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From profiles to rich tasks: the situated nature of 'authenticity' in the context of reforming curriculum and assessment practices

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Abstract

Outcome based education that has dominated Australian education in the 1990s is under review in the early years of the twenty first century. The available historical "texts" produced during the first half of the 1990s, which include the national Statements and Profiles, and the state Curriculum and Standards Frameworks, provide us with documents that we can engage with not simply for "history's sake", but with an opportunity to, in the words of the feminist author Dorothy Smith, "displace[s] the analysis from the text as originating in writer or thinker, to the discourse itself as an ongoing intertextual process" bringing into view the social relations in which texts are embedded and which they organise" (1990, p. 161-2). Most Australian states and territories have now commenced significant situated, local curriculum renewal and reform. This renewed interest in curriculum offers insights into the character of recent assessment practices in Australia, recognising the tensions inherent in assessment practices and authentic assessment models. This paper explores, by way of an overview of the broad curriculum and assessment practices adopted in Australia over the past twenty-five years, the situated nature of 'authenticity' in the context of curriculum and assessment practices and how as teacher educators we are responding through our everyday work.

Introduction

In the prologue to our recent book, *Portfolios, Performance and Authenticity*

(Pearson, 2005) Julianne as co-editor with Trevor Hay, pre-empted that as part of the recent election campaign, the incumbent government advised that their education policy would include the return of letter grading on school reports. Yes, the A through to E has, true to the political promise, arrived. This has created, particularly in Victoria, Australia, some strong critics, including the Victorian Minister of Education, the Hon. Lyn Kotsky. The parents, reportedly the centre of the change, have been depicted in any number of newspaper articles.

IT'S BACK TO BASICS

Sample primary student report card:

your child's achievement against what is expected for this time of year

○ shows the achievement of your child last year

● shows the achievement of your child this year

JOHN SURNAME		Year 4 Semester 2		
Learning Area	Rating	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Health and Physical Education	C	○	●	●
English	Reading	○	○	●
	Writing	○	○	●
Mathematics	E	○	●	●
Science	D	○	○	●

Ratings:

A. Well above the standard expected at this time of year

B. Above the standard expected at this time of year

C. At the standard expected at this time of year

D. Below the standard expected at this time of year

E. Well below the standard expected at this time of year

Legend:

○ Your child's achievement last year

● Your child's achievement this year

○.....● Your child's progress since last year

■ The expected level of achievement

Work habits:

Needs attention Acceptable Excellent

Effort: [Progress bar from Needs attention to Acceptable]

Class behaviour: [Progress bar from Needs attention to Excellent]

Sample secondary student report card:

your child will receive a separate report for each subject studied

Note: secondary students otherwise have same assessment system as primary students

■ shows the level of achievement expected of all students in Victoria at this year level

KATE SURNAME		Year 8 Semester 2		
Science	Rating	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Science	C	○	○	●
Interpersonal Development	B	○	○	●
Thinking	C	○	○	●

Delighted: Asimina Vasili and her daughter Annie, 5

Source: Sun Herald: 25 August, 2005

Together as co-authors working in teacher education and professional development with Victorian teachers we explore in this paper by way of an overview of the broad curriculum and assessment practices adopted in Australia over the past twenty-five years, the situated nature of 'authenticity' in the context of curriculum and assessment practices. We draw recent examples from practice through our engagement in teacher education and professional development activity, particularly the Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLT, Department of Education and Training, Victoria) and our work with pre-service teachers in the courses we teach at the University of Melbourne, as to how we are attempting to support authentic assessment practices in teacher education and why it is, as Bernstein (1990; 1996 cited in Apple 2001, p.88) reminds us, that when we take up educational change there are three fields that we need to acknowledge:

- the field of \square production \square where new knowledge is constructed;
- the field of \square reproduction \square where pedagogy and curriculum are enacted in schools; and
- the \square recontextualising \square field where discourses from the field of production are appropriated and transformed into pedagogic discourses and recommendations.

Given the context of Australian education and the harmful potential that we may witness in an \square A to E \square economy, there is an urgent need for educators to be reminded, as Michael Apple (2001, p.83) has pointed out, that neo-liberal reforms and the \square free \square markets are coupled by increased surveillance. Apple continues:

As in the case of the linkage between national tests and performance indicators published as league tables, they have been organized around a concern for external supervision, regulation and external judgment of performance and have increasingly been colonized by parents who possess what is seen as the \square appropriate \square economic, social and cultural

capital.

Background: From profiles to rich tasks: authenticity in curriculum and assessment practices in Australia

The field of curriculum and assessment in Australian education has a short and conservative history. Dominated by transmission- and subject-orientated curriculum (Green 2003 p.129) developed by state and territory educational bureaucracies and dependent on the Commonwealth Government for additional resources, innovations in curriculum and assessment practices are the subject of boom and bust cycles.

Australian schools and their communities, reliant on politically shaped short term programs and projects, have largely been unable to question or change the dominant patterns of Australian schooling structures or systems. Locating itself firmly within the western discourses of schooling, Australian education mirrors traditions that are sharply and deliberately stratified; segregated by race, by gender, and by class; tracked into academic and technical schools; divided among public and private, Protestant and Catholic (Connell, 1994, p.129). Evidence can always be gathered from innovative educational hot spots in some local schools and districts that counter Connell's position, however the wide spread allegiance to the competitive academic curriculum, formalised high stakes testing, and tightly held tertiary entrance exams signal that the technical production (Posner, 1988, p.80) model remains the dominant form of curriculum and assessment logic in Australian education.

Outcome based education

Outcome based education in Australia is drawn from the first attempt at a nationally consistent curriculum. Between 1990 and 1994, the eight learning areas - the Arts; Technology; English; Languages other than English, LOTE; Mathematics; Science; Studies of Society and Environment, SOSE; Health) were developed as curriculum fields and were supported by a Statement and a Profile document. The Statement introduces the content of the learning area. The Profiles, as they became popularly known, aimed to provide a framework for:

- teachers in classrooms to chart the progress of their students;
- schools to report to their communities; and
- systems reporting on student performance as well as being amenable to reporting student achievement at a national level.

(Curriculum Corporation, English Profile 1994, p.159)

The idea of a national curriculum was short lived, as individual states were quick to take up local revisions and branding. Notwithstanding some of the significance of these local changes, the additions and deletions when taken at a distance were minimal. In Victoria for example, the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) was developed and implemented from 1995 and revised as the CSF II in 2000. The curriculum@work CD-ROM planning tool was distributed to every teacher in Victoria in the same year. The CD-ROM and the development of web resources (Department of Education and Training, 2000) aimed to assist teachers in the development of teaching and learning overall. The resources included: ideas on how to use the CD-ROM; examples of planning templates; models of completed templates; and ways to incorporate learning technologies into the curriculum and planning for the different stages of schooling.

Some states and territories such as South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory retained the

original format of the statement and profile documents and produced small-localised documents in various Key Learning Areas (KLAs). The Statement and Profiles were reviewed in 1997 at a national forum hosted by the Department of Training and Educational Coordination (DTEC) New South Wales. The question How have the Statements and Profiles helped or not helped Australian Schools establish policies with regard to reporting outcomes and educational accountability?, was one focus of the forum.

Table 1 Positive and Negative Features of the Profiles

Positive features	Negative features
Profiles have acted as a catalyst for debate on reporting and assessment.	Profiles are not robust enough to report on what a school <input type="checkbox"/> value adds <input type="checkbox"/> .
The provision of a common set of expectations across schools <input type="checkbox"/> more empowering of parents.	Parents are calling for different forms information <input type="checkbox"/> language of profiles may not be doing this.
Provides a common language.	Profiles have not resolved problems resolved through mobility, but they have the potential to do so.
Some States/Territory basic skills testing has been re-aligned to the profiles.	Terminology is a major problem in attempting to explain to the concept to parents and teachers.
Profiles make explicit to students where they are at a particular level.	Statements and outcomes do not provide a comprehensive set of descriptions of what society expects students to achieve, i.e. their competencies.
Development of the English statement was an example of a well-developed statement <input type="checkbox"/> good consultation process: Profile outcomes followed from the Statement.	Possibility of spending too much time forcing students to <input type="checkbox"/> fit <input type="checkbox"/> the reporting procedures which may be detrimental to the learning process <input type="checkbox"/> realistic assessment requirements.
Profiles have improved reporting and given a focus to assessment.	Profiling has made it clear that we lack consistency across the nation.
Need for consistent reporting across States/Territories.	High schools still confused by the normative versus standards based requirements.
Developments in literacy assessment have flowed from the profiling approach.	Outcomes do not acknowledge other kinds of knowledge or build on them.
Chance to influence bench marking and track outcomes.	Potential dangers of between school comparisons and the possible misuse of data.

Outcomes-based focus has provided a strong focus for teachers to try new strategies.	Difficult for primary schools to report on all KLA□s.
Outcomes encourage consideration of the whole range of students.	Problems with tying ages to stages and levels.
	The stop-start nature of the process... (C)ynicism amongst teachers especially secondary teachers...
	There is a need to seek a balance between a focus on content and the process of learning.

Source: Department of Training and Educational Coordination (DTEC) 1997, p.81-82

At one level the profile documents provided teachers with an extraordinary opportunity to reshape curriculum and assessment practices. The chance to use:

- multiple threads of curriculum knowledge in each key learning area □ the strands;
- developmentally phased progression through the Bands and Levels and the descriptive content of the outcomes and pointers;
- emergent trends in student learning, supported and illustrated by work samples; and
- teacher judgement

that could be read as a progressive attempt at curriculum and assessment reform.

However the profile documents, whilst they had an apparent logic to the developers were exceedingly difficult for teachers to grasp and apply. The large number of documents, the thick nature of much of the descriptive content and the simplistic rendition of some of the learning outcomes contributed to teacher resistance, summarised by the often-heard statement, □never looked at them [the Statement and Profiles], never will□. Further, education systems were uncertain in their responses to the highly industrialised teaching workforce of the time, still bleeding from major systems restructuring and school closures prevalent in the early nineteen nineties in a number of Australian states. In Victoria, for example, during a period when there was an overall decline in Commonwealth Education funding to State education, the situation was exacerbated with the election in October, 1992, of the Coalition Kennett government.

The Coalition government was responsible for the closing of 230 government schools, removing 8200 teaching positions, and cutting government spending by over \$300 million (Marginson 1997 p. 216). Moreover, teachers caught in largely isolated and individualised cultures of teachers□ work struggled to convince bureaucracies of the need for sustained and significantly altered professional learning. In the context of an individualised culture of professionalism and with limited opportunities for the labour intensive tasks of handling and categorising multiple work samples across a number of learning areas, particularly in the primary school setting, caring and conscientious teachers did what they could. Whilst it is self evident that a productive relationship with assessment practices is crucial for curriculum reform, the connection to teachers□ labour practices cannot be overlooked.

The beginnings of the Australian curriculum □turn□

During the latter part of the twentieth century, at an international level, curriculum theorising became permeable to the □turn□ that was occurring more broadly in intellectual thinking, that is tied to

postmodernism and post structural thought. All in all, curriculum studies were understood as becoming part of the "narrative turn" and "textual turn" literary and cultural studies that now tend to be labelled postmodernist and poststructuralist (Gough, 1998 p.59-60).

The common and agreed national goals specified in the Adelaide Declaration's National Goals of Schooling in the Twentieth First Century, outline the roles of the student as citizens, and schooling being a foundation for young Australians' intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development (MCYEETYA, 1999). Given the context of these broad national goals and the large-scale curriculum reform in most Australian states, it is difficult to imagine anything but significantly changed assessment practices being at the centre of current teaching and learning practices.

The Adelaide Goals of Schooling are in part echoed in the development of the Education Queensland (2001b) productive pedagogies model - Recognition of Difference, Connectedness, Intellectual Quality and Social support. The model generated for Education Queensland, from the commissioned research, the School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS) undertaken by the University of Queensland, moreover represents a rigorous reconception and radical transformation of curriculum and assessment practices for education in Queensland and makes a significant contribution to Australian education more broadly. Curriculum designs from Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland are summarised below.

Table 2 Curriculum Organisers: Victoria, Tasmanian and Queensland

State	Curriculum overview	Organisers
Victoria 2004 Blueprints and Essential Learning Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -core discipline concepts, generic skills, and personal and social competencies, attributes and values are evident. -supported by The Principles of Learning and Teaching P-12 (PoLT) that aims to:build consistent, comprehensive and improved pedagogical approaches within and across schools - highlights the capacity of local decision making to focus teaching to meet the diverse needs of students strengthen learning communities within and beyond the school. 	Discipline based learning (Knowledge) The Arts, English and Language, Humanities Mathematics and Science Interdisciplinary learning (Skills) planning, thinking, communicating, Information Communication Technology-ICT, design and technology Physical, personal and social Learning (Interpersonal) - health and physical development, cultural understanding, awareness of social responsibility and civic obligations
Queensland 2001 New Basics <input type="checkbox"/> What is taught Productive pedagogies <input type="checkbox"/> How it is taught Rich Tasks <input type="checkbox"/> How kids show it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - focuses new student identities - highlights the importance of new economies and workplaces - high value given to new technologies diverse communities and complex cultures. 	Productive pedagogies: Recognition of difference; Connectedness; Intellectual quality; Social support Life pathways and social futures Multiliteracies and communication media Active citizenship Environments and Technologies
Tasmania 2000 Essential Learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - guided by negotiated values and purposes 	Communicating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being literate - Being numerate - Being information literate - Being arts literate Personal futures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building and maintaining identity and relationships - Maintaining well-being

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being ethical - Creating and pursuing goals <p>World futures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigating the natural and constructed world - Understanding systems - Designing and evaluating technological solutions - Creating sustainable futures <p>Social responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building social capital - Valuing diversity - Acting democratically - Understanding the past and creating preferred futures <p><i>and connected by:</i></p> <p>Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> inquiry and reflective thinking</p>
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As implied in all of the models above, productive curriculum and assessment approaches are going to be more student centred, rely less on the teacher as the sole arbiter and decision maker in the assessment process and will invite public scrutiny of performances that potentially link the school and community in unique ways. These practices require teachers to engage in transformed professional relationships across grades and school clusters in unique constellations. For many Australian teachers and clusters of schools, despite years of experience and school change initiatives, such practices are new. The positions being advocated above, however, are now being attempted to be resized through the direct intervention of the Commonwealth Government.

Authenticity in the context of assessment practices

The changing emphases in curriculum, teaching and learning in the 1990s impacted on thinking about assessment. Brady and Kennedy (2002) suggest that authentic assessment emerged in the Australian context as "a response to the heavy reliance on traditional and norm-referenced tests and a perception that that they fail to assess student ability to perform real-world tasks" (Brady & Kennedy 2002, p. 25). Thus authentic assessment became identified with the qualitative indicators of student learning (Reeves, 2004). It monitors the learner in action, revealing those stories behind student learning that assist teachers to make valid, reliable judgments about student performance and progress. While acknowledging that defining authentic assessment is problematic due to the variability of the contexts in which it occurs, there are some generally agreed upon characteristics that are consistent with the principles of assessment defined by the Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA, 1995). They attest that authentic assessment:

- requires reflection and self-assessment over time;
- is culturally and socially inclusive & developmentally appropriate;
- has many elements, including those often difficult to assess in traditional ways;
- has depth and richness;
- values different facets of student learning, e.g. social competences, thinking etc. facets which are difficult to assess especially through traditional means;
- is relevant and connects with students learning and life experiences;
- assists to make valid, reliable judgments;
- involves active thinking and doing;
- informs and reflects the teaching program; and
- is embedded in classroom contexts (Godinho & Wilson, 2005).

Authentic assessment is sometimes regarded as synonymous with formative assessment, given that both modes emphasise the interactivity between teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment. As Black & Wiliam (1998; 2005) claim, assessment only becomes formative when the evidence is actually used to adapt teaching to meet student needs.

Curriculum Corporation, owned by the Australian Ministers for Education, has been a strong advocate of formative assessment - assessment *for* learning. It directs teachers to the UK's Reform Group's (2002) research-based ten principles of learning to guide classroom practice. The Reform group's definition of assessment for learning as "the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there" expresses our beliefs about its significance to pedagogical practice. Both the Curriculum Corporation and the Victorian State Government's Department of Education and Training (2005) differentiates between:

- **assessment *for* learning** occurs when teachers use inferences about student progress to inform their teaching; and
- **assessment *of* learning** occurs when teachers use evidence of student learning to make judgments on student achievement against goals and standards.
<<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/>>.

Authenticity is essentially about making assessment meaningful so that it maps the individual student's journey of learning: the achievements and the processes involved over a period of time. This cannot be done by simply relying on standardized testing, but must rely on assessment practices that are far richer and more complex than the sitting of a test (Walker 2005). Table 3 suggests a range of assessment types and strategies, in addition to some record keeping possibilities for accountability purposes, that we associate with authentic assessment practices.

Table 3 Assessment Modes and Strategies for Authentic Assessment Practices

Type of Assessment	Strategy	Record Keeping
<i>Observations</i>	Group work, problem solving, learning centres, excursions, incursions, developmental play, learning stories	Anecdotal notes, skills checklists, marking criteria, photography, video/audio/ digital recordings
<i>Works Samples</i>	Individual work items: concept mapping, drawings, activity sheets, writing tasks, reflections, visual representations, surveys, position papers	Portfolios (digital and hard copy) student profiles, scrap books, files
<i>Performances</i>	Dramatic enactments, debates, interviews, operas, raps, poetry, songs, dance, panel discussions	Marking criteria, rubrics, peer and self assessment, descriptive feedback □ oral & written
<i>Products</i>	Models, Murals, collages, written projects, community projects, presentations, design briefs, PowerPoints	Marking criteria, rubrics, peer and self assessment, descriptive feedback □ oral & written

For some students in our pre-service teacher courses at the University of Melbourne, testing is what they perceive to be *authentic* assessment. Therefore, we have needed to challenge students to

transform their preconceived notions and support them when they initially encounter feelings of disequilibrium as they become aware of other possibilities for assessing learning (Senior & Sanjakdar, 2005). As teacher educators, we have had to confront the role of authentic assessment practices within our everyday work and not withstanding the credentialing requirement of our pre-service students to complete core subjects in curriculum and assessment, we are attempting to align our practices further with the recent middle years literature and the Victorian Department of Education Blueprint for Education, curriculum reform platform, and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (2004).

The idea that authentic or formative assessment is performance-based and mindful of the students' learning modalities, styles and intelligences (Coil, 1996) challenged those students whose success had been determined by their written linguistic abilities. While initially resistant to the idea of being assessed outside their preferred learning modality, many students were later able to acknowledge the importance of experiencing first hand other ways of demonstrating learning. The following reflection on an authentic task created by Diploma of Education student studying the teaching of English as a second language student illustrates this point:

I feel the Polly Doll has been further enhanced as a piece of quality assessment by having made her into a kit complete with instructions and ideas for activities. The reason for this is that she is now accessible to any ESL teacher who wishes to teach clothing-related vocabulary or phraseology. Knowing the difficulties of developing meaningful tasks and activities for ESL students, I would hope to foster, using materials such as Polly Doll, a spirit of exchange and sharing of classroom resources amongst teachers. It could only make our teaching more enjoyable, and productive, and (hopefully) make our students' experiences more significant.

The comment resonates with Hacker and Hathaway's (1991) belief that the most common advantages claimed for authentic assessment are that it involves direct measurement of what the students know, it emphasizes higher-order thinking skills, judgement and collaboration and encourages active involvement in the learning process.

The following images are the outcome of creating spaces in our courses for students to engage in authentic assessment tasks. They demonstrate the preparedness of students to take risks in exploring other ways of showing their learning and constructing meaning. The images are a powerful representation of the student's learning journey in this course and her recognition that authentic assessment tasks are:

- rich-worthwhile, in depth - one problem leads to another and errors matter;
- engaging and foster persistence;
- about active thinking and doing;
- derived from multiple solutions and multiple paths;
- involve a variety of communication skills;
- include reflection and self-assessment over time;
- are ethical and respectful of the learner; and
- support individual and group goals.

Image 1

Image 2



Image 3



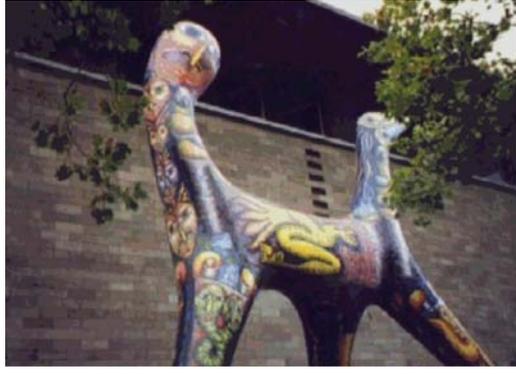
Image 4



Images 1-4 are the product of the two required tasks in the semester long subject Learning and Teaching, in the Diploma of Education course. Task 1, 'Developing a personal professional identity' is represented by the chest of drawers. Each drawer opens and reveals little by little, the influences that the student perceives have shaped her identity and, significantly, the potential impact that she takes from the narrative which will impact, support and develop the framing of the professional self. The second required task, 'Beginning a professional portfolio' is represented by the wardrobe and the hangers. Each hanger, carefully organized and progressively laid out, reveals the required criteria of the assignment including the folded reference list positioned at the base of the wardrobe. For both objects, the student has also photographed and created PDF formats of the entire content in order that the products and processes were produced and reproduced, responding to the communication criterion, which is that the item/s are readily accessible to a range of audiences.

The next images are stills from a DVD created by a student majoring in art. The DVD was a virtual tour of artworks in public spaces, ranging from traditional pieces of sculpture to graffiti walls. Having experienced authentic assessment in the first semester subject, Learning and Teaching, students in the subject Curriculum and Assessment were now encouraged to create an authentic assessment task for one of their learning areas.

<p>Is this art or is this vandalism?</p> <p>Many people believe art can be anything, can it be?</p>	<p>Can anyone be an artist?</p>

	
<p>Could this be both art and advertising?</p>	<p>This sculpture provides shelter for the homeless. Is this the artist's intention?</p>
	

As each piece of art was introduced to the viewer of the DVD, questions were posed for consideration, as indicated above the images. At the conclusion of the virtual tour, the viewers were invited to design a public artwork for their school grounds as an assessment task. The viewer was asked to consider the theme, the audience and the materials used, and to design a brochure that included information such as a statement by the artist about the importance of public art and why his/her work has so much to offer the community.

Implications of the national directives

In Australia, as in the United States of America (USA), there is a growing concern among some educators about the increasing emphasis on academic standards and how this might impact on teacher assessment practices. In recent weeks the federal government has announced that reporting to parents must use an A-E grading system for all key learning area studies, and the child's achievement must be reported, relative to the achievement of the child's peer group in the school, by at least quartile bands. Failure to do so will put the school's funding by the government at risk. As the Victorian sample report shows, it will accord with the A-E grading, but will resist the requirement to rank students, as it argues this information reveals nothing more about the student's learning processes which is at the heart of student assessment.

The aim of these standards-based assessments is to enable teachers to monitor and report students' progress over time, and to provide teachers with comparative information about student achievement against state-wide achievement levels and national benchmarks (VCAA 2004, p. 12). A concern we have, which is shared by educators in Australia and globally, is that the increased emphasis on reporting to standards will render the assessment capability of the classroom teacher irrelevant (Reeves 2004, p. 106). There is an inherent danger of teacher assessment of student learning

diminishing as the government and parents place increasing emphasis on the reporting of norm-referenced standards. Anne Bligh, the Deputy Premier of Queensland, Professor Cuttance of the University of Melbourne, and Professor Geoff Masters of the Australian Council for Educational Research are already claiming the need to get consistency of teacher and assessment and judgments across schools because the way that teachers interpret grades is so variable (Milburn, 2005).

Our experiences with school reporting resonate with Black and Wiliam's (1998, p. 5) comment that:

While teachers' contributions to "summative assessments" have been given some formal status, hardly any attention has been paid to their contributions through formative assessment. Moreover, the problems of the relationship between formative and summative assessment roles have received no attention.

Some Australian schools have successfully combined the two modes of assessment for reporting purposes by using portfolios (Darling Hammond *et al.*, 1995; Klenowski 2002; Smith, Brewer & Heffner 2003; Stiggins 2001) to document the students' learning journey. Work samples in these portfolios include both teacher and student selected pieces that are purposefully chosen to show the student's learning in action — *formative* assessment. Portfolio slips (Wing Jan & Wilson, 1998) which justify the inclusion of the piece of work and analyze each entry for its appropriateness, encourage reflective, metacognitive practices — assessment *as* learning (Department of Education and Training 2005). School report proformas are also included in the portfolios to show the achievement of the learning outcomes — *summative* assessment. Learning portfolios used in this way have a diagnostic function in identifying strengths or weaknesses that relate to aspects of a student's work. Importantly, the inclusion of carefully selected *formative* assessment activities can be used to justify the grading for the summative assessment. Rather than simply providing one end point assessment task, which may not indicate the overall learning that has occurred during the unit, assessment reported in portfolios as the learning journey authenticates the grading in the context of classroom practice.

With the teacher's performance and the school's performance being judged on the reporting of norm-referenced standards will the same emphasis be placed on documenting the learning journey? As Andrew Blair, President of the Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals Association, comments the crucial balancing act for teachers will be to ensure simplicity of reporting, which parents have requested, does not drive a lack of rich content and a —diminished personalising of progress information— (2005, p. 5). While endorsing the use of simple language, Blair is at pains to stress the need for complex and diagnostic reporting.

But where does this leave us in respect to the place of the A- E economy that the newspaper article reminds us will be the reality that our students will face? Curriculum reform as we have indicated, if it is to impact on student learning, requires a paradigm shift in assessment practices. Yet will the authentic, formative assessment practices we have advocated be sustained? Current national assessment directives do not accord with ten principles for assessment espoused by UK's Reform Group's (2002). Perhaps what is needed is an approach like the Assessment is for Learning (AiSFL) program in Scotland. This program has explored how assessment for learning and accountability can be integrated successfully so that the assessment *for* learning is not overlooked by the measurement emphasis on standards, target-setting and accountability.

In the pre-service programs at the University of Melbourne we will continue to advocate the notion of assessment *for* learning, so that our students plan for assessment and design authentic, rich tasks for what Hutchinson and Hayward (2005) describe as an Assessment for Learning Schools where:

- teachers are skilled in assessment to support learning;
- pupils are fully involved in planning, reflecting on and evaluating their own learning; and
- the school has in place sound procedures for advising students about next steps in learning and quality assuring assessment judgements (p. 243).

The key question for us is: In the year 2010, will the old rules of formalised high stakes testing and tightly held tertiary entrance exams be the dominant force? In short, the transformation requires us to act on research that predates the date of birth of most recruits into the teaching profession. Do we understand sufficiently how our Australian curriculum and assessment practices have formed us in order that we can re(form)?

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