

**Submission  
No 46**

## **INQUIRY INTO REVIEW OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

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## **PREAMBLE**

I have been asked to write my concerns on the review of curriculum in NSW.

I represent no group but offer my concerns as a former senior educator and one who has listened to many, many worried parents who have been unable to express themselves adequately. I speak for them.

I am not addressing all the issues outlined, but offer global comments as an overview.

- I am a graduate of both the University of Sydney and the University of Newcastle. I hold a Dip T from Sydney and a TDipT from London.
- I held the position in TAFE as Head of Division for Communications in the School of Business Admonistration.
- In that capacity, I devised subjects, wrote curriculum and prepared examination papers for NSW students.
- I lectured to students undertaking teaching studies in the BEd and DipT classes at the University of Newcastle
- I am the published author of eight books on Communications;
- And have contributed to many papers on teaching strategies
- I have developed curriculum for interschool/TAFE courses.
- I have developed curriculum for Aboriginal students in an after-school program
- I taught in New Zealand secondary schools under the Wyndham scheme (our name) where results were a dismal failure and wondered why we adopted such an obvious failure in introducing the principles into our schools.
- In 1971 I became one of three women in Australia who held the position of Shire President. (Coffs Harbour)

- I am in the concluding stages of a book written re corruption in the legal system in the Family Law Court
- I have just completed a series of children's books.
- I am in my 92<sup>nd</sup> year and resultingly, have seen many, many changes in both societal structures and education.
- I have coached ten grandchildren through to HSC and now have a great grandson undergoing the traumas of a six-year old at school, who is being filled with teachers' own fully-uninformed ideologies.
- I trust that the above information lends credibility to my contributions.
- Because I am not at the coal face, my observations are general based as an overview, rather than addressing, individually, each of the criteria, some of which overlap and are repetitive.

## CURRICULUM CONTENT, FLEXIBILITY AND PEGAGOGY

My observations are related to English and associated subjects.

- 1 Too much flexibility in any curriculum leads to experimentation. Experimentation opens the doorway for teachers with nonconfirmust ideas and ideologies. For example:
  - a) A pre-schooler's mother told me how her daughter was being indoctrinated into 'climate change' by demonstrating how we would all drown.
  - b) A father of a primary school said his 8 yr-old could spell such words as 'environment' and 'temperature' and other associated words, but found it difficult to spell his own suburb.
  - c) My six yr-old greatgrandson tells me he is learning triograms! AS a graute in Linguistics and dpuble majors in English, this is a LOL situation. The best way to teach is the simple way for understanding.

- d) England did not INVADE Australia, and this kind of history is sheer distortion and conflicts with Marbo.
- e) Students are being inducted into Aboriginal Culture as a subj which could be talked about and covered in about forty-five minutes. There is no record of Aboriginals in this country for the said number of years being touted; there are no historical records and no artifacts other than some stick figures and maybe a boomerang or two. Teaching these kinds of untruths leads to confusion, divisiveness and an inbuilt sense of guilt. How often is the statement 'I am sorry' or 'should be sorry' reiterated throughout the country?

The danger of too much flexibility, as I said, leads to misinformation based on teaching ideologies.

The content of curriculum should be revised to incorporate language-based responses rather than computer responses or ticks in boxes. Students are losing the ability to articulate other than in accepted slang and idioms; and an increasing amount of jingoism and this is both practised and tolerated by a vast majority of teachers.

The majority of teachers are good teachers but there is an element where pedagogy might be revised as to the effect on some of these teachers. Perhaps a way to improve their methodology would be through teacher assessments, not student assessments.

I am told, particularly by primary teachers that they are embroiled in mountains of paper work, collecting unnecessary data that goes to some unnecessary office where it is filed away. These teachers have stressed they want to teach, not collect useless data. What they want is physical assistance in the classroom and fewer aids. Dotting a student's progress is no more than

a dot. It is the final mark that is the indicator of a student's ability and progress.

## CURRICULUM

Curriculum has been fragmented in order to cater for minority groups and multi-culturalism.

- Regardless of backgrounds, students should be learning how schools function in this country and what our sociology means and what literature we read.
- Children from multi-cultural homes learn the culture they left behind and that relevant language at home.
- What Australia is doing is literally chopping up a curriculum for all nations instead of all nations embracing Australian education.
- I have examined some books in both primary and secondary areas and note the obvious slant to the recognition of all races and racial problems. This is very noticeable in the English subjects.
- There should be a return to the great classics of literature, coupled with both early and modern Australian literature.

Australia has slipped down the educational ladder because we are not examining content in light of our country; we are allowing too much flexibility; and we are keeping teachers 'busy' with non-essential data collection; AND pedagogy should be continually assessed and individual ideas of teachers should be scrutinised from this perspective

## **OVERCROWDING OF THE CURRICULUM**

- There are too many subjects from which to choose
- There are too many 'mickey mouse' subjects such as puppeteering, Japanese, Indonesian, Aborigine, How to Tie a Piece of String and so on. These 'taster'

subjects are no more than a diversion, a waste of teaching time and have no merit or skills required for student futures.

- The purists will argue otherwise and will say that all things are relative to life skills. They are not and if we keep on believing that, we will drop further down the educational ladder, internationally.
- If a curriculum is too crowded, information is learned superficially and is quickly forgotten. A concentration of fewer topics allows for some kind of discovery learning and reinforces the subject matter. Quantity is frequently less. We just don't seem to recognise that fact.

### **OTHER THERE ARE MATTERS OF PUBLIC CONCERN**

The teaching of Gender Fluidity is a matter of grave concern at all levels of education.

If there is anything to be taught about sex, sexual exploitation or aberrations, it should be taught at home.

The teaching of such a matter as a subject is an indication of curriculum flexibility gone wrong.

No student should be subjected to the examination, concentration thought-provoking, inspection of their own or other's genitals because that is what we are talking about. If there was ever a topic introduced to confuse students, it would be this one, particularly for prepubescent children. It is no wonder young adults are becoming confused about their sexuality, take to drugs to ease their pain and then commit suicide. That is the pattern.

To draw attention to, discuss or examine each other's sexual preferences has nothing to do with work skills.

The idea of dressing girls as boys and boys as girls in order to introduce them to what.....is a waste of time and in many cases, an intrusion into people's privacy.

Being the mother of six children, I often witnessed the boys do a skit on women and vice versa at home where they got lots of laughs. To do it at school in order to make children gender conscious is the worst kind of travesty of an individual's right to privacy and morality.

This is another case of where flexibility in curriculum is taken too far possibly these teachers may like to introduce Black Magic or Voodism into the curriculum so that the student is well rounded in educational skills!

Another matter for concern has been the rapid rise in Confuscious schools. The acknowledgment of these schools sets a dangerous precedent for Australiana education, once again bowing to the influence of another country as we do in changing curriculu, to accommodate a multi-culture country.

The recognition of these schools should be condemned and outlawed. If students wish to learn their own Chinese language, go bavck to China and learn it. That is the feeling of every person I have spoken to about this form of curriculum recognition.

The same recognition of outrage by parents re Gender Fluidity should be listened to and acted upon.

Shirley McHugh