meaning in a particular form
- 8 edits own writing during and after composing
- 9 demonstrates accurate use of punctuation
- 10 takes notes, selects and synthesises relevant information and plans text sequence.

Major Teaching Emphases:

- demonstrate the connection between oral and written language
- demonstrate that written messages remain constant
- demonstrate that writing communicates a message
- focus on the way print works (print concepts and conventions)
- demonstrate that writing is purposeful and has an intended audience
- use correct terminology for letters, sounds, words
- encourage children to experiment with writing

At all phases:

- model good English language use
- model writing every day
- encourage students to reflect on their understanding, gradually building a complete picture of written language structures
- ensure that students have opportunities to write for a variety of audiences and purposes
- encourage students to share their writing experiences

Major Teaching Emphases:

- model brief, imaginative and factual texts and explain the purpose and intended audience
- help children build lists of high-frequency words from their reading and writing
- demonstrate the one-to-one correspondence of written and spoken words
- discuss how writing can be used to communicate over time and distance
- encourage children to talk about their experiences
- help children understand how written texts are composed in sentences
- help children develop a stable concept of a word
- help children relate written symbols to the sounds they represent
- talk about letters, words and sentences

Major Teaching Emphases:

- develop an awareness that writing is purposeful
- talk about the differences between oral and written language
- read, write and discuss a range of different forms of writing for different purposes and audiences
- teach outlining and revision strategies
- show how sentences are linked to form a cohesive paragraph
- show how paragraphs are linked to form a whole text
- teach strategies for learning to spell new words
- continue to help children develop word banks using topic or theme words
- discuss the selection of words to enhance meaning
- model the use of appropriate linking words
- introduce a proof-reading guide and encourage children to use it

Major Teaching Emphases:

- teach children to plan and write both narrative and informational texts
- help children to adapt their writing to suit the intended purpose and to explore alternative ways of expressing ideas
- discuss linguistic features of basic text types
- teach children appropriate use of organisational markers such as topic sentences, paragraphs and headings
- show different ways of linking paragraphs to form a whole text
- encourage the use of a variety of linking words
- encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning
- teach revising, editing and proof-reading skills
- discuss and foster 'personal voice' and individual style in writing
- teach children the conventions of language (punctuation, grammar and spelling) in context

Major Teaching Emphases:

- provide opportunities for students to analyse, evaluate and structure an extensive variety of forms of text, both narrative and informational
- discuss the specific effect of context, audience and purpose on written texts
- extend students' knowledge of correct use of writing conventions
- teach students to analyse mass media
- discuss and foster a sense of 'personal voice', e.g. individual style, tone, rhythm, vocabulary
- extend the students' range of planning and revision strategies
- encourage students to use writing to reflect on and monitor their own learning
- encourage students to read as writers and write as readers

PHASE F: Advanced Writing not included on this overview

Models/issues/transitions

- Norm referenced standardised achievement tests
- Curriculum examination
- Formative developmental diagnostic assessment
- Assessment for learning
- Authentic assessment
- Teacher moderated assessment
- Portfolio assessment
- Digital portfolios and online (peer) moderated assessment
- Digital simulation/gaming assessment

Issues in systems-level rich task construction and delivery

- Ownership of the task
- Calibrating criteria and levels of difficulty
- Co-curricular/teacher coordination
- Student/teacher issues with the provision of requisite disciplinary/field knowledge and expertise
- Renewal/relations in moderation processes
- Queensland Studies Authority – ‘New Basics’, ‘Senior Moderation’, Year 2 net moderation, ‘Rich Tasks’

Year 4

- Year 3 and 5 reading test scores up (probable cohort effects)
- Behaviour/attendance problems in decline
- Staff morale high, systems recognition, low staff turnover
- System awards, recognition
- Principal mobility?

SECOND WAVE ISSUES: FROM TRAINING TO EDUCATION

- SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT, 'READING OF THE WORLD', 'INTELLECTUAL PRESS', 'INTELLECTUAL DEMAND', HIGHER ORDER, CRITICAL LITERACY
- TEACHER CONTENT KNOWLEDGE THRESHOLDS
- TEACHER ASSESSMENT LITERACY: SETTING AND USING RICH AND DEMANDING CLASSROOM TASKS AND ACTIVITIES, expanding task based and moderated assessment systems

curriculum/pedagogy for sustained achievement of most at risk students

- INTELLECTUAL DEMAND: Challenging content, big ideas, current issues
- SUSTAINED CONVERSATION: Teacher questioning, substantive topical discussions, scaffolded classroom talk (Hattie, 2010)
- CONNECTION TO THE WORLD: Moving from the known to the 'new', from everyday/commonsense to technical/scientific knowledge (Newmann et al, 1996; Ladwig, 2002)

Primary to secondary

- From 1st person to 3rd person
- From narrative to expository genres – stories to essays and lab reports
- Disciplinary field content: not just facts but epistemologies/methodologies – learning to see/think/act like a scientist, artist or ...
- From everyday knowledge to technical/specialised ‘registers’, vocabularies and ‘discourses’ via critical literacy and other activities

Core strategies

- Reading across the curriculum: reading comprehension strategies in core subjects
- Vocabulary: prefixes, suffixes, morphemic analysis, functional grammar, nominalisation
- Genre: direct instruction in texts required in secondary science, arts, voc ed, etc.

see: Jay Lemke, Talking Science

David Corson, The Lexical Bar

Western schooling

- BRUNER – known to new
- VYGOTSKY – everyday to scientific
- HALLIDAY – commonsense to technical
- PIAGET – concrete to abstract
- GLOBALISATION THEORY – local to global
- OLSON – narrative to expository text
- BERNSTEIN – restricted to elaborated

Functional grammar

Photosynthesize - photosynthesis

Catalyze – catalyst

Create – creation

NOMINALISATION – VERBS TO NOUNS

ACTIVE VOICE to PASSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

FIRST PERSON to THIRD PERSON

Social justice and equity

- RE-COGNITIVE JUSTICE: altering the substantive cultural content of dominant curriculum and pedagogy to include and engage 'other' voices, histories and cultures
- RE-DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE: equitable access to dominant cultural discourses, capital and pathways

Nancy Fraser, 1997 Justice Interruptus

- Value the known, build bridges to the new
- Teach in advance of development, continually up the intellectual ante
- Continually be taking students to new 'possible worlds' and ways of 'reading the world'