Registration Matters
Teachers Registration Board of South Australia

trb

in this issue

Artwork completed by Year 12 students in 2007 has been selected from the SSABSA Art Show 2008 and can be viewed throughout this Newsletter. The Board extends its thanks to SSABSA and to those students who have loaned their work to be displayed in the newsletter and at the TRB office

Above: Teachers sponsored by the Board at the Fourth International Middle Years of Schooling Conference 2008.

Fourth International Middle Years of Schooling Conference 2008 - Board Sponsorship

Above: Venue - Adelaide Convention Centre

"Global Citizenship

- connect

- work together

- and walk on"

"Global Citizenship connect – work together – and walk on"

The conference provided the opportunity for educators to build their professional skills and knowledge, broaden their thinking, share ideas, and to explore innovative contemporary approaches to teaching, learning and research, with other local and international professionals. The theme of the conference was Global Citizenship.

The Board was pleased to provide sponsorship, through the payment of conference registration fees, for teachers to attend the event. Sponsored teachers undertook to share their insights and learning with colleagues and provide a report to the Board.

Sponsored teachers in alphabetical order: Judy Anderson, Liz Black, Stephen Brown, Jenny Burford, Joy Cresp, Nita Cummings, Kathie Davis, Natalie Hann, Ian Jenkinson, Grant Ley, Andrew Lines, Tim McLeod, Rebecca Moore, Bea Plush, Jessica Polson, Aurora Reid, Maria Sexton, Adam Slater, Nanette Smibert, Lynn Wann.

Further information about the conference is available on the SAPMEA Conventions website *www.sapmea.asn.au/conventions/ middleschool2008*.

Seed Pod Series
LUCY GRANEY

Once again ANZELA presented a rich diversity of issues from an interesting range of perspectives both national and international. The 130 delegates were invited up the staircase to the conference and immersed in Kapahaka, a deeply moving and empowering welcoming ceremony involving movement, song and discourse between the indigenous ensemble and representatives from the organising committee, celebrating a higher level of cultural understanding. It was immediately evident that we had much work to do with regards to our commitment to reconciliation.

Whilst I attended many workshops I choose briefly to reflect on a key issue that demands attention in our precinct. Cyberbullying has taken a higher profile as the uptake of technology explodes with insatiable appetites from consumers. World-wide cell phone sales were projected to reach over 3 billion units by the end of 2007 and nearly two-thirds of U.S. children 10-19 already had cell phones by mid-2007. The post-Columbine FBI task force report found that two-thirds of school shooters reported being bullied at school.

K-12 students in America have never been without computers and the internet. Virtually all US K-12 schools have had internet access since 2000. We are aware that bullying by technology occurs in chat rooms, blogs, by email, SMS and on Web sites. It can be instantaneous, widespread, and anonymous, initiated by one person or many and doesn't go away - it's "on 24/7". Pew Internet and American Life Project June 2007 found: the most common form of cyberbullying was making private information public; girls cyberbullied more than boys; 41% of girls 15-17 who go on line report being cyberbullied and 39% of social networking users have been cyberbullied in some way.

Pew Internet Study: Teens and Social media 2007 research found: 64% of on-line teens engage in content creation, 35% of all teen girls blog, 54% post photos, most are 12-14, 20% of on-line teen boys blog, boys are more likely to post videos on YouTube, 75% of teens interviewed report having a profile on MySpace or Facebook.

Dealing with cyberbullying is part of the larger problem of bullying in schools. We know that bullying has long term consequences for both victims and perpetrators. Many more students are impacted negatively by cyberbullying than by on-line predators and cyberbullying effects are much more subtle. Cyberbullying can be so severe that victims have committed suicide or retaliated with violence. The Olweus Program Success (named as one of 10 model violence prevention/reduction programs *www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints*) noted that: over 2 years the rate of student-reported bullying dropped 30-70% in schools studied and long term studies indicate a need to address girls' indirect or relational bullying more thoroughly.

Peer counselling and peer mediation may be an effective strategy with a focus on students helping other students based on the premise that students are more comfortable talking with peers. Mediators help 'negotiate' solutions by providing procedural equality to counter the power imbalance between the bully and the victim. Kathleen Conn Ph D., J.D. LL.M. Neumann College, Aston, PA USA extends an invitation for further conversations *kathcouls@verizon.net*.

As educators, Australian law leaves us exposed to cyberbullying. The Privacy Act only applies to Federal Government departments, agencies and businesses. The actions of individuals are not covered. If somebody takes a photo of you and posts it on-line, the Privacy Act can not protect you. Teacher's private lives are now being targeted. Australian Education Union president Angelo Gavrielators, acknowledges the emerging problems with new technologies and cyberbullying. He observes "Regrettably, teachers are being subjected to more and more public scrutiny with respect to what they do in their private lives. I don't think that's a healthy thing, it's particularly problematic in smaller communities where teachers don't enjoy the anonymity their counterparts in larger cities may enjoy. Teachers, like anyone else, have a right to a private life and that private life shouldn't be infringed upon." He rejects the suggestion that clear guidelines are needed to help guide teachers' personal conduct and asserts "I always believe common sense is the best guard."

The 18th ANZELA conference will be held in Melbourne.

Written by
Bob Woodbury, Board Member

Presiding Member's Report

This year, I had hoped to be able to report that all states and territories had established a system of teacher registration so that a federal system was a reality. The ACT has not progressed to this point, despite an extensive consultation phase and draft paper.

The election of a new Commonwealth Government in November 2007 has meant that the education agenda from a number of perspectives is being re-considered and priorities reviewed. The Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA) has become an incorporated entity and been active in carrying out its terms of reference approved by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). In particular, ATRA in consultation with the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) has been asked to develop a draft set of graduate teacher standards and standards for the accreditation of pre-service teacher education programs. This has involved a collaborative approach between the Commonwealth and the teacher regulatory authorities. Work will continue during 2009.

In the meantime, at a state level, the Board, with assistance from the tertiary providers of teacher education, has put in place a more effective process of conferring and collaborating on the appropriateness of such courses for registration. Ultimately, ATRA takes the view that a federal system for the accreditation of pre-service teacher education courses should build on existing processes for local delivery so that the independence of state registration authorities is respected.

This year also marked the implementation of graduate professional standards and standards for moving from provisional registration to registration. Professional standards for renewal of registration are being developed and will be progressed during 2009.

In March 2008, the Board was reconstituted for a further three year period. A number of members retired. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Julie Haar (nominee IEU) for many years of service, Julie Muirson (nominee AEU), Robert Matthews (nominee of the Universities) and Jenny Turner (nominee DECS). I welcome all new members, Lyn Castle (nominee IEU), Peter Ryan (nominee AEU), Larry Owens (nominee of Universities) and Michael Papps (nominee DECS). It is fair to say the demand on the time of members has significantly increased with the added responsibilities of the new legislation proclaimed in 2005. Therefore, I thank all members for their ongoing commitment and willingness to contribute to the important work of the Board.

Further, I acknowledge and thank the Registrar, Ms Wendy Hastings, and her team within the Secretariat, for the diligent and professional manner in which the provisions of the legislation are administered.

On behalf of the Board, I extend compliments of the season to all.

Carmel Kerin
PRESIDING MEMBER

The Teachers Registration Board of South Australia

Back: *Larry Owens, Leona Graham (Deputy - Michael Papps), Tony Houey (Deputy - Roger Anderson), Mardi Barry (Deputy - Barry Thompson), Keith Parkinson, Gerry Mulhearn, Margaret Kelly, Kevin Comber (Deputy - Helen O'Brien), Julie Lundberg*
Front: *Lyn Castle, Bob Woodbury, Ann Bliss, Carmel Kerin (Presiding Member), Peter Ryan, Jackie Bone-George*
Absent: *Jenny Hocking, Michael Papps, Roger Anderson, Helen O'Brien, Barry Thompson*

Reflections
KIRRA-JAE VINCE

The Teachers Registration Board is a member of the Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA). South Australia works closely with all other States, Territories and New Zealand to ensure effective national exchange of information and to promote uniformity and consistency in the regulation of teaching (Section 6 (e) of the Act). ATRA is an incorporated association. The current Office Holders are Ms Carmel Kerin (Chair), Ms Wendy Hastings (Deputy Chair) delegates of the TRB (SA) and Mr Andrew Ius (Secretary) delegate of the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

Refer to their website *www.atra.edu.au* for further information.

Untitled
LUCY GRANEY

National Pre-Service Teacher Education Accreditation

The accreditation of pre-service teacher education programmes for teacher registration purposes is currently being undertaken by teacher regulatory authorities in each State and Territory.

It was argued that a national system would support recognition at a national and international level as well as increase public confidence in the qualifications and quality of graduate teachers.

In June 2008, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) resolved a national pre-service teacher education accreditation system be developed and a national authority be established to monitor and quality assure programmes, in partnership with the State and Territory teacher regulatory authorities (ATRA).

ATRA has developed a set of draft national teacher and programme accreditation standards in consultation with the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE). Work will continue in 2009.

> " *… a national system would support recognition at a national and international level …* "

Academic Requirements for Teacher Registration

Under Section 21(1)(a) of the Act, in order to meet the qualifications requirements of the Board, an applicant for teacher registration must have completed higher education qualifications totalling at least four years, at least one year of which must be a recognised teacher education qualification.

There are several types of higher education qualifications that can be completed to meet current Board requirements. The type of qualification you currently hold will determine what sort of qualification you can enrol in and complete to meet these requirements. For teachers who possess a three-year Diploma of Teaching or Bachelor of Teaching, you may wish to consider one of the following options:

- a one-year Graduate Diploma
- two six-month Graduate Certificates
- a one-year postgraduate Bachelor or Master degree

The higher education institutions in South Australia offer a wide variety of programs. These programs are listed in the 2009 SATAC guide and on *www.satac.edu.au.*

Before enrolling in a particular program, you are advised to contact the Qualifications and Registration Administrators on (08) 8226 8153 or (08) 8226 5981 to confirm the program you are considering will meet the Board's requirements for registration as a teacher.
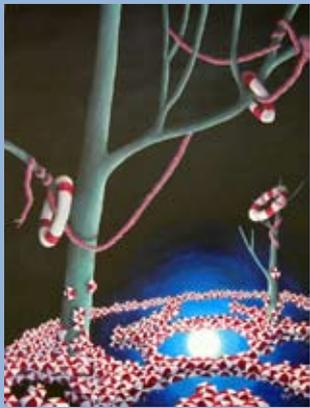
Supporting Graduate Teachers to Register

Each year a Project Officer, Professional Standards visits the University of Adelaide, Flinders University, the University of South Australia and Tabor Adelaide, to talk to the pre-service teacher education students about the role, responsibilities and functions of the Board, the requirements for registration and to discuss professional responsibilities as a registered teacher.

Graduates have acknowledged the support offered by the Board in providing them with the necessary information to complete their application for registration. On being granted provisional registration teachers receive a package which includes a letter of welcome to the profession from the Registrar, a copy of the Code of Ethics, a copy of the Act and Regulations and most importantly their registration certificate.

C.a.F.E. Enfield

On 30 May 2008 the monthly meeting of the Teachers Registration Board was held at C.a.F.E. Enfield which is an integrated services site that links health and education with the community.

The Children and Families Everywhere Centre involves setting up early childhood and family programs, which provide opportunities for young children and their families, who reside in the Enfield and surrounding areas.

One of the operating principles is providing an environment for all participants, including families and staff, that is welcoming, family friendly, non-judgemental, inclusive and enables safe learning. Refer to their website:
www.enfieldps.sa.edu.au/CafeIndex.asp
for further information.

Board members appreciated the opportunity to visit the centre and to meet and talk with staff about programmes and learning opportunities.

*Above: John Iannunzio (Principal) and
            Lani Thornton (Assistant Director)*

*Below: Board members and C.a.F.E. Enfield staff*

Registered Teachers - Age Profile

Renewal of Registration

Over 18,000 teachers are due to renew their registration by 31 December 2008. Applications were posted to all those teachers in mid-October 2008. The onus is on teachers to renew registration by the due date.

Non-receipt of a renewal of registration is not an excuse for failing to renew registration by the due date.
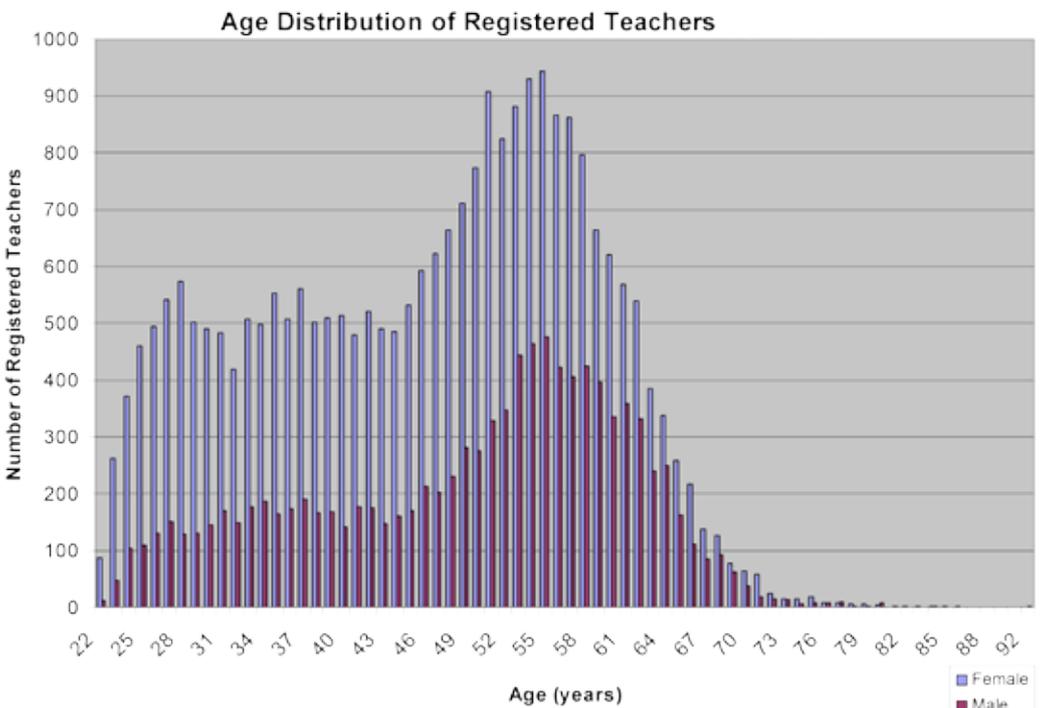
Register of Teachers

An online version of the Register of Teachers is published on the website.

Check a registration number and expiry date of registration by accessing the website at *www.trb.sa.edu.au*.

Mutual Recognition Arrangements

Mutual Recognition arrangements exist between teacher regulatory authorities in Australia and New Zealand. An applicant who is currently registered as a teacher in the first state, i.e. Australian State or Territory or New Zealand, is entitled to registration in the second state. Teacher regulatory authorities operate in South Australia, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia, Northern Territory and New Zealand.

Refer to the TRB website *www.trb.sa.edu.au* for further information.

Disciplinary Matters

The Board may, on Complaint of the Registrar, or of its own motion, hold an inquiry in order to determine whether the conduct of a registered teacher (or formerly registered teacher) is unprofessional and whether such conduct may constitute proper cause for disciplinary action.

From 1 November 2007 to 31 October 2008 the Board held the following Inquiries:

One registered male teacher was reprimanded and was disqualified from being registered as a teacher until further order as a result of unprofessional conduct (being improper conduct) involving the obtaining of information from students in order to pursue (unsuccessfully) relationships with their carers and another two young women under the age of eighteen.

One registered male teacher had his registration cancelled and was disqualified from being registered as a teacher permanently for unprofessional conduct (being disgraceful and improper conduct) resulting from a conviction in the Adelaide District Criminal Court on two counts of indecent assault upon the person of a 14 year old male student.

One registered male teacher had his registration cancelled and was disqualified from being registered as a teacher permanently for unprofessional conduct (being disgraceful and improper conduct) after engaging in an improper sexual relationship with a 14 year old male student over a four year period.

One registered male teacher was reprimanded and had his registration suspended until further order for unprofessional conduct (being improper conduct) as he did not maintain proper boundaries in relation to the teacher/student relationship to the detriment of particular students. The suspension was also subject to certain conditions being fulfilled in the interim.

One formerly registered female teacher was reprimanded and disqualified from being registered as a teacher until 31 December 2008 for unprofessional conduct (being improper conduct) involving convictions for petty larcenies from a school site.

One provisionally registered male teacher sought to have conditions removed from his registration which related to his ongoing rehabilitation as a result of drug related offences in 2005. The application was granted.

One registered female teacher was found guilty of unprofessional conduct (being improper conduct) and had her registration suspended until further order for failing to comply with certain provisions of the *Teacher Registration and Standards Act 2004* in relation to providing requested information to the Registrar.

One registered female teacher was found guilty of unprofessional conduct (being improper conduct) for contravening a condition on her registration that she satisfactorily complete a mandatory notification training course as required by the Regulations under the *Teachers Registration and Standards act 2004* and her registration was suspended until further order.

Admissions Hearings

From 1 November 2007 to 31 October 2008 the Board held the following Hearings:

The Board held eighteen Hearings in relation to the Admission to the Register of new or formerly registered applicants, who did not hold the requisite prescribed qualifications and/or experience as described in the *Teacher Registration and Standards Act 2004* or meet the Board's policy on recency of practice. In exercising discretionary power vested in the Board the following determinations were made:

Ten applicants for registration were granted provisional registration subject to a condition that they upgrade their qualifications to meet the prescribed minimum standard described in the legislation.

Eight applicants were refused registration for reasons related to the relevance or adequacy of their qualifications or failure to comply with the recency of practice requirements.

In addition three further Admissions Hearings were held:

One applicant was granted provisional registration and one applicant granted registration subject to conditions related to health matters.

One applicant was re-admitted to the Register of Teachers on a provisional basis after satisfying the Board that she was a fit and proper person for re-admission having met certain conditions imposed as a result of earlier disciplinary proceedings.

APPEALS

There were no appeals from decisions of the Board to the District Court.

Change of Status Process

In the last newsletter, the Board provided information about a new process to change status from provisional to registration. The new change of registered status application forms are available online at *www.trb.sa.edu.au* and were sent out to all preschools and schools in January 2008.

The Board has processed 237 applications for a change of registered status between 1 March and 31 October 2008.

If you hold provisional registration and have completed 200 days of satisfactory teaching service in the last 5 years, download the Change of Registered Status Application Form from the TRB website and, with your principal or director's support, complete the written requirements. Forward your application to the Teachers Registration Board by mail. Faxed or emailed copies will not be processed.

Please refer to the website *www.trb.sa.edu.au* for more details.

Professional Standards for Teachers

Since the proclamation of the *Teachers Registration and Standards Act 2004,* many teachers across the state have been involved in consultation relating to the development of professional standards for entry to the profession, change of status from provisional to registration and renewal of registration.

Standards relating to entry to the profession and change of status from provisional to registration were implemented during 2008.

During 2008 further targeted consultation in relation to renewal of registration was held across the state. A key message from the consultations was that requirements for renewal of registration need to recognise the significant amount of professional learning already undertaken by teachers.

The Board will consider the findings of the consultation process and work towards the development of a set of draft requirements for renewal of registration during 2009.

City Swept
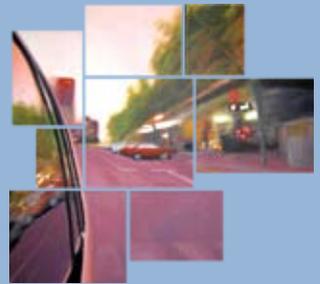AARON WILSON

World Teachers' Day

Teachers are World Teachers *every* Day. Teachers open the world to children and students in so many different ways as they bring the world into their learning environments. Teachers assist children and students to achieve a better understanding of the global society in which we live and our roles as local and global citizens. Teachers make a world of difference. This year World Teachers' Day particularly focussed on the many and varied ways in which teachers make connections to the world through their teaching. World Teachers' Day was a time to recognise the valuable work teachers do every day in connecting children and students through what and how they teach.

The Board would like to thank the teachers of South Australia for the significant work they do as World Teachers *every* Day.

To read more, visit the World Teachers' Day section of our website at *www.trb.sa.edu.au*.

On 31 October 2008 the Teachers Registration Board placed the advertisement below in the Advertiser.

World Teachers *every* Day
October 31, 2008

Every day, teachers open the world to their students in many different ways.

World Teachers' Day recognises and celebrates the work teachers do every day working with children and students to achieve a better understanding of the global society in which we live.

For more information please visit www.trb.sa.edu.au

trb Teachers Registration Board of South Australia
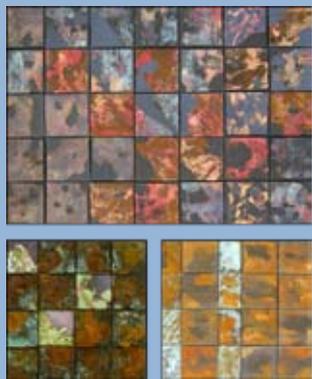
Functions of the Board

The Teachers Registration Board is an independent, statutory authority established under the *Teachers Registration and Standards Act 2004* and *Teachers Registration and Standards Regulations 2005* to regulate the teaching profession. The functions of the Board are:

(a) to administer the provisions of this Act for the regulation of the teaching profession;

(b) to promote the teaching profession and professional standards for teachers;

(c) to confer and collaborate with teacher education institutions with respect to the appropriateness for registration purposes of teacher education courses;

(d) to confer and collaborate with teacher employers, the teaching profession, teacher unions or other organisations and other bodies and persons with respect to requirements for teacher registration and professional and other standards for teachers;

(e) to confer and collaborate with other teacher regulatory authorities to ensure effective national exchange of information and promote uniformity and consistency in the regulation of the teaching profession within Australia and New Zealand;

(f) to keep the teaching profession, professional standards for teachers and other measures for the regulation of the profession under review and to introduce change or provide advice to the Minister as appropriate.

Statutory Review of the Teachers Registration Board

The Hon. J. A. Darley moved that the Statutory Authorities Review Committee inquire into and report on the effectiveness of the Teachers Registration Board in the exercise of its functions and processes in respect to –

1. The welfare and best interests of children as its primary consideration in the performance of its functions;

2. The manner and process by which it ensures that a teacher registration system and professional standards are maintained to safeguard the public interest in there being a teaching profession whose members are competent educators and fit and proper persons to have the care of children;

3. The composition of the Board;

4. The manner and process by which evidence is gathered and presented to the Board, including the representation of parties to proceedings;

5. The relationship between the Department of Education and Children's Services and the Board; and

6. Any other relevant matters.

It is anticipated the Review will commence in 2009.

Research Digest - Issue 3

The Research Digest is a periodic digest produced by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) for the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia in conjunction with other members of the Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA).

Each digest focuses on a topical issue. The focus for Digest Number 1 was writing-to-learn. Digest Number 2 focused on behaviour management. Digest Number 3 focuses on

data in schools. Eight pages (of a total of sixteen) are published as part of the newsletter.

To read the full version and Numbers 1 and 2, please visit our website at *www.trb.sa.edu.au*.

Teachers Registration Board of South Australia
THE DIGEST

trb

IN THIS EDITION

This Research Digest is available in a PDF version on the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia website at: http://www.trb.sa.edu.au/

The Digests

This Digest is one of a series of periodic digests produced by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) for the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia.

Each digest focuses on a single topical issue, and provides a review of major messages from research on the issue. A key feature of the digests is an emphasis on what the research means for teachers and teaching. Over the course of several editions, a wide range of issues will be covered, so that teachers from different areas of schooling will find topics of particular relevance to their needs.

Previous Issues

The Digest
Number 3

What does research tell us about how schools and teachers can use data to inform teaching in ways that lead to improvements in student achievement?

This *Digest* is focused on studies that have investigated how data can be used in schools to examine teaching practices in order to improve student learning. A selection of relevant websites is listed, and a full reference list is provided. Links to those references for which full-text online access is freely available are also included.

School systems, principals and teachers have access to an extensive range of data that can be used for a variety of purposes. Accountability processes and data have come to play a significant place in policy development and reform efforts. There is a large body of research about the use of data for improvement at the system level. The key question addressed by this digest is "What does research tell us about how schools and teachers can use data to inform teaching in ways that lead to improvements in student achievement?"

The digest draws on searches of a number of databases and bibliographic resources, including the Australian Education Index, Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC,) Education Research Complete, British Education Index and Scopus.

ACER

Data in
schools

Using data to support learning has recently become a matter of significant interest in schools.

Earl (2005) suggested some key reasons why this is so.

In the past several decades, a great deal has changed. The 21st century has been dubbed the 'information age'. There has been an exponential increase in data and information, and technology has made it available in raw and unedited forms in a range of media. Like many others in the society, educators are trying to come to grips with this vast deluge of new and unfiltered information, and to find ways to transform this information into knowledge and ultimately into constructive action.

Accountability and data are at the heart of contemporary reform efforts worldwide. Accountability has become the watchword of education, with data holding a central place in the current wave of large-scale reform.

Technological advances have led to data from external assessments being made accessible to schools in a range of ways so that data can be used meaningfully. Schools also have access to a wide range of formal and informal data generated in the course of everyday teaching.

Data can be used to generate change. Earl (2005) points out that educational change depends on collaborative professional learning . She reminds us that

Becoming inquiry-minded and data literate are major changes in practice that are consistent with the notion of professional learning communities and that warrant concerted attention to new shared learning.

Matters (2006) in a review of a series of papers focused on research about the use of data to improve learning, describes how data shape the landscape of our professional lives. She highlights recent changes in data use, suggesting that increased accessibility opens up wider possibilities for using data in many contexts, including classrooms.

In the not-too-distant past, educational data were slow to turn around, unwieldy to manage, and too disparate to enable meaningful comparisons to be made between groups or over time. Today, owing to advances in computing and communications technology, the widespread use of data for decision making is practical and possible at every level of the education system — from students and teachers to parents and school administrators to stakeholders and policy makers.

Matters (2006) drew from a categorisation of sources of data provided by Earl (2005) to identify potential sources of data about student achievement:

◗ standardised, norm-referenced, criterion-referenced tests
◗ questioning in class
◗ performance and standards-based assessments
◗ teacher-made tests, projects, quizzes
◗ teachers' observations
◗ student work.

Understanding and interpreting data

The availability of this extensive range of data poses challenges for schools and teachers, not least in understanding and interpreting data. Work done in the Western Australian project that has come to be known as the Data Club has focused on representing data from state-wide assessments in ways that help schools. Schools' own data has been the focus of this project. The developers of the Data Club indicate that

There is evidence that the best support for interpreting data is a combination of information about data analysis and representation strategies together with application of this information to participants' own data. (Wildy, 2003)

In New South Wales, another example of support provided to schools to use data effectively is found in the School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART) that facilitates the gathering, monitoring, analysis and reporting of data in NSW public schools.

Smith (2005) describes the vast store of information available within the system and its schools on academic, social and affective student outcomes; and the vital importance of providing support to schools to use this data.

Accessing, managing, analysing and interpreting this store of information are tasks fundamental to the success of the Department, its schools, and for high quality provision for the students in their care. Significant challenges have been overcome through the development of state-of-the- art information and communication systems (ICT) that bring complex data to the finger tips of staff in schools and regions in highly usable forms.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) offers a Data Service to schools. This service provides data about students' results in the Victorian Certificate of Education to schools in ways that help school staff to use the data effectively and easily for planning improvement.

Charts and tables provided to schools through this service can address a range of key questions:

- How were our school's overall results this year? Were they better or worse than in previous years? How do they compare with schools like ours?
- How did our students perform, study by study in terms of completions, Study Scores, examinations and school assessment grades?
- How did our school's results compare to reasonable expectations? Did our students perform as well as students of comparable ability in other schools?
- Is our student cohort changing over time, in ability and/or achievement?
- How can we develop better understandings of the patterns of group performance by identifying how individuals contribute to those patterns? (Rowley, 2005)

These services are interesting examples of ways in which performance feedback from large scale assessment has been provided to schools, so that it can inform the future planning of classroom programs.

Purposes for
using data

System leaders, principals and teachers all use data, for overlapping yet different purposes. For teachers, the central purpose of analysing data is described by Allen (2005) as being to

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*By locating evidence in the classroom …
we can influence the major agent that
influences student and learning — the teacher*

… improve the learning of one or more particular students. That is, the individual teacher and the school take the students who come to them and seek to improve the learning of those students. This purpose is different from that of the sociologist seeking to understand patterns of participation, or that of the policy analyst seeking to understand the impact, if any, of policy settings.

Interest in the uses of data has accelerated, as, increasingly, schools receive performance feedback from a variety of sources. Hattie (2005) notes that *schools are awash with data.* He argues that the discussion about using data needs be located in the classroom, and to move

… away from data towards interpretations, from student outcomes to teaching successes and improvements, and from accountability models located in schools to located first in the classroom to support such evidence-based teaching and learning. … By locating evidence in the classroom … we can influence the major agent that influences student and learning — the teacher, can highlight the debate about what is worth teaching, and most importantly, can begin to establish a teacher-shared language about the achievement progression (Hattie, 2005).

Research about what makes a difference to teaching and learning indicates that what students bring to learning accounts for 50% of the variance in students' achievement. Teachers account for account for 30% of the variance, with home, peers, schools and principals making up the remaining 20%. (Hattie 2003) In further research, Hattie (2005) emphasises the importance of teachers using data:

The reason for locating the power of data to enhance student outcomes at the teacher level comes from the many recent studies on the epicentre of causal effects on learning: the teachers. (Hattie, 2005)

Studies at the school level provide insights into how teachers, supported by school leaders, use data for the purpose of improving learning. Much can be learnt from these studies. Three examples illustrate this.

In the first example, a recently published case study (Waddell, 2008) from an elementary school in the US, provides insights into how an ongoing review of summative student achievement data collected over three years transformed teaching practices and closed the achievement gap for students.

Data as an impetus for examining practice: one school's journey

At Viewmont Elementary School in North Carolina the incoming principal noticed that the data from state assessments showed that some groups of students were failing to meet state benchmarks, and the achievement gap between the highest and lowest performing students was around 40%. The decision was made to change this situation.

Over three years the school worked towards becoming a professional learning community. They began by reviewing data from current and previous years, which showed that what was happening in classrooms did not benefit all students. The school set the goal of establishing a focus on data-driven, collaborative professional work. 'Dialogue' and 'data' were key words, and data became the impetus to examine practice. Staff became engaged in conversations about data and teaching practices in small- and large- group meetings.

By the end of the first year, teams had made presentations to the whole staff, and it was recognised that there was a need to change instruction to be more responsive to the needs of all students. In the second year, staff had developed a deeper understanding of literacy instruction, and a model of peer coaching had been established. Significant changes in instructional practices had been made by the end of the second year by many, but not all, staff members. The analysis of data at the end of this year showed that the achievement of students overall had increased, and that there were large spikes in the achievement of lower achieving students.

The evidence provided by the data convinced teachers who had resisted the changes, and school wide implementation commenced. Support was continued in the form of half-day meetings, model lessons, peer coaching and whole-group discussions.

By the end of the third year, the data validated the work of the principal and the whole staff. All students continued to perform well, and the achievement gap had closed from 40% to less than 10% over three years. The staff's commitment to reflection, research and professional growth had become embedded in the school's daily work, and much had changed. (Waddell, 2008)

A second, school-level study is described by Timperley (2005) who reported on a study of a New Zealand school where the assistant principal:

…wanted to use student achievement information during team meetings as a catalyst for professional learning about improving the delivery of literacy programs. Over the time of the study, the teachers shifted from initial beliefs that achievement was determined primarily by outside influences, and therefore, the data were irrelevant to their practices, to using data to improve their practice. Indicative measures of student achievement showed that it improved as a result of their efforts.

In this school, located in a poor suburban area, ninety-five per cent of children enrolled were Maori or from one the Pacific Islands, groups that traditionally underachieve in New Zealand schools. The assistant principal and the teachers collected a range of literacy achievement data in the early years, including, for example, running records and reading tracking sheets, and the Observation Survey (Clay 2002). The assistant principal had considerable expertise in using data to plan programs to meet student needs, but she observed that the teachers were not using the available data for teaching purposes. *"I actually don't see it in their planning. I don't see that it informs their next steps." (Timperley, 2005)*

A characteristic of good data is its potential to help teachers make good decisions about children's learning. Data tell a story. … The two questions uppermost in teachers' minds should be: What does it all mean and; how can we use it to improve children's achievements?

She began a process of professional learning in a team meeting by giving teachers the Observation Survey data taken from her records and *showed how she had started to graph the results, which indicated that the students were not progressing at a rate expected for their age. (Timperley, 2005)* This process continued, with the assistant principal helping teachers to make links

Purposes for using data

between the skills and understandings of the students, and teaching practice.

As the project continued, gains in student achievement were evident. Teachers described gains associated with changes in teaching practices, and commented on the achievements of some students:

"... one student who had written nothing the first time had 27 words the second time." (Timperley, 2005)

A year after the focus on using data to plan teaching, teachers described how they had been working together:

" 'You can identify where you need to put more effort in,' 'We all support each other – we ask, Hey what are your doing to get yours [text levels] up', and 'What do we need to do?'" (Timperley, 2005)

Timperley (2005) teases out the issues that, in this context, needed to be addressed simultaneously to support teachers to use the data to change practice:

◗ identifying the knowledge and skills required to use achievement data;

◗ setting up a situation whereby the data on initial improvement in students achievement challenged the teachers' initial assumptions, and teachers came to realise that the achievement data related to teaching practices;

◗ providing the opportunity for the teachers to make explicit how they might teach differently to improve achievement.

The third example relates to work in numeracy teaching.

It is clear that data tell stories for all; the child, the teacher, the school, the parents and the nation. Without informed analysis or in fact "interrogation" of data and a precise understanding of the story it tells, little or moderate impact will be made on children's achievement. The data provides the base for constructive management of the implicit complexities of teaching in a dynamic classroom. (Tozer & Holmes, 2005)

These comments come from an account of New Zealand work in using numeracy interviews to provide the teacher with immediate and detailed information about children's number knowledge and mental strategies and allowing behavioural observations to be made in response to oral questions. This work demonstrates a process of data gathering in classrooms, and leads to conclusions such as:

The diverse range of children's numeracy needs as evidenced by the data cannot be ignored. The challenge is for the classroom teacher to plan a classroom programme in response to the highlighted strengths and weaknesses in student knowledge and strategies. (Tozer & Holmes, 2005)

On a large scale

A recent large scale study in England (Kirkup, Sizmur, Sturman & Lewis, 2005) was designed to investigate how data was used to promote learning in schools, and to identify good practice in the effective use of data to improve learning. A key finding of this study was that

'Good practice' emerged from the use to which the data was put rather than specific systems or tools. A recurrent theme was that data only becomes effective if it stimulates questions about the actual learning that is taking place and how it can be developed further. (Kirkup, al., 2005)

This study found that, at pupil level, effective use of data
- informs accurate curricular targets for individual pupils
- highlights weaknesses in specific topics for classes or groups
- highlights specific weaknesses for individual pupils
- provides evidence to support decisions as to where to focus resources and teaching
- informs setting and grouping of pupils. (Kirkup et al., 2005)

Using a questionnaire survey and case studies, another English study by Kirkup (2006) looked specifically at the extent to which schools and teachers are able to integrate analyses of summative tests within an assessment for learning approach to teaching. Indications from the survey were that information from formal tests was considered very useful by teachers at the class or year group level, as it could feed into teaching strategies, planning, grouping and target setting strategies.