



AROUND THE WORLD

**THE EVOLUTION
OF TEACHING
AS A PROFESSION**

**JOHN MORRIS
ROSE PATTERSON**

**THE
NEW ZEALAND
INITIATIVE**

Around the world

The evolution of teaching as a profession

John Morris and Rose Patterson

THE NEW ZEALAND INITIATIVE

The New Zealand Initiative is an independent public policy think tank supported by chief executives of major New Zealand businesses. We believe in evidence-based policy and are committed to developing policies that work for all New Zealanders.

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Education terminology is different in each country but we have used generic terms for consistency throughout the report. The term 'principal' is used consistently to refer to school leaders although the terminology is different in each jurisdiction (head teacher, head master etc). Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is used as a catch-all phrase for all pre-service teacher training, and Professional Learning and Development (PLD) is used to describe all professional learning, development, and in-service teacher training. The term 'Ministry' is used for the body with overall responsibility for education in each country (e.g. the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, the Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture Affairs).

Any errors remain our own.

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List of abbreviations

A Level	Advanced Level
ACER	Australian Council for Education Research
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
AQ	Additional Qualifications
ARM	Alternative Reform Movement
AST	Academy of Singapore Teachers
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
CoP	Communities of Practice
EQAO	Education Quality and Accountability Office
HOD	Head of Department
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GERM	Global Education Reform Movement
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NIE	National Institute of Education
NTIP	New Teacher Induction Programme
NZTC	New Zealand Teachers Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofsted	Office of Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PIRLS	Progress In International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PLD	Professional Learning and Development
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination
PTI	Prince's Teaching Institute
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TLLP	Teaching Learning and Leadership Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Introduction

Rose Patterson

And of course that's part of the fun, the politics, working out what is culturally specific and what is transferable.

– Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, England.¹

In May 2013 I embarked on a six-week journey around the world, starting in Singapore, and travelling to Germany, England, Finland and Canada. My colleague and co-author John Morris travelled to Australia.

The purpose of our respective journeys was to speak with policymakers, politicians, educators, academics, teachers, and school principals about teacher quality policies in those countries, and to understand how those policies worked in practice within their cultural contexts.

This follows from our first report *World class education? Why New Zealand must strengthen its teaching profession*. We identified that though teachers are our greatest educational resource, the status of teaching is not high enough. Career and pay progression is based on time served, not on skills or expertise, and the status of teachers is too low to attract and retain the best people to the teaching profession. While we have a high quality teaching profession overall, it needs to be strengthened to attract, develop and retain top teachers, and we need to work out how the best teachers can share their practice with others to strengthen the whole profession.

So we turn to jurisdictions overseas in this report to find out how they have strengthened or are attempting to strengthen their teaching professions.

We learn from three systems that are performing better than New Zealand overall – Singapore, Finland and Ontario, but we also learn from Germany, England, and Australia, countries that are not performing well but are undergoing reform with the aim to improve. We can learn both from what works, and what doesn't work.

For the purpose of this report we judge performance largely on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results and also on other internationally comparable measures – the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). These studies are not without their flaws, and of course only measure literacy, numeracy and scientific capability. While they do not necessarily measure broad and deep learning, or other more holistic factors like socio-emotional development, these core areas do provide building blocks for further learning. And for the purpose of international comparison they are useful measures. A worldwide obsession with PISA rankings ('PISA envy') has been criticised. However, as an Economist article points out "rankings and data do not tell the whole story. But they provide a useful spur".²

¹ Interview with Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education. London. 22 May 2013.

² *The Economist* (2013, January 19). *Testing education: PISA envy*.

This series of reports on teacher quality is not about taking a model from another jurisdiction and assuming it can be applied with equal results here. As Jennifer Buckingham of The Centre for Independent Studies in Australia argues, top-ranking countries are very different socially, culturally, demographically, geographically, and linguistically from countries like Australia and New Zealand. These features influence educational policy and performance.

Finland's success, for example, is partly due to cultural factors of valuing education, partly due to their largely homogeneous society, and partly due to long-term sustained reform that cannot be realised in one election cycle.

Singapore, for example, is an authoritarian city state and serious consideration needs to be given to the applicability of their policies in New Zealand. Another point of context is that what the 'story' is at the national level may be different from what occurs on the ground. Singapore's Ministry of Education is a well-oiled PR machine and it is notable that no interviews were granted with schools or teachers. Nevertheless, we can still learn from their policies.

John Morris' visit to Australia revealed an infatuation with Asian school systems including Singapore, but now there is a growing recognition in Australia that transplanting systems is not the best way to improve education there. The aim is not to copy and paste education systems or teacher policies, but to think about how some aspects of these policies might apply in the New Zealand context. As Ben Jensen from the Grattan Institute in Melbourne says, "...each country has to tailor reform to its own system and culture".³

We learned that culture plays a huge role in how an education system performs. However, we also learned that good

policy can build on cultural factors. And some systems have seen a culture change. Ontario has turned around a culture of low expectations of students. Students' backgrounds are no longer an excuse for poor educational performance.

This report has six chapters – six case studies. It does not claim to be a comprehensive analysis of the complexities of each country's education system. Each chapter provides a broader context of primary and secondary schooling to set the stage for a discussion on teacher quality and also explores how teachers have been involved in the process of reform. The report does not provide quantitative comparisons of aspects of teacher policy. Instead we picked out some innovative and interesting policies that will be relevant for teaching policy in the New Zealand context.



³ Jensen, B. (2012). *Catching up: learning from the best school systems in East Asia*. Grattan Institute, p. 2

Executive Summary

Singapore

Systematically attracting, retaining and developing teachers

- Singapore is a centralised city state where high-stakes examinations drive student success.
- Singapore selects teachers from the top third of the academic cohort and only 1 in 10 applicants are admitted.
- Policies to attract and retain good teachers have built on a culture of valuing teachers. For example, teachers are paid during their studies and those studying towards a master's degree have 75% of course fees sponsored. Teachers are also paid a stipend every five years.
- Selection processes for entry to teacher training are standardised and rigorous in Singapore, and include a teaching stint in schools.
- Singapore recruits one in four teachers from other fields to the profession as a second career.
- Training is practical, with 22-24 weeks of practicum in the school where the trainee teacher will be posted to once they become a teacher. Every test and assignment has a practical application.
- Singapore provides a career structure for classroom teachers called the 'teaching track'. Professional Learning and Development (PLD) is becoming more school based and is often led by 'Master Teachers'. Teachers are given 100 hours of PLD release time each year.
- Annual teacher appraisals are used both to deal with underperformance

and recognise success with bonuses. They take into account a range of success factors including student achievement and relationships with students and parents.

- The bonus system and the 'teaching track' career systems are competitive, with limited places or bonuses available. To progress up the teaching track, teachers must demonstrate the ability to work with other teachers and share their practice.

Germany

A rigorous system of entry to teaching

- Germany has a low performing and inequitable education system, although they have seen improvements since 2000.
- Poor results in the PISA 2000 study spurred Germany to reform, including the introduction of national standards, longer school days, greater autonomy for schools combined with more accountability. While there was little policy to directly influence the quality of teaching, teachers and their unions were at the forefront of educational change.
- Germany's teachers very much see themselves as civil servants, with a job-for-life mentality. Retention, as such, is high, but this is not necessarily positive. Germany has a problem of teacher burn out.

- Some have partly attributed PISA improvements to older teachers retiring and being replaced by younger teachers.
- Entry to teacher training is competitive. Entrance to university is dependent on high-school examination grades. Then, trainee teachers have to pass a difficult master's level exam to reach the second phase of teacher training, *Seminarschule* (seminar school) where they undertake a challenging two-year teaching apprenticeship. Teachers then must pass a difficult examination (including observations of teacher-student relationships) and their marks determine employment.
- Once teachers have passed through these quality control gates, it is a job for life. There is little support and development, with the lowest participation in PLD in the OECD, no career structures, a pay scale based on experience rather than expertise, and teachers are only appraised once every four years. The culture is changing slowly, where teachers are working together more collaboratively.
- The status of teaching improved after it was made into master's level qualification in the 1970s.
- The Ministry of Education and Culture steers the system but devolves responsibility to local authorities which then devolve responsibility to schools and teachers who are highly qualified and dedicated. This level of trust and professionalism in turn makes the teaching career more attractive, in turn attracting the best to the profession.
- Entry into teacher training is competitive, with rigorous selection processes.
- Teacher training is underpinned by research but is also heavily practical. A large part of training is done in schools owned by the universities.
- Hierarchies in schools exist largely for administration purposes. Culturally, Finnish teachers see themselves as equals. There is no career ladder for teachers (aside from administration) but teaching is already the most respected profession in Finland.
- While pay is largely agreed collectively, schools can pay bonuses to teachers with outstanding skills.
- There are few formal accountability mechanisms in place. Teachers in Finland are highly professional and are held accountable to community standards and values.
- There is little PLD in the official statistics, but Finnish teachers have less classroom contact time than in any other OECD country, allowing more time to plan and help students outside of official class time.

Finland

A highly professional and trusted teaching workforce

- Finland's success in education has been attributed to their relatively homogeneous society. However, the country has systematically invested in establishing a high quality teaching workforce, building on the cultural value of the teacher and education.

England

Devolving autonomy and allowing teachers to lead the profession

- England performs very poorly in international tests of student achievement and as such, is undergoing radical change, including reformation of qualifications, curricula, and the expansion of the Academy Schools programme. The philosophy is to deregulate the system so that innovation can start from the ground up.
- Principals are being given more autonomy and there are many mechanisms for schools to organise into clusters so that leaders can support other schools to improve. This is potentially more effective than centrally-controlled prescriptions of improvement.
- Schools are also forming lateral accountability, a shared sense of responsibility similar to the Finnish model. This is more desirable than centrally mandated accountability, as schools and teachers have a sense of ownership.
- Innovative and diverse teacher training methods are being established and the weight of training is shifting towards schools rather than universities. Schools are clustering together to form alliances with other schools for the purpose of teacher training and ongoing PLD. The new 'Schools Direct' system means that those who want to teach as a second career can come into teaching without having to go back to university.
- Principals are being given autonomy to design their own

remuneration structures within minimum and maximum salary bands. Teachers will no longer necessarily progress automatically up the pay scale.

- The establishment of a truly teacher-owned professional body of teachers, which will neither be an arm of the state nor of the unions, is in the pipeline.

Ontario

Building on accountability and rebuilding trust

- Ontario has had peaceful teacher labour relations over the past 10 years. The previous period was characterised by acrimony between the government and unions when unpopular policies such as increased accountability, standardised testing, and outcomes-based curricula were introduced.
- Measures of success internal to Ontario's education system show improvements during the more peaceful period of the past 10 years. However, internationally comparative data shows sustained improvements from 1995 to 2003, and slight declines since then.
- The reforms introduced between 1995 and 2003, while unpopular at the time, have led to a strong culture of accountability to the public. A deeper sense of peer accountability is also being embedded with the emergence of collaborative work among teachers, similar to England. The culture of expectations has changed and a student's socio-economic background is no longer an excuse for poor performance.

- The government has set a limited number of clear and high targets, and has been effective in getting buy-in from all layers of the education system to these goals.
- The Ontario College of Teachers is a self-regulating professional body with a clear job to protect the public interest. It was set up to be differentiated from teacher unions to prevent conflation with industrial issues.
- Teacher training institutions select teachers from the top 30% of the academic cohort. Ontario also has a huge oversupply of teachers at present, which is problematic but is enhancing competition.
- PLD like in many other countries is increasingly school based and focussed on student achievement.

Neighbouring schools form clusters and one school within each has the responsibility for teacher training, allowing for shared capacity building.

- Appraisal and performance management is a 'tick-the-box' exercise, centrally controlled and not owned by schools. It does not recognise excellent performance, deal with underperformance, nor does it align with career structures. In 2010 the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) consulted widely, including with teacher unions, to develop a performance management framework that would be flexible and responsive to individual schools.
- A part of the framework is to develop National Professional Standards for Teachers with four career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher, similar Singapore's 'teaching track'. There is potential to link the four stages to pay progression, and talk of establishing an Australian College of Teaching to accredit the four levels of the teaching career.

Australia

Moving towards a career structure to raise the status of teaching

- Australia suffers from many of the same issues as New Zealand. While salaries have increased since 2000, the quality of teacher graduates has been declining. There is variability in the quality of teacher training which is not preparing teachers adequately for the realities of the classroom, and entry standards to training are too low. The status of the profession is low.
- However there are examples of good practice. The University of Melbourne's clinical practice model of teacher training is based on the medical training model, rooting the academic study of pedagogy in practical reality.

1.

Singapore – the wealth of a nation

Rose Patterson

The wealth of a nation lies in its people.

– Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of Singapore (1990–2004)⁴

The education system in Singapore has consistently been one of the highest performing in the world. In 2011, Singapore’s Grade 4 and 8 students tied with Korea for the 1st place in the world in mathematics and science in the TIMSS and placed 4th in the world in reading literacy in PIRLS. In the 2009 PISA study, Singapore’s 15-year-olds were placed 5th in reading, 2nd in mathematics, and 3rd in science.

And yet Professor Tan Oon Seng of the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore says, “We are still learning”.⁵ For a country that is leading the way in education, his words exemplify Singapore’s quest for continual improvement.

For a country with no natural resources, Singapore has achieved a lot. Education is seen as the key to the survival and growth of Singapore. The heart of its economy is its people who are well equipped with the skills and knowledge required to drive a 21st century economy, and teachers are the lifeblood of the education system.

Before discussing the teaching profession in Singapore, a brief political and historical context and a broad overview of the Singaporean education system is necessary.

Turning around a kayak rather than a battleship

Singapore is a city state with a population similar to New Zealand but concentrated in a geographical area smaller than Auckland. Schools are organised into four districts that are led by district superintendents in a highly centralised and efficient structure.

It is not just the geographical spread (or lack thereof) of the population that is conducive to this efficiency in Singapore. There are strong elements of pragmatism, orderliness, control and respect for authority that arise from a political system, described by the Economist Intelligence Unit as hybrid with elements of authoritarianism and democracy.⁶

The People’s Action Party has been in government since Singapore’s first general election in 1959. The political stability and consistent philosophy of the government allows for effective and continued policy implementation. As Professor Tan explained, in education and in other policy areas, “Sometimes the question is not whether policy A or policy B is better. The question is if policy A is carried through properly, will it succeed?”⁷ The potential drawback is that success depends

⁴ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

⁵ Interview with Professor Tan Oon Seng, Dean of Teacher Education, National Institute of Education, Singapore. 29 April 2013.

⁶ Economist Intelligence Unit (2012). *Democracy index 2013: Democracy at a standstill*. *The Economist*.

⁷ Interview with Professor Tan Oon Seng, op. cit.

on quality leadership to build effective policy in the first place. However, as East Asian education expert Isabel Nisbet says, Singapore's meritocratic system is "part of the DNA" of Singapore.⁸ Those in leadership positions are extremely capable, having arrived there by their merit and having been sponsored for top-quality management education.⁹

Singapore's policy implementation is often described as seamless. According to an OECD education report, "The government of Singapore is a highly efficient, honest and flexible meritocracy with a strong focus on integrated strategic planning and detailed execution".¹⁰ However, such a description is somewhat naive. Like anywhere, change meets resistance.

In education, teachers do not automatically embrace policy initiatives mandated from above. Teachers initially accept policy changes because they are mandated to do so, but eventually, as researcher Lee Shu Shing explains, "The tipping point arises when teachers begin to see the value of these things, and teacher agency kicks in after that tipping point is reached".¹¹

According to policymaker Timothy Yap at Singapore's Ministry of Education (Ministry), the Ministry engages with teachers and involves them in the change process. As Yap explains, educators are involved in the education policy formulation and curriculum design process from the beginning, and policies are communicated to school leaders and teachers before they are announced to the public. He says this is a reflection of the important perspectives that teachers bring, and their key role in ensuring that policy is implemented well.¹² In this way, teachers are shown respect and recognised as the ones who will implement policy on the ground.

The flip side is that the system is less than democratic. There is no active teachers' union and there does not seem to be much peer encouragement for teachers to voice their concerns actively.¹³ Most of the interviews conducted for this chapter were with Ministry officials and it was not possible to secure interviews with teachers or principals. One source explains that the Ministry is a well-oiled PR machine and that the reality on the ground may be somewhat different.

Schooling in Singapore

Education in Singapore is seen as a social leveller and the philosophy is that no school should be accessed based on family background and the ability to pay.¹⁴ Singapore's highly meritocratic system means that anyone, regardless of background or wealth, can do anything provided they have proven ability.

Confucian traditions

Like other Asian countries, Singapore has a tradition of valuing education and teachers that originates from Confucianism. The major ethnic groups in Singapore are Chinese (75%), followed by Malay (13%) and Indian (9%). Teachers are valued among all ethnic groups and not just by the 'tiger mothers' who push their children to succeed. Teachers and education are also valued regardless of socio-economic backgrounds. "Many people in social housing on Saturday mornings, whatever their occupation, will be in bookstores with their children finding enrichment resources for them," says Nisbet.¹⁵

⁸ Interview with Isabel Nisbet, Senior Education Advisor, Cambridge International Examinations, Singapore. 1 May 2013.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

¹¹ Interview with Lee Shu Shing, Researcher, Office of Education Research, National Institute of Education, Singapore. 30 April 2013.

¹² Interview with Timothy Yap, Planning Officer, Ministry of Education, Singapore. 2 May 2013.

¹³ Interview with Isabel Nisbet, op. cit.

¹⁴ Interview with Lee Shu Shing, op. cit.

¹⁵ Interview with Isabel Nisbet, op. cit.

A public system

Almost all students in Singapore attend government schools run by the Ministry. These are supplemented by a few private schools that are intended to meet the varied needs of the school-going population (such as international students or students who have returned from overseas) while ensuring that these students attain education standards that are on par with Singapore's national education system and international norms.

Singapore's education system is driven by the guiding principle of a student-centric, values-driven education in which 'every school is a good school' that caters to the needs of their unique profile of students. Even so, parents in Singapore try to seek out the "best" schools. For instance, Yap says that in the past, the Singapore media reported on school rankings based on standardised test results, similar to New Zealand's media reporting on our National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results and National Standards. However, this eventually resulted in an excessive focus on grades as a measure of a successful school, and these rankings were abolished in Singapore. Instead, the Ministry highlights success stories for schools that might not be known to parents. Policymakers notice an increase in enrolments in those schools after they are highlighted by the Ministry.

Another key mechanism for attempting to ensure every school is a good school is distributing teacher talent across the system. Teachers are posted to schools in their first two years, after which they may apply for a transfer – although their school preference may not be necessarily approved. While this is the message from the top, a source explains some of the best teachers are strategically posted to the top schools. Principals too are sometimes posted to schools that need to be turned

around.¹⁶ In contrast, New Zealand teachers are free to apply for teaching positions in any school, and schools are free to employ any teacher they wish as long as they are registered.

Pathways to success

Until the late 1970s, Singapore's one-size-fits-all schooling system failed many students who were dropping out of school at unacceptable rates. In 1979, the system was overhauled to open up many alternative educational pathways for children.¹⁷ These pathways are not automatically available to everyone but are based on examination results.

Children attend six years of broad curriculum primary schooling, sitting the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) at the end of Grade 6. PSLE grades largely determine which secondary school children will attend and which course they will take. While the Ministry pushes the line that every school is a good school, a source explains that most Singaporeans would disagree. The competition for entry into 'good' secondary schools indicates at least that there are perceived differences between schools. The exam is highly competitive, and children as young as 10 or 11 are under much pressure to succeed. This competition also acts as a strong driver for school performance (see Box 1).

Based on their PSLE results, students are admitted into one of three streams of study.

- **Express academic:** 60% of students take this four-year academic path, culminating in the General Certificate ordinary level (GCE O-level) examination.

¹⁶ Interview with Isabel Nisbet, op. cit.

¹⁷ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

- **Normal academic:** 25% follow this five-year academic path, sitting the GCE normal level (N-level) examination at the end of their fourth year and GCE O-level at the end of their fifth year.
- **Technical:** 15% follow this five-year technical path.

After secondary school, students attend two years of junior college, polytechnic, or the world-class Institute for Technical Education.

The three streams are changing and more options are being offered to students. Students who take the express academic path and are identified early as having high academic abilities can attend an integrated secondary and junior college programme. This allows them to develop leadership and thinking skills without having to study for end-of-secondary-school examinations.

Some secondary schools specialise in developing talent in specialised areas e.g. sports, mathematics, and the arts. Singapore also now has a handful of specialised independent schools where principals have full flexibility to implement programmes to support weaker students by hiring teachers directly. While these independent schools still offer the traditional courses of mother-tongue language, English and mathematics; they specialise in vocational pathways, such as mechanical engineering, hospitality and retail, and have links with industry.

Usually though, teachers are allocated to schools by the Ministry and principals do not have a choice in who they hire. One argument is that principals cannot be held accountable for performance because they cannot select their own staff; the counter-argument is that the quality of teachers coming through is consistently high already and the job that principals have is to then develop teachers further.

Teaching in Singapore

An attractive profession

Teachers are highly regarded in Singapore, but are not held in the same esteem as doctors and lawyers as they are in Finland. This is mainly because Singapore has other attractive options for talented young people – such as a thriving international financial sector.

A major policy in Singapore which attracts people to the profession is that trainee teachers are paid during their Initial Teacher Education (ITE).¹⁸ Singapore is also effective in retaining teachers: the attrition rate of teachers is lower than the rest of the civil service.¹⁹ This is no coincidence; Singapore actively designs and implements policies to retain good teachers by offering:

- the chance to study part time for a master's degree, with 75% of course fees sponsored by the government.
- a stipend every fifth year for staying on as teachers. If they choose not to withdraw the funds, teachers can save up to SGD\$160,000 (roughly equivalent to NZD) by retirement.²⁰

Behind the attraction and retention of teachers in Singapore is strong ITE, and clear career pathways and progression. There are also strong mechanisms to ensure only the best and brightest are admitted into the profession.

Qualifications

Singapore offers the same types and levels of teacher qualifications as New Zealand does.

Singapore recognises that teachers should have strong academic content

¹⁸ Interview with Professor Tan Oon Seng, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ Interview with S Manogaran, Executive Director, Academy of Singapore Teachers, Singapore. 30 April, 2013.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

knowledge to teach. The majority of teachers first complete a bachelor's degree with a subject speciality before training to become teachers.

Most trainee teachers (85%)²¹ complete their undergraduate degree with a subject speciality before training to become teachers with a one-year postgraduate diploma in teaching specialising in primary teaching, secondary teaching, or junior college teaching.

The remaining trainee teachers (15%)²² come straight from school into a four-year bachelor programme – either a Bachelor of Arts with Education or a Bachelor of Science with Education. The majority go on to teach in primary schools but can also choose to teach in secondary schools.

Although trainee teachers are selected for their strong academic background and content knowledge, “there is a very strong message that you are first a teacher of the learner, rather than a teacher of the subject”, says Professor Tan.²³ In other words, although content knowledge is important, Professor Tan explains that the personal attributes required for teaching are valued more highly.

Selection processes

Selection processes in Singapore are rigorous, with “several gates to ascertain quality”.²⁴ Would-be teachers apply for ITE, have their paper credentials assessed, and are interviewed by a panel which includes a current principal. All selected candidates have to undertake a teaching stint in schools as “contract teachers” where they are further assessed as to whether they have the disposition to teach.

Selectivity is dependent on how many positions are available and how many apply. Singapore hires teachers from the top third of the academic cohort, and in

present economic times, only one in 10 applicants are accepted.

Singapore also recruits one in four of its teachers from other fields.²⁵ This has a dual benefit: it brings people with diverse professional experience into the teaching workforce, but it also reduces the number of places available to young students by 25% – hence increasing competition and the ability to be more selective.

The Ministry directly controls the number of students enrolled in the NIE. Efficient workforce planning means that supply and demand are matched closely in Singapore.

How are teachers trained?

While New Zealand has 28 training institutions for a similarly-sized population, Singapore has only one teacher training institute, the NIE. This makes the task of implementing teacher training policy far more straightforward. This ability to seamlessly implement policy is also helped by a strong and deliberate ‘tripartite’ partnership between the NIE, the Ministry and schools.²⁶

One could argue that having only one institution reduces competition and therefore quality. However, the NIE management knows that the Ministry has considered alternatives for training, so the onus is on NIE to prove its worth in providing high quality ITE.²⁷ The Ministry also ascertains the quality of the NIE by assessing a new teacher's performance after two years, and conducts focus groups with new teachers to feedback on how to improve teacher training.

²¹ National Institute of Education (2013). *Teacher education and undergraduate studies*. Retrieved from www.nie.edu.sg/studynie/admissions/teacher-education-undergraduate-studies/university-admission-exercise-uae-2010-applicants-information-bachel.

²² Interview with Isabel Nisbet, op. cit.

²³ Interview with Professor Tan Oon Seng, op. cit.

²⁴ Interview with Professor Tan Oon Seng, op. cit.

²⁵ McKinsey Education (2009). *Shaping the future: how good education systems can become great in the decade ahead. Report on the International Education Roundtable*. Singapore.

²⁶ National Institute of Education. (2009). *A teacher education model for the 21st Century*. Singapore.

²⁷ Interview with Professor Tan Oon Seng, op. cit.

Pedagogy: an emphasis on practice

The NIE programmes, while rooted in a strong theoretical basis, are heavily practical. In other words, teachers are taught how to teach. “We emphasise the thinking teacher for practice”, says Professor Tan.²⁸ While many universities focus on philosophy for teaching, the NIE focuses on the application of theory to the classroom and student learning.

Like other countries including New Zealand, Singapore recognises that “the gap between theory and practice is something that teacher education programmes need to be aware of – having a balance of classroom experience and knowledge of developments in the education literature (such as pedagogy) is crucial”.²⁹

Attempts are being made to improve the practical application of university-level teacher study:

- Trainee teachers have 22–24 weeks of practicum in schools. Practicum time is important but so is quality. The trainee teacher’s NIE supervisor works with the school, and the trainee teacher is assessed by the NIE supervisor and the school. There is good gatekeeping in place – students are failed if they don’t meet the standards.³⁰
- The school in which a trainee teacher is posted to during their training is the same school they spend their first two years teaching, providing a continuation of the support structure for a beginner teacher.³¹
- Every test and assignment must have a school-based application. There are no theoretical assignments.³²

- The Ministry has provided a five-year research fund of up to SPD\$100 million to the NIE’s Office for Educational Research to research what works in teaching. As Professor Tan says, “[Research] must inform pedagogy ... so we are less sympathetic to blue-sky philosophical ideas. We have a bit of that but we tend to be very pragmatic”.³³

Teachers as researchers of their own classrooms

As outlined in the New Zealand Initiative’s first report in this series, teaching is becoming a more professional career. Worldwide, teachers are expected to be more research driven in their own classes by continually testing their assumptions about what works for student learning. This change in teaching culture is being achieved in ITE at the NIE and by other mechanisms:

- Teachers are encouraged and incentivised to complete a master’s degree to hone their methodological skills.³⁴
- Teachers are encouraged to do ‘action research’ in their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) (a detailed description of PLCs is provided later in the chapter).³⁵
- NIE researchers work with teachers to undertake learning interventions where teachers design and implement the interventions and researchers gather and analyse data.³⁶
- Theoretical knowledge is distilled for teachers in ways they can use in their own classrooms through the NIE newsletter *SingTeach*.³⁷

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Interview with Timothy Yap, op. cit.

³⁰ Interview with Professor Tan Oon Seng, op. cit.

³¹ Interview with Lee Shu Shing, op. cit.

³² Interview with Professor Tan Oon Seng, op. cit.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

³⁶ Interview with Lee Shu Shing, op. cit.

³⁷ Ibid.

How are teachers developed?

We want teachers to have a sense of empowerment.

– Professor Tan Oon Seng³⁸

Like New Zealand, Singapore is concerned about impending teacher retirements and is focusing on recruiting more young teachers.³⁹ The nation has a young population (the median age is 33.5 years compared to 37.2 years in New Zealand), with a growing cohort of younger teachers. While ITE is crucial in determining the quality of teachers, with this relatively young and inexperienced demographic, Singapore is emphasising the pedagogical development of teachers once they begin teaching. The Academy of Singapore Teachers (AST) is responsible for this in-service teacher development.

The Academy of Singapore Teachers (AST)

The professional development of teachers continues to evolve from a largely centralised approach to one which is teacher-led where teachers take greater ownership of their own growth. Seen as knowledge workers and professionals, teachers are empowered to lead the profession.

This has come to fruition in the form of the AST, established in 2010 by the Ministry. Before that, training courses were run by the Training Development Division which was more curriculum- and compliance-related.

The AST focuses on pedagogy and has the benefit of also acting as a network of teachers. Importantly, AST workshops are teacher-led.

Other than organising courses and workshops for teachers, the AST runs subject chapters, bringing together people

teaching the same subject and led by Master and Principal Master teachers (see below). It runs teacher conferences every two years and professional focus groups in specialist areas such as teaching strategies for low-progress learners. The movement towards teacher-led PLD illustrates how teaching is becoming a more professional career. There is real potential with such a model because teachers are more likely to accept new ideas and best practice from colleagues who are still teaching, rather than as in New Zealand where PLD is outsourced to ex-teachers who have escaped from the classroom.

The teaching track

One of the main functions of the AST is to develop teacher leadership capacity and grow the ‘teaching track’ career option that teachers can choose to follow, culminating in the role of a Principal Master teacher. This teaching track, started in 1997, was borne out of a recognition that teachers can stay in the classroom and continue to teach while continuing to grow professionally and share their experience with other teachers.⁴⁰

The teaching track could potentially ensure that good teachers are ‘spread’ throughout the education system. With only a set number of teacher leader positions in a school or cluster of schools, progress up the teaching track may require moving to a school that does not usually attract the best teachers. Because part of the job is to lead others, their expertise is shared throughout the system.

Singapore has a rigorous system for advancing teachers. Reaching the next stage in the teaching track is not easy. It takes at least five years to become a Senior Teacher, another three to five years to become a Lead Teacher, another three to five years to become a Master

³⁸ Interview with Professor Tan Oon Seng, op. cit.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Interview with S Manogaran, op. cit.

Teacher, and a further three to five years to become a Principal Master Teacher. As S Manogaran, Executive Director of the AST, says, “You need to earn your stripes”.⁴¹

To become accredited as a Senior or Lead Teacher, teachers are identified by the principal for their strength in pedagogy. Then a panel of one superintendent and two other principals review a portfolio that showcases classroom teaching, work with other teachers, and what professional development they have undertaken.

Master and Principal Master Teachers are appointed by a panel of senior Ministry officials after assessing their professional portfolios and an interview. These teachers are considered masters of their craft with high levels of ‘pedagogical content knowledge’⁴² (the interaction of subject knowledge and knowledge of how to teach that subject).

The long road of professional development

Singapore has not automatically taken the top teachers and immediately promoted them as Master Teachers. It is deliberately and systematically building leadership capacity. Singapore also offers teachers a ‘leadership track’ and a ‘senior specialist track’.

The average age of a teacher in Singapore is 35, so there is much experience and expertise yet to be developed to reach Master Teacher levels. The main strategy for developing Master Teacher capacity is to offer teachers opportunities to help develop that expertise. Although there is a slow and deliberate process in place to develop this capacity, Singapore is also fast tracking the process by:

- Identifying suitable teachers to consider the teaching track as a career option.
- Offering teachers 100 hours of PLD per year to upgrade their skills in content and/or pedagogy. All teacher PLD in Singapore is tied to student achievement.⁴³
- Encouraging teachers to study part time to earn a master’s degree in pedagogy or instructional design – the NIE covers 75% of the cost.⁴⁴

While the NIE is responsible for ITE,⁴⁵ the AST is mainly responsible for in-service PLD. PLD also happens within schools where teachers work with other teachers in communities to share knowledge on improving student learning.

Teaching communities

The move towards school-based professional development is viewed favourably by schools as the PLD activities are often made relevant by the context and needs of the specific schools.⁴⁶ In Singapore and throughout the world, there is a move towards encouraging teachers to work together in their PLD to improve student learning. The buzzwords in teacher development are PLCs, Communities of Practice (CoP), and ‘de-privatisation of the classroom’.

In the past, teachers would close the door and teach their classes. Now, there are more opportunities for sharing and collaboration. As an integral part of their PLD, groups of teachers come together in PLCs and CoP to share their knowledge and experience and work together as teams to improve student learning. As David Hung, Associate Dean for the Office of Education Research at the NIE, says, “It is one thing to have professional development and another to have it in a more collegial manner”.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Interview with David Hung, Associate Dean, Office of Education Research, National Institute of Education, Singapore. 30 April 2013.

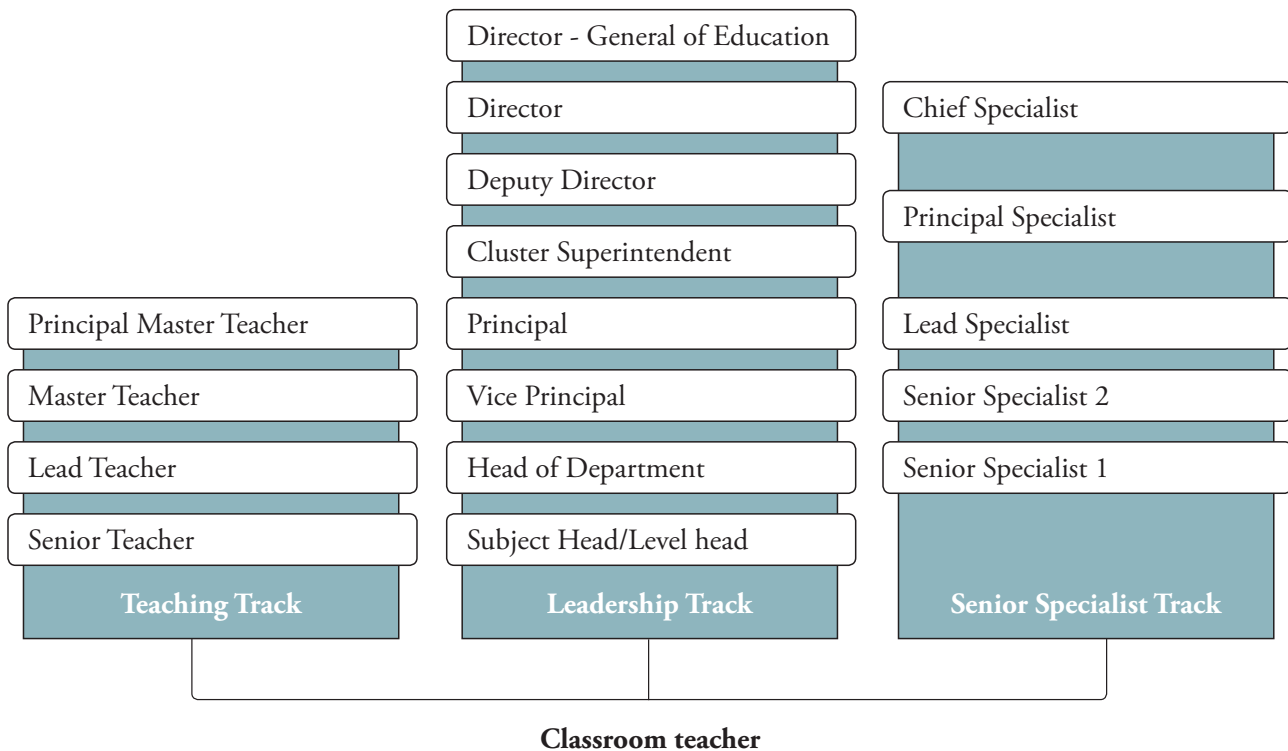
⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Interview with S Manogaran, op. cit.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Interview with David Hung, op. cit.

Figure 1: Career pathways for teachers in Singapore



Source: Career Tracks for Teachers, Singapore Ministry of Education, Retrieved from <http://www.MOE.gov.sg/careers/teach/career-info/>.

The AST provides a structure for PLCs by providing training in effective facilitation of PLCs, while the Ministry provides schools with one hour of release time per week for teams of four to eight teachers to discuss ways to improve student learning outcomes. The release time is necessary. “When you give teachers a task beyond their traditional scope, they have a greater tendency to do it when they are given this time”.⁴⁸

Although release time is necessary, it is not sufficient. There is recognition that simply having PLCs is not effective in and of itself. There is always the risk at schools will use release time to discuss administrative affairs. Singapore is taking steps to ensure that schools are using

their release time to work in PLCs for professional development specifically related to student learning. The AST trains facilitators of PLCs, and school leaders are vital for creating the conditions to run effective PLCs.

The school leadership are extremely important because they give teachers the confidence, flexibility and time to actually participate in school-based projects.⁴⁹

The success of the PLC system in Singapore is perhaps an example of a policy implemented well by providing both the structural and social support for it to work.

⁴⁸ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Salaries and recognition

We don't become teachers for the pay. Yes, the salary is competitive, but the recognition and motivation comes from other avenues.

– Yeo Siok Ee, Teacher⁵⁰

Trainee teachers are paid during their ITE, and once they start teaching they receive competitive graduate salaries that are carefully aligned with market rates. Even so, Professor Tan says, “We don't want [money] to be the primary factor”.⁵¹ The idea is that while the level of recognition should be sufficient, it is not the main driver. The status of teaching and the intrinsic rewards of teaching are considered greater motivating factors.

The difficulties of measuring teacher performance are universal, and also well recognised in Singapore. Singapore rewards effective teaching by using a range of measures, including but not limited to student achievement. In New Zealand too, tying pay to student achievement is met with fierce resistance. It is a model viewed as driving teaching behaviour; that is, teachers become too extrinsically motivated rather than teaching for the intrinsic rewards of teaching. Policymakers in Singapore recognise these dangers.

Performance appraisals, whether for divvying annual bonuses (see below) or career progression, are based on a range of information: relationships with students, feedback from parents, and ‘value-added’ student achievement (student achievement attributed to the teacher, calculated statistically).⁵² School leaders decide where the focus of teaching should be. Student achievement is seen as the outcome, rather than the driver:

One common denominator of schools that seem to attain better results than other schools is that if teachers get right mix of the design, dialogue and learning, normally student outcomes come into alignment accordingly.⁵³

At the same time, teachers are fairly rewarded for their hard work.

The ‘Enhanced Performance Management System’

Singapore introduced the ‘Enhanced Performance Management System’ (EPMS) in 2001 based on a business model of awarding bonuses on key performance indicators. Like other workers in Singapore, every year teachers are assessed holistically by the senior management team of each school and given performance grades ranging from A to E. Teachers who have performed poorly are counselled and coached. In addition, all teachers attend relevant PLD to strengthen their skills and capabilities. Grades A, B and C are associated with bonus payments. Teachers given A ratings receive bonuses of up to 3.25 month's salary, while teachers with C-ratings are given up to 1.5 month's salary. Grades D and E are used to deal with underperformance. Heads of department (HODs) allocate a grade to each teacher based on a range of performance indicators. Then all the HODs discuss the final grades. In the interest of fairness, superintendents sign-off on the grades awarded.

Such a system has the potential to create negative competition, with teachers vying for higher grades or positions. Yet all field interviewees (Ministry officials and researchers at least) indicated a strong culture of sharing and collaboration in Singapore's teaching profession.

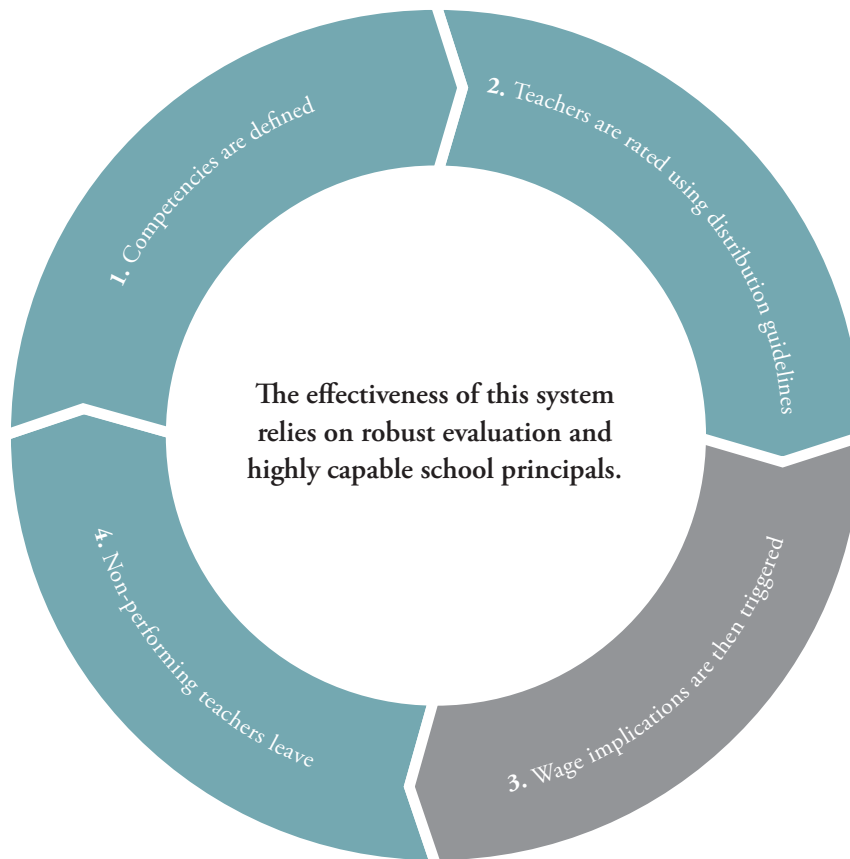
⁵⁰ Interview with Yeo Siok Ee, Senior Officer, International Relations Planning Division (teacher seconded to the Ministry of Education), Ministry of Education, Singapore, 2 May 2013.

⁵¹ Interview with Professor Tan Oon Seng, op. cit.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Interview with Paul Chua, Researcher, Office of Education Research, National Institute of Education, Singapore. 30 April 2013.

Figure 2: Performance-based compensation in Singapore



1. Competencies are defined identifying the skills and knowledge expected. Detailed descriptions of the competencies, and suggestions for improvement, are provided.
2. Distribution guidelines are approximately normal, allowing differentiation between performance levels.
3.
 - A-rated teachers get bonuses of up to 3.25 months' salary (bonus pool varies by year).
 - C-rated teachers' average bonuses are equivalent to their salary for 1.5 months.
4. E-graded performers put in a performance review for 6-9 months (termination possible).

Source: Barber, M., & Mourshed, M. (2009). *Shaping the future: How good education systems can become great in the decade ahead. Report on the International Education Roundtable.* McKinsey & Company.

Box 1: 21st century learning and the locked-down box

Singapore is heavily invested in developing ‘21st century skills’ such as critical thinking and problem solving. As East-Asian education expert Isabel Nisbet explains:

The proportion of the population who will need to be able to apply their minds critically to what they are doing, as opposed to proficiently and efficiently following processes, will be much higher.⁵⁶

However, core academic knowledge is not compromised. Policymakers believe it is possible to develop 21st century literacy skills without compromising on basic knowledge: “It is important to have a strong core. You cannot think without content”.⁵⁷ It need not be one or the other.

While high-stakes examinations are still in place, the core academic knowledge will remain at the heart of the education system. While teachers may be encouraged to try new methods of teaching and encourage 21st century learning skills, the knowledge of content required for the high-stakes examinations at the end of primary and secondary school, and the accountability to parents to open futures for their children, are stronger drivers of teacher behaviour.

Nisbet says the Singapore education system consists of a locked-down box sitting within a larger box. The small box contains the risk-free tried-and-true methods of teaching that lead to results in high-stakes examinations in core academic subjects. Outside that box, Singapore is highly innovative with dozens of initiatives.⁵⁸

There is a lot of discussion around Asian countries desiring more creative teaching, but while high-stakes examinations are in place in their current form, content will remain the core of teaching.

There are two key factors to balancing the apparent tension between competition and collaboration, which are not seen as mutually exclusive in Singapore. First, school leaders are responsible for balancing this tension and creating trusting and collegial environments. Second, there are incentives to encourage healthy competition – to progress, teachers must demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively to share and enhance the work of others.

According to Nisbet, while some teachers might perform particularly well

in one year and achieve an A grade, with natural fluctuations in performance, they may not consistently perform at the A grade level each year. This allows others to have an opportunity to excel.⁵⁴

Overall, Singapore seems to have implemented its EPMS well. As Hung says, “The system does have its trade-offs, but it does lift performance overall.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Interview with David Hung, op. cit.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Interview with Isabel Nisbet, op. cit.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Summary and conclusions

Singapore's political climate and geography allow for relatively seamless and sustainable policy implementation, and its meritocracy ensures strong leadership. The success of the education system is down to intelligent policy and detailed execution, but teachers and students alike are still highly driven by high-stakes examinations. Policymakers push the message that Singapore is bringing more creativity to the classroom, but high-stakes examinations throughout schooling are still by far the most powerful drivers.

While the Confucian tradition of valuing the teacher and recognising the importance of education gave Singapore a good starting point, the view of the teaching profession was not always this rosy. In the 1970s, for example, teacher morale was low and attrition high,⁵⁹ and this likely deterred many from pursuing a teaching career.

Teachers are now the heart of the education system, and the Minister of Education in particular is generous with praise for Singapore's teachers. This political support from the top is essential to teacher morale. Cultural factors help the high status of teachers in Singapore, but good policy continues to make teaching a desirable profession by attracting and retaining the best and brightest candidates.

The culture of a high status profession has been preserved by intervening at critical points – for example, when talented people had other career choices in good economic times. Since the 1990s, in particular, Singapore has invested in developing “tremendous capacity at the point of education delivery”.⁶⁰ Singapore is a proven model of how it is possible to lift the status of education via good public policy.

Trainee teachers are paid during their study and receive a competitive graduate salary as teachers. Teaching is an attractive career choice and only those with high academic credentials and the disposition to work with children are selected to be teachers with many quality control barriers in place.

Quality control is also effective at the training stage, with only one training institution that works in partnership with the Ministry. Training at the NIE is heavily practical, and the practicum element is undertaken at the school trainee teachers will be posted to once they begin their career, allowing for long-term relationships with their mentors in the beginning stages of their teaching careers.

Teachers are respected professionals, and there is a great drive to improve teaching and leadership capacity in the system. The development of Master Teachers and the teaching track encourages exceptional teachers to lead others, raising the overall profile and status of the profession. There is evidence for recent changes in the teaching culture too: a) from compliance-related top-down training to teacher-led PLD for improving student learning, and b) from one-off external courses to PLCs. Teachers now work together in schools on long-term projects to improve student learning with the help of structural (release time) support and social support (school leadership).

Stipends and bonuses to teachers encourage career development and high retention of good teachers. While student achievement is important, it is only one factor in a more holistic picture of teacher appraisal. Teachers are paid competitive salaries and recognised fairly for excellent teaching. Singapore's bonus pay system, implemented in a healthy culture, leads to healthy competition that lifts the whole profession.

⁵⁹ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

There are reservations about following Singapore's policies for strengthening the teaching profession. Although bureaucrats say that education in Singapore is not centrally controlled, the reality is that Singapore is still an authoritarian society. Policies would need to be carefully considered in New Zealand with its liberal democracy.

However, there are lessons to be learned from Singapore – particularly for remuneration and career development. While New Zealand teachers receive nearly automatic pay increments for the first eight years or so, teachers in Singapore receive compensation based on performance.

Box 2: Class size: evidence-based pragmatic policymaking

Singapore is known for its pragmatic approach to problem solving, allocating resources, and building and implementing policy, with a strong awareness among policymakers of the constraints on resources and budget.

Singapore uses research evidence to inform policymaking to get the best bang for its buck. For example, Singapore is not alone in thinking that class sizes should be small. Teachers want as much opportunity to provide the best individualised care for their students as possible. Intuitively, reducing class sizes should be a good thing. But reducing class sizes by half means, of course, doubling the budget. Policymakers in Singapore asked whether the intuition was backed by empirical research: Does reducing class size matter for student achievement? And their questions dig deeper still: in what situations does class size matter, and for which subjects?

Research shows that class size is very important at the lower primary level in particular. So class size was reduced for the first two years of primary school to no more than 30 students. And at secondary school, schools were given 10 extra teachers and the autonomy to deploy teachers creatively to best meet students' needs.⁶¹



⁶¹ Ibid.

2.

Germany – shocked into reform

Rose Patterson

The PISA-2000 results were rather disappointing and had a high impact on educational policy. People often refer to this as some sort of beneficial PISA shock ... The German States started many programmes and projects at the regional/local level as well as at the federal level to approach the problems that PISA had revealed.

– A respondent from Germany for an OECD report⁶²

In 2000, Germany experienced a great shock. The first round of PISA in 2000 revealed that contrary to the perceived excellence of Germany's education system, Germany in fact ranked quite low in international tables in student achievement. Germany's 15-year-olds performed much worse than their international counterparts in reading, mathematics and science. To compare with New Zealand which ranked 3rd place in reading, Germany ranked 21st.

Not only did Germany perform poorly on average but by international standards, it also had one of the highest correlations between family socio-economic status and student achievement.⁶³ As *Die Tageszeitung* reporter Christian Fuller explains:

All of a sudden an industrialised country, a world leader in exports, had to recognize that 25% of its students went to school without learning what they would need later in life to contribute to the economy and act as a responsible citizen.⁶⁴

New Zealand's education system ranks much higher, so are there any lessons to be learned from Germany? In fact, the lesson from Germany is we can still improve.

PISA 2000 results shocked Germany into speeding up educational reform, resulting in much improved performance between 2000 and 2009. Not only that, but the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students reduced by 25 score points. In contrast, between 2000 and 2009, New Zealand saw worse performance and more inequity. Instead of being complacent about New Zealand's education system, New Zealand needs to address any gaps and introduce reforms to ensure New Zealand maintains its high PISA ranking. This chapter discusses these reforms, after a background on the structure of Germany's education system.

The German education system is overseen by the Federal Ministry, which also regulates policy and funds research, but each of Germany's 16 federal states is responsible for its own education policy and delivery.

⁶² Breakspear, S. (2012). The policy impact of PISA: an exploration of the normative effects of international benchmarking in school system performance, *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 71, OECD Publishing, p. 15.

⁶³ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

⁶⁴ Pearson Foundation (2011). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: a video series profiling policies and practices of education systems that demonstrate high or improving performance in the PISA tests*. Germany [video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.pearsonfoundation.org/oeecd/germany.html>

Table 1: Germany and New Zealand PISA results (2000 and 2009)

	Germany 2000	New Zealand 2000	Germany 2009	New Zealand 2009
Reading	21 st – 484	3 rd – 529	20 th – 497	7 th – 521
Mathematics	20 th – 490	3 rd – 537	16 th – 513	13 th – 519
Science	20 th – 487	6 th – 528	13 th – 520	7 th – 532

Sources:

OECD. (2010). *PISA 2009 results: what students know and can do – student performance in reading, mathematics and science (volume 1)*.

Max-Planck Institute for Human Development. (2001). *PISA 2000 zusammenfassung zentraler befunde*. Berlin.

While this chapter sometimes refers to education policy at a national level, field research for this report focused on comparing and contrasting teacher policies in two states: the top performing state, Bavaria in the south, and one of the poorest performing states, Bremen in the northwest.

The contrast between states is important, because state-by-state PISA results released in 2002 showed great disparities in performance between German states. This caused an even greater uproar than the original PISA shock.⁶⁵

The three-tiered ‘feudal class’ system

The wide inequities in education performance in Germany have been attributed to Germany’s three-tiered ‘feudal class’ system.

In most German states, children go to primary school until the age of 9 or 10, and are then separated into one of three types of school. As figure 3 shows, in some states children go on a preparation stage at age 10 before being split into one of the three tracks. Unlike Singapore, which also separates children at age 10 into academic or vocational tracks by school grades, in Germany, this is based on school

recommendation and ultimately parent choice.

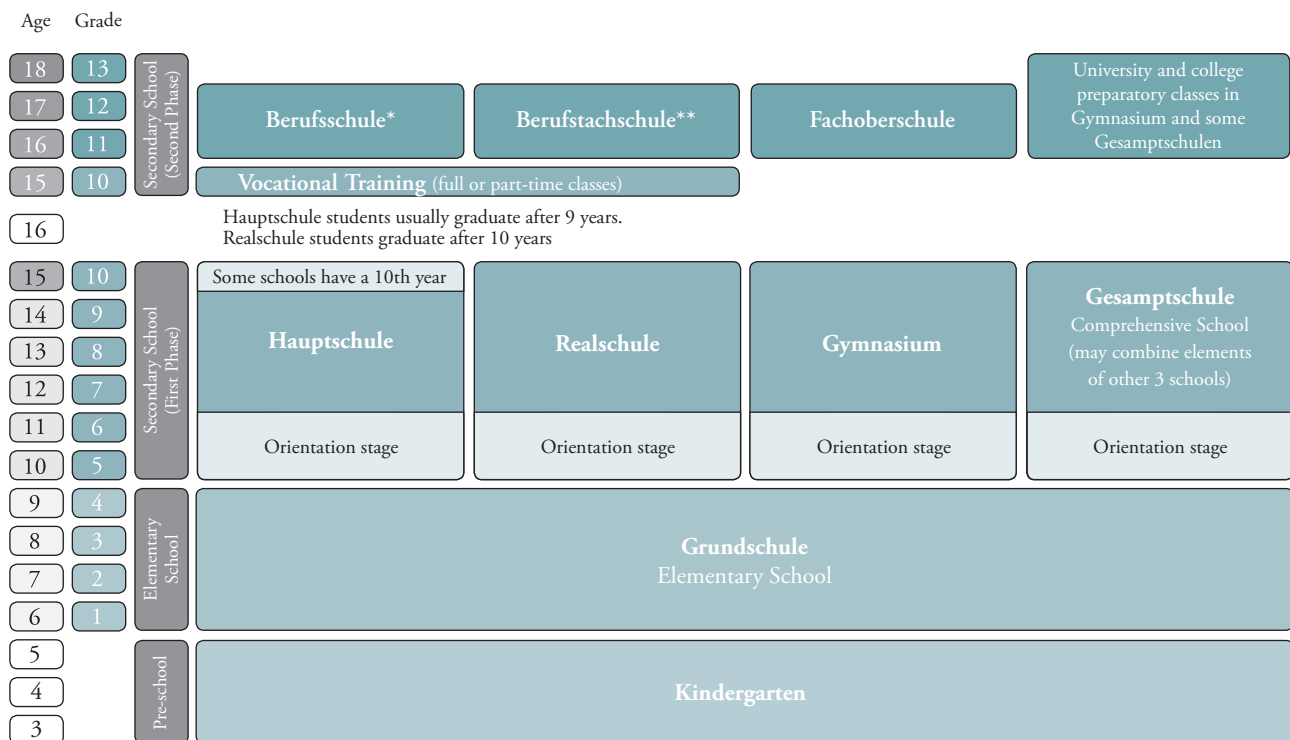
Children not deemed academically bright go to *Hauptschule* (*Mittelschule* in Bavaria), which generally leads to blue-collar jobs, referred to as the ‘low track’ from here on. The brighter kids go to *Realschule* (‘middle track’), which usually leads to white-collar middle management positions. The most academically inclined children are enrolled in *Gymnasium* (‘high track’), a grammar school in preparation for university. An OECD report says: “These school divisions corresponded rather neatly to the social divisions that characterised feudal Germany”.⁶⁶ Some states have a fourth type of school – the *Gesamtschule* – a comprehensive school for children of all abilities.

These tiers in the education system were effective in the past when children attending the low track went on to get good apprenticeships. In fact, the vocational training system that follows the low and middle tracks is one of Germany’s greatest educational success stories (see box 3). However, the streamed system failed to adjust to the changing shape of Germany’s economy.

⁶⁵ Waldow, F. (2009). What PISA did and did not do: Germany after the ‘PISA-shock’. *European Educational Research Journal*.

⁶⁶ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

Figure 3: School system in Germany



* Berufsschule: Apprenticeship combines work and classes

** Berufstachschule: Vocational Training (full or part-time classes)

Source: <http://www.howtogermany.com/pages/germanschools.html>

From the 1950s to the 1970s, Germany faced a shortage of low-skilled workers. Immigrants mainly from Turkey, Greece and Italy came to work and settle in Germany and many of those children entered the low track system. However, once demand shifted towards higher-skilled jobs, the low track became a ‘dumping ground’ for immigrant children and children from lower class German native families. These problems continue to the present day. Children who attend the low track are often stigmatised because these schools are seen to serve the educational ‘leftovers’. It is the third-generation migrant families in Germany who experience the most problems in education today.

The 2000 PISA study found that a child whose parents went to *Gymnasium* (high track), of equal ability to a child whose parents went to *Hauptschule* (low track), is three times more likely to go to a *Gymnasium*. Head of the PISA study Andreas Schleicher says that in Germany, children are “divided between those deemed to pursue careers of knowledge workers and those who would end up working for the knowledge workers ... mainly along socio-economic lines”.⁶⁷ There is some “permeability” in the system meaning that students can move between the tracks. Arnulf Zöller, Director of the State Institute for Quality and Education Research in Bavaria explains that nowadays, 50% of people coming to university do not come through the traditional *Gymnasium* route.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Schleicher, A. (2012, July). *Use data to build better schools* [Video File]. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/andreas_schleicher_use_data_to_build_better_schools.html

⁶⁸ Personal interview with Arnulf Zöller, Director, State Institute for Quality and Education Research, Munich. 7 May 2013.

Box 3: Germany's vocational system

Although Germany's three-tiered system has been blamed for the large educational disparities in Germany, the vocational aspect of the system is seen as one of Germany's main strengths leading to the nation's economic success. From around age 15, students in the low and middle tracks can enter the country's vocational training scheme. This three-year programme sees young people apprenticing three to four days per week in one of the 350 clearly defined and highly regulated professions of their choice, from hairdressing to optometry. The remaining one or two days per week are spent studying theory in school. Students have to find an organisation to offer them a training contract, and are paid a low wage.

However, students who attend the low track are much less likely to be taken on board by firms because of the reputation of these schools, as outlined before.

The balance of the high track (*Gymnasium*) for academic pursuit and the middle track (*Realschule*) for vocational pursuit was acclaimed in an OECD report:

[The] twin impulses underlying the German education system, one driven by the Romantic, Idealist philosophers towards a very humanistic non-instrumental image of education, and the other just the opposite, a vision of education that put education for vocation and occupation at the centre, were both very much alive, each balancing the other.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD, p. 206.

⁷⁰ Halász, G., Santiago, P., Ekholm, M., Matthews, P., & McKenzie, P. (2004). *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Country note: Germany*. OECD.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² There are no caps in theory, but students still must have good Abitur (end of school examination) marks to make it into some courses, and if they don't make the grade, there are long waiting lists.

The way teachers are given incentives and deployed through the three tracks may exacerbate inequities between the three tracks. Those wishing to become secondary school teachers choose at the outset to be a *Gymnasium*, *Realschule* or *Hauptschule* teacher, which creates a clear silo effect. As an OECD report noted, "The diverse and fragmented structure of schooling has far-reaching implications for the training and employment of teachers".⁷⁰ Industrial representation for teachers is also in silos – unions represent the issues of their representatives rather than teachers as a whole.

Gymnasium teachers are better paid than their *Realschule* or *Hauptschule* counterparts, creating a bias towards attracting higher quality teachers to *Gymnasium* (in some states *Hauptschule*

teachers are paid less than *Realschule* and *Gymnasium* teachers).⁷¹ The theory that the high track attracts better teachers is borne out by the evidence: in Bavaria at least, while there is an oversupply of *Gymnasium* teacher graduates, there is high demand for teachers in *Mittelschule* (the word for *Hauptschule* in Bavaria).

One might ask why Germany does not cap the placements on university courses for trainee *Gymnasium* teachers to regulate the supply more fairly. This is because according to Basic Law in Germany, citizens may pursue any academic or career pursuits they wish to, meaning that there are no caps on university courses, and no limits to the number of universities that offer teacher training.⁷² Therefore, placement on courses is driven by university student

demand. *Gymnasium* teacher careers are in greater demand than *Mittelschule* teacher careers – the logical conclusion being that *Gymnasium* teaching is a more attractive career, attracting higher quality candidates and exacerbating the gaps between the school tracks.

PISA shock – the catalyst for reform

Changes to the three-track streaming system have been one part of PISA shock reform in Germany. PISA shock sparked intense public debate, and acted as a catalyst to speed up many other reforms in the pipeline and introduce others.⁷³ The federal government implemented national standards, which were previously fragmented by state, to send a clear signal of what children were expected to have learned by a certain age. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds were given more support, and many states lengthened the school day.⁷⁴ Schools were given more autonomy to design their school days and became more accountable for their performance.

Many states have done away with the stigmatised low track and combined *Realschule* and *Hauptschule* into one middle track. Some commentators believe there will no longer be a distinction between *Realschule* and *Hauptschule* in 10 years throughout Germany – that is, there will be only one middle track.⁷⁵ Bavaria, however, may be the exception to this.

Bavaria

As part of the field research for this report, I travelled to Bavaria during the Munich Spring Festival, the quieter version of the Oktoberfest, and saw young men and women cheerily singing traditional songs dressed in traditional Bavarian

costumes. Tradition and conservatism define Bavaria and its school system.

A southern state of 12.5 million people and 5,000 to 6,000 schools, Bavaria has a history of independence from federal politics. One report notes that Bavarian individualism has been especially evident in the school system.⁷⁶

Like Singapore, Bavaria has benefited from the consistency of politics; Bavaria's conservative Christian Socialist Party, aside from a three-year break, has held power since the end of World War II. Bavaria has the strongest economy and the strongest education system in Germany.

Scratching beneath the surface though, Bavaria is the state least likely to correct for social disadvantage through education. Critics have argued that this is due to Bavaria's stubbornness and resistance to change. Even when children are matched for cognitive and reading skills, those from blue-collar backgrounds are six times less likely to go on to the high track (*Gymnasium*) than a child from a white-collar or civil service background⁷⁷ (more than double the national rate). Children from immigrant families are also less likely to access higher education: "The ratio of students at a *Gymnasium* to *Hauptschule* is 10:8 for Germans, but 10:57 for Italians and 10:77 for Turks."⁷⁸

A 2007 report claimed that the school system in Bavaria has become more closed in the last 30 years. That is, the choice made at age 10 largely determines the future of that child. Ten years ago, Bavaria was the only state where school recommendation for which track students would take was binding – based on school grades.⁷⁹ Now though, the Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has changed the rules so that parents do have a choice as to which type of school their child will go to.⁸⁰ Interviewees in Bavaria say their system is now "permeable", meaning children

⁷³ Waldow, F. (2009). What PISA did and did not do: Germany after the 'PISA-shock'. *European Educational Research Journal*.

⁷⁴ Pearson Foundation (2011). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: a video series profiling policies and practices of education systems that demonstrate high or improving performance in the PISA tests. Germany* [video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.pearsonfoundation.org/oeed/germany.html>.

⁷⁵ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD, p. 210.

⁷⁶ Rotte, R., & Rotte, U. (2007). Recent education policy and school reform in Bavaria: a critical overview. *German Politics*, 16 (2), p. 1.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Piopiunik, M. (2013). *The effects of early tracking on student performance: evidence from a school reform in Bavaria*, Ifo Working Paper, No. 153.

⁸⁰ Personal communications with Marc Piopiunik, Researcher, Leibniz Institute for Economic Research, University of Munich. 9 June 2013.

can move vertically into the other tiers. Fifty percent of people going to university now do not come through the traditional *Gymnasium* route.⁸¹

Even before the PISA shock, Bavaria had reformed its tracking system in 2000. Aside from children who went straight to the high track, children were separated into the middle or low track at the end of Grade 6 (age 12). After the reforms, they were separated earlier, at the end of Grade 4 (age 10). A recent analysis concluded that the reform lowered performance in both the low and middle track, while performance remained steady for the high track.⁸² Unlike other states that combined the lower and middle tracks into one, Bavaria has retained its three tracks and set the path for children even earlier in their development.

Bremen

Bremen is Germany's smallest state and home to 5,000 teachers. It is made up of two cities: the city named for its state: Bremen, where the majority of Bremen's population of 664,000 live, and Bremerhaven. Bremen is a quaint town and a stroll along the mazed lanes of the fifteenth and sixteenth century Schnoor quarter leads to the statue of the Brothers Grimm fairytale Bremen musicians.

Bremen's economy, however, is one of the worst in the country. At 11.4%, its unemployment rate is relatively high for Germany (4.4% in Bavaria). The Bremen docks are the fourth-largest container trans-shipment point in Europe, and one in three jobs indirectly or directly depend on the docks. Bremen also has high rates of immigration. After Bremen's appalling PISA results, school structure was intensely debated. Like Bavaria, Bremen students now go straight to secondary school at age 10. Unlike Bavaria, however,

Bremen has combined the low and middle tracks into one type of secondary school, reducing the three tracks to two.

Detailed PISA results by region are not available, but despite the large gap between Bremen and Bavaria in 15-year-olds' average reading ability, Bremen's performance improved while Bavaria's remained steady from 2000 to 2006⁸³ (table 2). This may be due to the differences in school structure. While Bavaria retained the stigmatised lower track, and pigeonholed children into tracks at an even younger age, Bremen's merging of the lower and middle track likely had a positive impact. Indeed, the OECD has analysed factors for school performance to find:

In countries where 15-year-olds are divided into more tracks based on their abilities, overall performance is not enhanced, and the younger the age at which selection for such tracks first occurs, the greater the differences in student performance, by socio-economic background, by age 15, without improved overall performance.⁸⁴

Teachers in Germany

The problems facing teaching are the same everywhere in the world: there are too few men in teaching; there is an perception that people who do not know what they want to do with their lives become teachers; primary school teachers don't have enough specialist subject knowledge; rural areas struggle to attract teachers. And like in New Zealand, remuneration in Germany "is related to a very limited number of aspects – in essence, qualification, age and years of experience".⁸⁵

⁸¹ Interview with Arnulf Zöller, op. cit.

⁸² Piopiunik, M. (2013). *The effects of early tracking on student performance: evidence from a school reform in Bavaria*, Ifo Working Paper, No. 153.

⁸³ Results by federal state are not available for 2009.

⁸⁴ OECD (2010). *PISA 2009 results: what makes a school successful? Resources, policies and practices, Volume IV*. OECD.

⁸⁵ Halász, G., Santiago, P., Ekholm, M., Matthews, P., & McKenzie, P. (2004). *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Country note: Germany*. OECD, p. 36.

Table 2: PISA reading results for Bavaria, Bremen and New Zealand (2000 and 2006)

	Bavaria	Bremen	New Zealand
PISA 2000 reading	510	448	529
PISA 2006 reading	511	474	521

Source: http://www.focus.de/schule/schule/bildungspolitik/pisa/tid-12583/bundeslaender-im-vergleich-lesekompetenz-im-internationalen-vergleich_aid_349340.html

While there are similarities, there are of course also differences, the most pertinent being cultural, in that German teachers very much see themselves as civil servants.

Teachers as civil servants

As one teacher explains when discussing the policy of the teachers being posted to schools (rather than teachers individually applying for positions as in New Zealand), “It is part of the civil service idea that you are sent to wherever you are needed”.⁸⁶ Some states reformed their systems after 2000 to allow schools to hire their own teachers under management theory principles of increased autonomy for schools coupled with greater accountability.⁸⁷

Teachers enjoy many benefits in Germany. It is a job for life with job security and benefits like health care subsidies, exemptions from insurance contributions, and an excellent pension scheme. “A teacher can only be dismissed under extraordinary circumstances”.⁸⁸ With those benefits, teachers view themselves as being in a privileged position, are expected to be loyal, and receive fewer worker rights than private employees; there is no collective bargaining through the unions – these are regulated through educational authorities,

and it is illegal for government employees to strike.

The situation is often described as – once a teacher becomes a civil servant, he or she can relax.⁸⁹

There is very little attrition of teachers because of the ‘career for life’ mentality. Retaining teachers who have burn out however is not necessarily helpful. Medical and psychological studies in Germany indicate that “up to one-third of teachers suffer [sic] from various physical, psychosomatic and psychological problems often described as the ‘burn-out syndrome’”.⁹⁰ Recent 2009 PISA data on teacher absenteeism indicates this is still the case: the majority of school leaders said teacher absenteeism hindered student learning to some extent. Only 18% of German school leaders answered ‘not at all’ to this question compared to 40% in New Zealand.⁹¹

As the OECD report noted: “It is debatable whether the school system should be interested in attracting individuals whose main motivation is job security”.⁹² The civil servant nature of the teacher’s role in Germany has its advantages and disadvantages.

⁸⁶ Interview with Mrs Fischer, Teacher Trainer. Luitpold Gymnasium, Munich. 6 May 2013.

⁸⁷ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD, p. 209.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Halász, G., Santiago, P., Ekholm, M., Matthews, P., & McKenzie, P. (2004). *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Country note: Germany*. OECD, p. 36.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 24.

⁹¹ OECD. (2013). *Interactive data selection results 2009 – Perceived hindrances to school capacity to provide instruction*. Retrieved from <http://pisa2009.acer.edu.au/interactive.php>.

⁹² Halász, G., Santiago, P., Ekholm, M., Matthews, P., & McKenzie, P. (2004). *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Country note: Germany*. OECD, p. 34.

Teacher reform

Although teacher quality is well recognised as the most important factor in student achievement (outside of the home), it seems teacher quality was hardly broached in the reforms implemented after the 2000 PISA shock in Germany. This may have been because changes to teacher quality occurred organically as large proportions of the teaching workforce retired and were replaced by a younger generation of teachers. A 2004 OECD report noted that the German teaching workforce had one of the oldest age structures among OECD countries, and half the teaching workforce would retire in the 2010s.⁹³ Older teachers may have lost some of the enthusiasm they once had for teaching, and may be likely to adapt to the changing demographic profile of their students and new technologies. Karl Ulrich Mayer, a professor of sociology suggested that “Some of the effects of the improvement in performance after PISA were due to the recent hiring of younger teachers”.⁹⁴

Another possible reason for the lack of explicit intervention to improve teacher quality is that teacher quality and professionalism were already high before and after reforms.⁹⁵ Teaching is a highly regarded profession in Germany (although, like Singapore, it does not enjoy quite the same status as medicine or law⁹⁶). One interviewee remarks that teachers are actually more respected by society than they perceive themselves to be respected.⁹⁷

Contrary to the OECD report’s assertion that teacher professionalism was high before and after reforms, one interviewee, Manfred Prenzel, Dean of the TUM School of Education, notes that teachers have become more professional and less ideological since the reforms. “There was a shift in thinking

about responsibility as the other part of autonomy”.⁹⁸ Although there were no specific policies for addressing teacher quality, the accountability measures introduced as part of the larger sweeping educational reforms may have improved teaching quality.

While there was not much reform of teacher quality itself, in 1999 (remembering that reforms were already in the pipeline prior to PISA shock) the German Government and the Länder (each German state) started a national debate and made 12 recommendations for education reform based on broad agreement. “Teachers: the key to education reform” was recommendation number 5.⁹⁹ Teachers were seen as key agents of change for wider educational reform.

Teachers – leaders of change

PISA shock and the public pressure that resulted from it gave impetus to reforming the German education system. An OECD report claims that “the German teachers and their unions knew how important it was for them to get out in front of the reform process if they were not to be steamrollered by it”.¹⁰⁰ Yet teachers did not compromise on what they valued. For example, fearing the linking of the newly introduced national standards to performance pay, teachers ensured that data was collected on a sample basis, yet they were open to data collection for improving student performance. The tests introduced as a result of the reforms may also have been better accepted in Germany than in New Zealand because of the clarity of their purpose: formative and diagnostic assessment rather than for judgment and evaluation.

Part of the reason teachers may have been happy to front foot reform is, as an

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 212.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Interview with Mrs Fischer, op. cit.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 24.

⁹⁸ Interview with Manfred Prenzel, Dean, TUM School of Education, Munich. 7 May 2013.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Halász, G., Santiago, P., Ekholm, M., Matthews, P., & McKenzie, P. (2004). *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Country note: Germany*. OECD.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 213.

OECD report has pointed out, is that teachers are well consulted in Germany:

Germany is notable for the mechanisms to guarantee that teachers participate in the development of teacher policies. Teachers' involvement is ensured not only through teacher organisations but also by their direct participation in different consultative bodies, namely councils at school, regional and Land levels. Teacher organisations [unions and professional associations] articulate teachers' views on a wide range of educational issues, promote research to inform the policy debate, and play an important role in the formulation of educational policy.¹⁰¹

As part of the Germany's educational reforms of the last 10 years, teachers also welcomed longer school days as they were associated with commensurate pay increases. Teachers no longer go home at lunchtime as they did 10 years ago.

However, the idea that teachers openly embraced changes is perhaps oversimplified at the national level. According to a more critical 2009 report, in Bavaria at least, teachers have not reacted well to reforms.¹⁰² The paper claimed that rising pressures like student behaviour problems, reform exhaustion, longer working hours without improvement in conditions, fear of innovation, increased criticism from parents, and teacher shortages resulting in larger classes – all lead to major burn out. Retirement age is usually 63 to 65 years old, but 50% of teachers quit before reaching the official retirement age, between 51 and 56 years old. The supply problem in Bavaria was so serious that parents were asked to stand in for teachers.¹⁰³

However, four years later, Bavaria now faces an oversupply of teachers, at least in *Gymnasium*. And as one teacher explains,

although initially resistant to the changes, teachers have become accustomed to them. Echoing a Singaporean researcher, the “tipping point arises when teachers begin to see the value of these things”. Teachers' resistance to change in New Zealand is not unique.

Who becomes a teacher?

In Germany, as long as the Abitur (university entrance) is passed, there are no regulations as to who can train to become a teacher. Two ITE providers interviewed for this report said there are rigorous selection processes for trainee teachers, basing entry on school marks and an interview and counselling process to ensure candidates are suitable for the realities of a teaching career.

There are no regulated caps on teacher training positions in Germany, so selection procedures are only as good as the pool of people wanting to pursue teaching. Also like New Zealand, teacher training faculties are generally not well respected,¹⁰⁴ and the system is highly fragmented. One report noted that there were more than 40 categories of teachers in Germany, as some are organised by level (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary) and some are organised by type of school (*Gymnasium* etc).¹⁰⁵

Seminarschule – the secret to success?

Teacher training in Germany occurs in two distinct phases. In the first, all trainee teachers come through the university system to gain specialised subject knowledge, majoring in at least two subjects, including educational studies. Students must pass a difficult state-influenced exam at a master's level to enter the second phase of training. This

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Rotte, R., & Rotte, U. (2007). Recent education policy and school reform in Bavaria: a critical overview. *German Politics*, 16 (2).

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Arnulf Zöllner, op. cit.

¹⁰⁵ Halász, G., Santiago, P., Ekholm, M., Matthews, P., & McKenzie, P. (2004). *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Country note: Germany*. OECD.

university phase lasts three to four years, and in total, teacher training takes five to six years.

Unlike other states in Germany, Bavaria does not have a cut-off point in that exam other than passing. As a result, university graduates from other states who miss the cut-off point for becoming a teacher in their own state come to Bavaria where they are guaranteed a place in the second phase of teacher training. The Bavarian teacher training program has such a reputation of excellence that these graduates are highly likely to find jobs back in their home state.¹⁰⁶

So what is this second phase? It is a fully practical 18-month to two-year apprenticeship in a *Seminarschule* – schools that operate as usual but also train young teachers. In Bavaria, trainee teachers spend six months in one school, one year in another, and then the last six months back in the initial school. In one school visited, the two teacher trainers were responsible for 20 trainees. Trainee teachers observe lessons and give supervised lessons where they are given feedback from their peers and trainers. In the second year, trainees start teaching lessons.

At the end of the two years, trainee teachers take an examination that includes a written thesis, an oral examination, and an evaluation of their teaching skills.¹⁰⁷ In Bavaria, this is based on three official lesson observations by two trainers over the two-year period. These observations are based on a range of factors, and relationships with students are considered extremely important. Most teachers who reach the end of the two years pass the second stage, but many who find the demands of the job too challenging drop out of the course on their own before they reach this stage. This naturally weeds out many who are not fit for the demands of teaching. It is no secret that teaching

is a difficult career in Germany. As one teacher explained, “If you don’t work hard you’re not going to be very happy in this profession, I’m afraid. It is too hard not to do the job well”.¹⁰⁸

Although most trainee teachers pass the second stage, the grades vary considerably, and only those who reach a certain threshold, determined by state-wide demand for teachers, will be employed in the public school system. The job market is highly competitive, and trainee teachers need to work very hard to get jobs. Of course, as in New Zealand, the demand for teachers in Germany depends on the subject area and the type of school. Only around one-third of those who train for *Gymnasium* schools end up with jobs in *Gymnasium*.¹⁰⁹

This two-year apprenticeship programme is in many ways similar to New Zealand’s two-year induction and mentoring programme, except in Germany, it is seen as part of training rather than the first years in a teaching career, and teachers are paid an apprentice wage.

Considering the two years as training rather than employment has major implications for performance expectations. In New Zealand, school leaders often bemoan beginner teachers’ lack of classroom experience. In Germany, these specialised *Seminarschule* know that aside from content knowledge, their trainees are blank slates and it is their job to provide the practical training required for the job.

Still, expectations and reality do not always meet, and like Singapore and New Zealand, there are constant efforts in Germany to reduce the gap between theory and practice. The second phase is criticised for not having good linkages to the initial university phase and to teachers’ subsequent employment.¹¹⁰ In Bavaria in 2002, new regulations came into effect

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Mrs Fischer, op. cit.

¹⁰⁷ Halász, G., Santiago, P., Ekholm, M., Matthews, P., & McKenzie, P. (2004). *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Country note: Germany*. OECD.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

where teachers now must have internships in schools and firms before starting university, and a few weeks of practicum in schools during their studies.¹¹¹ There is also a move to teach education papers at university from a problem-oriented perspective – for example, how to develop experiments to teach children science. Germany has been criticised for focusing too much on content knowledge and not enough on pedagogy.¹¹² Like Singapore, the move is towards offering education papers at university that are less about philosophy and sociology, and more about the functional relevance of teaching in schools.

Despite offering some more practical components while studying at university, as one teacher trainer explained, “What it is really like – they learn here [in *Seminarschule*]”.¹¹³ The vocational aspect of teacher training is the biggest strength of Germany’s teacher education. One study noted that school influence on ITE is the strongest in Europe.

In saying this, the culture of a ‘job for life’ in Germany for teachers has meant that teachers have little practical experience outside the education system. In recognition of this problem in Bavaria, teachers at vocational schools now can take a year to work in other occupations. People start teaching and earn their teacher qualifications at the same time, and their first step on the salary scale recognises prior experience. In 2001 though, only 3% of teachers came through as ‘side entrants’ from other occupations.¹¹⁴

Continuing development?

As noted in the first report of this series, induction and mentoring systems are more effective as part of wider systems of PLD for teachers. Germany should be no exception to this, yet it seems that once

teachers are employed in the state system, they are left almost completely to their own devices, with very little support and development.

In Bavaria teachers attend 12 days of PLD every four years as mandated by the state since 2002 (around 24 hours per year). Bremen teachers must do at least 30 hours of PLD per year and they choose PLD depending on their goals. Compare this to Singapore, where teachers are provided 100 hours per year of high quality PLD related to student achievement and development. According to the 2000 PISA survey, the extent of teacher participation in professional development activities in Germany is the lowest among OECD countries.¹¹⁵

There is little PLD for German teachers, and once teachers have completed their two-year ‘probationary’ period and employed in a permanent position, they are appointed for life. From there on, teachers are given very little feedback. Where in New Zealand and Singapore, teachers are appraised once a year by their school leaders, principals in Bavaria are required to conduct an appraisal once every four years.

It may be that the high quality, intense two-year training, with plenty of observation and feedback, is seen as sufficient. However, one does question the extent to which teachers become rusty in their practice over time. In saying this, there seems to be some movement in Germany to more observation and sharing among colleagues, even if teachers are not receiving feedback from school leaders themselves.

This may be partly because school principals in Germany perceive themselves as teachers with extra administrative duties rather than school leaders. A 2004 OCED report says: “Teachers, as well as principals seemed to be astonished when we asked questions about how often the

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Interview with Mrs Fischer, op. cit.

¹¹⁴ Halász, G., Santiago, P., Ekholm, M., Matthews, P., & McKenzie, P. (2004). *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Country note: Germany*. OECD.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

principal visits the classroom to observe teaching and learning in action in order to give feedback to teachers”.¹¹⁶ The report noted that there was work to shift school management into the paradigm of a profession in and of itself.

The ‘job for life’ mentality of German public servants comes hand in hand with little ability to progress career wise. Teachers may become teacher trainers, take up school administrative positions, or apply for posts in the Ministries, but there is no formal career structure for staying in the classroom. Compare this to Singapore where clearly defined career paths encourage collaboration and sharing of excellent teaching among the teaching fraternity.

Teachers and researchers often use the image of the teacher in Germany as an island, or “lone fighter”.¹¹⁷ Traditionally, teaching has been a private affair in Germany. “You go into the classroom, you close the door, and with the exception of the pupils no one really watches what you’re doing ... the culture is still – you do your own thing in your own classroom”.¹¹⁸ An analysis of PISA data from 2009 shows that while 88% of school leaders in New Zealand and 76% in Singapore said they used teacher peer reviews to monitor the practice of teachers in schools, only 22% did so in Germany.

There are some mechanisms for encouraging a more collegial environment. As Prenzel notes: “During the last decade, I would say there have been a lot of initiatives in Germany to foster the collaboration between teachers and do it with respect to standards”.¹¹⁹

In Bavaria, a quality management system introduced since the reforms means that teachers work in groups of six to eight to set goals and improve the quality of education their students receive. A new evaluation system (similar to the Education Review Office model

in New Zealand) focuses on teaching. In addition, there is a trend of mathematics and science teachers working together. Schools can apply for funding for these teachers to work together in PLCs where they compare teaching methods, work out how to diagnose errors, and so on. PLCs encourage colleagues to observe one another’s lessons.

Although none of this seems as formal or organised as it is in Singapore, there is certainly a trend in Bavaria towards more sharing among teachers. As one teacher trainer explained, while there is no pressure to work collaboratively, the younger teachers are encouraged during their training to work together and pool resources.¹²⁰

In Bavaria, teachers are paid well initially. Pay is comparable with engineer salaries.¹²¹ Pay progression, like New Zealand, is fairly automatic, although the waiting times between steps are longer.¹²² Typically, teachers progress every two years up the first five steps of the 12 steps of the pay scale, and then the time to progress gets progressively longer. Experience is valued – everyone goes up the scale and the only variation is in how long it takes. Although a civil service law was reformed in 1997 to increase motivation and mobility for public service staff to introduce “career paths where promotion is no longer based on seniority but performance”,¹²³ teacher unions in Germany favour the traditional system where everyone is paid the same.¹²⁴ It seems these civil service law reforms never made it to the teaching profession.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Mrs Fischer, op. cit.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Manfred Prenzel, op. cit.

¹²⁰ Interview with Mrs Fischer, op. cit.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Halász, G., Santiago, P., Ekholm, M., Matthews, P., & McKenzie, P. (2004). *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Country note: Germany*. OECD.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Interview with Manfred Prenzel, op. cit.

Summary and conclusions

As a result of Germany's realisation that they were not high performers in education internationally, Germany has undergone major educational reform in the last 10 to 15 years. Teachers have been at the forefront of that reform, in recognition that they are vital in delivering the change necessary for improving system-wide performance.

The road to becoming a teacher in Germany is difficult. Like Singapore, German teachers are expected to have excellent content knowledge learned at university. The two-year apprenticeship model for beginner teachers is similar to New Zealand's induction and mentoring system, except that teachers are still considered to be in training. Trainee teachers are trained in schools specialising in the practical elements of the job. In addition, Germany has solid quality control gates to ensure only the most committed become teachers in the first place.

Teachers are highly professional. It is likely that Germany's relatively low performance is a function of school structure (streaming into ability tracks) rather than poor teachers, or at least that the best teachers are allocated to the *Gymnasium* schools.

Once past those quality control gates, teaching is a job for life. Teachers in Germany are civil servants and as such take their place in society seriously. However, the lack of career structure for teachers in Germany, and the 'job for life' mentality, are possible causes of stagnation and burn out. This seems to be the case particularly for older teachers, many of whom have been moving into retirement in the last few years to be replaced by younger teachers. But even though these younger teachers are more collaborative in their approach to teaching and work with

others to improve their practice, there is very little formal PLD and no career structure in place. Teachers get almost no feedback from school leaders or peers, and pay progression is based on experience rather than expertise or performance.

The culture is changing, though. As part of reforms, schools are being given more autonomy and are expected to be more accountable for student outcomes, and teachers are collaborating more to improve performance.



3.

Finland – a model of teacher professionalism

Rose Patterson

Most observers have come to believe that, if there is a key to the success of the Finnish system, it is the quality of their teachers and the trust that the Finnish people have vested in them.

– Center on International Education Benchmarking¹²⁵

Finland was as shocked as Germany with its PISA 2000 results, but for Finland, the shock was more of a pleasant surprise. Finland was at the top of the international league tables, had the most equitable education system, with the smallest variations in performance among all OECD countries.¹²⁶

It was unexpected because Finland never had the goal of topping the PISA charts. The Finnish people interviewed in the field work for this chapter seemed to regard competitive scrambling for the top with some disdain. PISA success was the result, rather than the goal, of excellent policy.

Since PISA began 13 years ago, thousands of policymakers and educators the world over have travelled to Finland to mine the secrets of its success. The global interest in Finland is such that it is placing extra burden on the education system: one school visited for the report receives 50 groups of visitors every year, and Finland has had to divert resources to hosting international visitors since PISA 2000.

Finland and New Zealand are similar in land size and population – there are 5.4 million people in Finland and 4.4 million in New Zealand. In Finland, one-fifth of the population is densely located in Helsinki, while one-third of New Zealand's population is concentrated in greater Auckland.

However, the similarities end there. The cultural and ethnic homogeneity in Finland is intrinsic to its education success – and also the reason Finnish education policies cannot be easily replicated elsewhere. Finland has only 3.4% foreign-born citizens,¹²⁷ compared with a much more diverse population in New Zealand. Despite this, there are pockets of communities in Finland with high proportions of immigrant families (in Helsinki, one in five children is from non-Finnish ethnic background), raising concerns about ensuring an equal education to all children. Some schools in areas with up to 75% immigrant families are experiencing a 'Finnish flight' – native Finnish people are sending their children to schools in other areas.

¹²⁵ Center on International Education Benchmarking. *Finland overview*. Retrieved from www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/finland-overview/

¹²⁶ Sahlberg, P. (2011). *Finnish Lessons*. New York: Teachers College Press, p. 45.

¹²⁷ Total foreigners living in Finland 195, 511 of population of 5, 426,674. Figures retrieved from Statistics Finland. http://www.stat.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk_vaesto_en.html

Table 3. Finland PISA scores and international (OECD) rankings (2000 - 2009)

	2000	2003	2006	2009
Reading	1 st – 546	1 st – 543	2 nd – 547	2 nd – 536
Mathematics	4 th – 536	1 st – 544	2 nd – 548	2 nd – 541
Science	3 rd – 538	1 st – 548	1 st – 563	1 st – 554

Sources:

OECD (2003). *Literacy skills for the world of tomorrow: further results from PISA 2000*. OECD.

OECD (2004). *Learning for tomorrow's world: first results from PISA 2003*. OECD.

Telford, M., & Caygill, R. (2007). *PISA 2006: How ready are our 15-year-olds for tomorrow's world*.

Ministry of Education New Zealand.

OECD (2010). *PISA 2009 results: what students know and can do – student performance in reading, mathematics and science (volume I)*. OECD.

Finland did try affirmative action to bring more people from other ethnic backgrounds into teaching, but found that language skills were problematic. This policy has since been scrapped, and all teachers now come through the competitive model. But education policymakers are trying other policies to attract non-Finnish born people into teaching. For example, high school students from immigrant families are being given more support to do well in school and to choose a teaching career, says Hannele Niemi, Professor of Education at the University of Helsinki.¹²⁸ Still, the size of the foreign-born demographic in Finland is small.

Ethnic and cultural homogeneity does not necessarily make for classrooms of children with equal ability, as there are many other background factors that influence student ability. Finland has undertaken major educational reforms to provide equitable levels of education to children of different ability, primarily by introducing comprehensive schooling for Grades 1–9 in the 1970s.

Before that, Finland's system was similar to Germany's: After four years of education, Finnish children could take up

additional schooling leading to vocational education, or attend grammar schools leading to university.¹²⁹ As Pasi Sahlberg, educator and scholar notes, students in Finland were held to different expectations before the reforms:

Earlier, these subjects [mathematics and foreign languages] had three levels of curricula that pupils were assigned to based on their prior performance in these subjects, but also based on their parents' or peers' influence.¹³⁰

After Finland combined all schools into one comprehensive system in the 1970s, achievement gaps between high- and low-performing students declined.¹³¹ Finland also offers special support to 30% of its students who need remedial work. As seen by PISA results, the reforms to make education more equitable is not at the expense of high achievement overall.

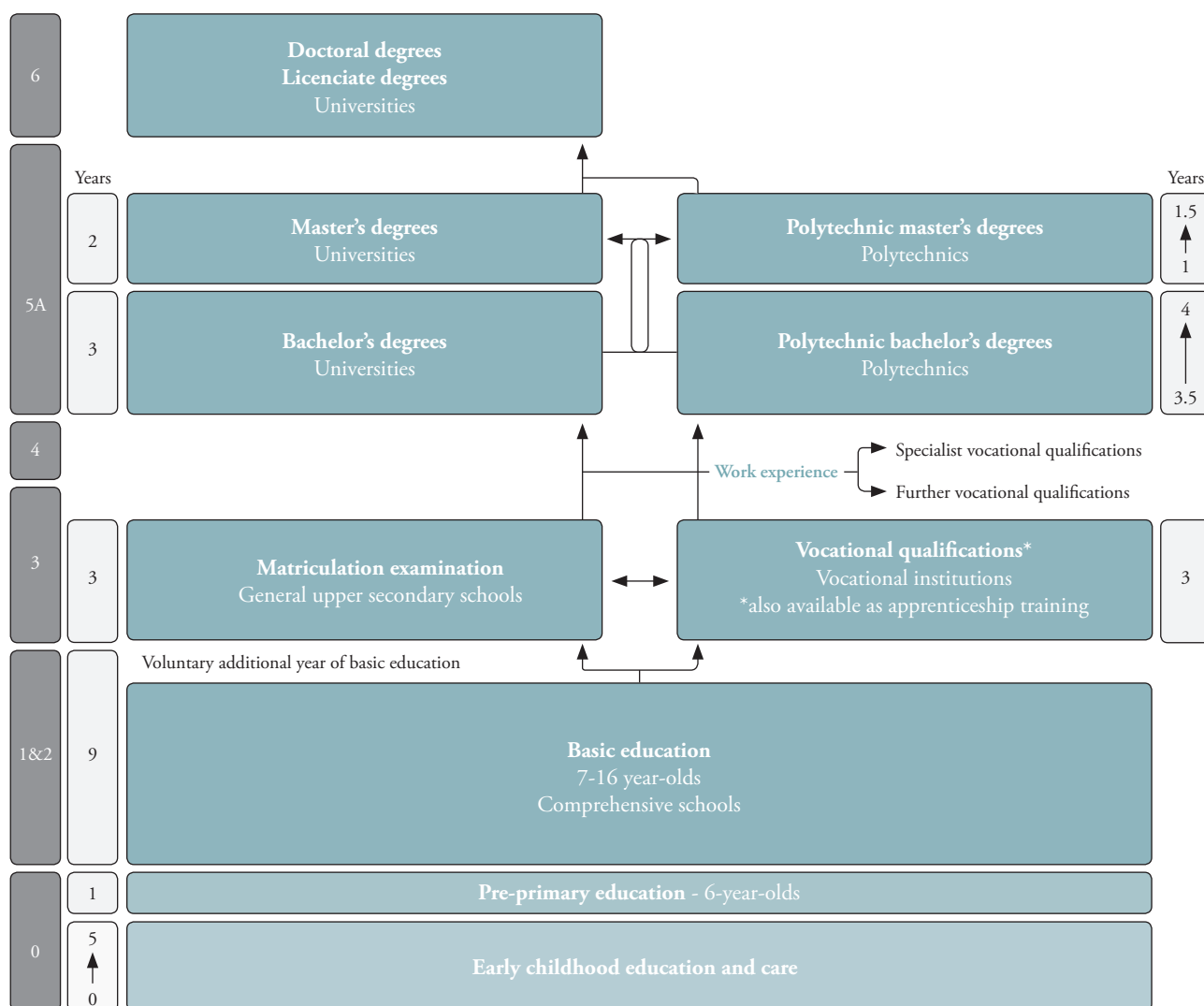
¹²⁸ Interview with Hannele Niemi, Professor of Education. University of Helsinki, Helsinki. 14 May 2013.

¹²⁹ OECD. (2010). *Finland: slow and steady for consistently high results*. OECD, p. 119.

¹³⁰ Sahlberg, P. (2011). *Finnish lessons*. New York: Teachers College Press, p. 45.

¹³¹ Ibid.

Figure 4: School system in Finland



Source: Ministry of Education and Culture and (2012). Finnish education in a nutshell. Retrieved from http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2013/liitteet/Finnish_education_in_a_nutshell.pdf

A peaceful education system

The two main goals of education in Finland are to ensure equity in society and teach students lifelong learning skills.¹³² The reforms have been so successful that since the 1970s, Finland hasn't had to change its education system much. "It has been very systematic and sustainable. Everybody has played their part."¹³³

From the outside, the Finnish education system appears ideal but there are real tensions, says Niemi. However, Finland has clear, simple national guidelines, arrived at by consensus, that Niemi says "create a strategic environment so when there are tensions, we go back to those basic guidelines".¹³⁴

¹³² Interview with Hannele Niemi, op. cit.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

The structure of schooling

After turning seven, every child in Finland receives a basic general education for nine years. The first six years are with a ‘class teacher’ (primary school teacher) who teaches across the curriculum, and the last three with ‘subject teachers’ (secondary school teachers). After that, the school system is split into vocational and academic tracks (whereas the entire system was once split into streams – now the first nine years are comprehensive).

The Ministry of Education and Culture (the Ministry) is responsible for education policy, and ‘steers’ the system rather than controlling it. This perception of ‘steering’ exists throughout the education system – it is not just a line from the centre but something that everybody knows and follows.

The National Board of Education is responsible for implementing the nation’s education policy, and local authorities (municipalities or joint municipalities) allocate funding, recruit personnel, and usually delegate decision-making power to schools.¹³⁵ Although there is little variation in educational outcomes between schools (only 7% between-school variance in reading¹³⁶), there are large economic differences between municipalities. The amount of federal money given to the municipalities is based on the number of students in each municipality, but the municipalities are the main funders and are responsible for the quality of education.

By contrast, New Zealand has self-managing schools so there is no middle regional layer of bureaucracy. Instead, Boards of Trustees are appointed for each school which delegate responsibility to school principals. Although there are more layers in the Finnish education system compared with New Zealand, each layer steers the system and devolves

responsibility downwards. For example, local municipalities appoint principals and then generally leave principals to run their schools, hire staff and manage budgets – and this is usually done in collaboration with teachers. Teacher salaries are paid by the school.¹³⁷

Principals do not see themselves as above or separate from teaching staff. As one teacher trainer says, there is no official middle management in schools. They do not uplift anyone as superior, as this would go against a collegial working atmosphere. Hierarchies do exist, but more for efficient administration.

Finland – the alternative model?

Sahlberg’s book on the Finnish education system, *Finnish Lessons*, and much of the publicity surrounding the bestseller, positions the Finnish system as opposing the Western reform models (discussed briefly in the first report in this series). Sahlberg characterises the Finnish education reforms as the Alternative Reform Movement (ARM), while Western reforms are characterised as the ‘Global Education Reform Movement’ (GERM) (see table 4).

It is overly simplistic to put New Zealand in one camp or the other because it leads to ideological debate and false dichotomies. For example, consider ‘focus on literacy and numeracy’ versus ‘focus on creative learning’. New Zealand schools are good at fostering creativity, but current policies are designed to place more emphasis on literacy and numeracy – considered the basic building blocks for accessing further knowledge.

Regardless of whether New Zealand is in the ARM or the GERM camp, or somewhere in between, none of these policies matter without quality teachers to implement them. The contrast between

¹³⁵ Ministry of Education and Culture (2012). *Finnish education in a nutshell*. Retrieved from http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2013/liitteet/Finnish_education_in_a_nutshell.pdf

¹³⁶ Sahlberg, P. (2011). *Finnish lessons*. New York: Teachers College Press, p. 45.

¹³⁷ Education for All (2000). *The EFA 2000 assessment: country reports – Finland*. Retrieved from www.unesco.org/education/wef/countryreports/finland/rapport_1.html

Table 4: Pasi Sahlberg's Characterisation of Western vs. Finnish Education Reform

'Global Education Reform Movement' (GERM)	'Alternative Reform Movement' (The Finnish Way)
Standardising teaching and learning	Customising teaching and learning
Focus on literacy and numeracy	Focus on creative learning
Teaching prescribed curriculum	Encouraging risk-taking (locally-owned curriculum)
Borrowing market-oriented reform ideas	Learning from the past and owning innovations
Test-based accountability and control	Shared responsibility and trust

Source: Sahlberg, P. (2011). *Finnish Lessons*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Finland and Singapore is a case in point. Finland has been driven by the ARM model, and arguably, Singapore fits more firmly into the 'GERM' camp than any other country studied in this report. Yet both countries systematically invest in their teaching profession and perform remarkably well, despite vastly different educational philosophies.

Test-based accountability versus shared responsibility and trust

It is worth exploring the last line in table 4. In Finland, there is testing and evaluation but with the understanding that they are for formative reasons – to identify gaps and problems to recommend improvements. This is throughout the system, from the Ministry to the universities' faculties of education, to teachers using testing to diagnose student learning. Teachers make great use of student assessment data to monitor how they are doing.

There is national-level testing too, but only on a sample basis. That way schools get feedback at a national level about their students and this information is used to make improvements overall.

Importantly, as in Singapore and Germany, end-of-school examinations are high stakes. As noted in the Singapore, the power of high-stakes examinations to motivate student- and teacher- behaviour should not be underestimated.

An OECD report noted the perplexing question of how Finland produces such good results without any accountability systems. After all, an OECD report identified the two factors that led to school success – autonomy and accountability.¹³⁸ Principal Aaltio says:

Paradoxically, [the success without accountability can be attributed to] the heavy Finnish emphasis on student assessment. While the Finns do not assess for school accountability purposes, they do an enormous amount of diagnostic or formative assessment at the classroom level.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ OECD (2011). *PISA in focus. school autonomy and accountability: are they related to student performance?* OECD.

¹³⁹ OECD (2010). *Finland: slow and steady for consistently high results*, p. 127.

Competition

The Western model is often characterised as competitive. Olli Määttä, Head of International Relations at the Normal Lyceum of Helsinki says, on the Finnish aversion to competition, says: “We don’t regard it that high ourselves. We love teaching, we love the results, and we love our kids, but we’re not into competition that much”.¹⁴⁰

While the Finns are quick to say they don’t like competition, there are in fact competitive pressures in Finnish education. And competition exists where it matters most: becoming a teacher.

Three interrelated points about competition show how a certain amount of the right kind of competition can be highly effective.

First, competition need not be a categorical either-or concept. Rather, it exists on a continuum. Compared to Singapore, Finland’s education system is less competitive rather than ‘not competitive’.

Second, competition can exist without the negative connotations the word arouses for the Finnish people – of vying for being the best. Finland is a peaceful and equitable society and the nasty sides of competition are not seen in a good light.

This brings the argument to the third point: competition does not need to come at the expense of somebody else winning. For example, in Singapore, the teacher career ladder is highly competitive with only the best gaining promotions. But promotion in Singapore rests on demonstrated ability to work with others, lead others, and help others improve their practice.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Olli Määttä, Head of International Relations, Normal Lyceum of Helsinki. Helsinki. 13 May 2013.

¹⁴¹ Center on International Education Benchmarking (2013). *Finland overview: teacher and principal quality*. www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/finland-overview/

¹⁴² OECD (2010). *Finland: slow and steady for consistently high results*, p. 119.

Teachers in Finland

Teaching is Finland’s “most respected” profession, and primary school teaching is the most sought-after career.¹⁴¹

Finland today is fiercely independent, with a history of subordination to Sweden for 600 years and a self-regulating part of Russia for 100 years before becoming independent in 1917. Like Singapore, Finland has a long history of respecting teachers and education, since the 17th century when priests and teachers were the most respected people in society. Teaching is one of the most attractive professions in Finland. As Sahlberg notes:

We are a small nation that the rest of the world sees as a strange place that speaks a language nobody else understands. Over the last half-century we developed an understanding that the only way for us to survive as a small, independent nation is by educating all our people. This is our only hope amid the competition between bigger nations and all those who have other benefits we don’t have.¹⁴²

While this historical respect helps, Finland has not rested on its cultural laurels. Like Singapore, specific policy interventions have raised the quality of the teaching profession in Finland.

As is the case with other top-performing countries, observers often dismiss the Finnish example because they see the status of teachers as a cultural characteristic that cannot be altered by policy and therefore as not replicable. But ... among the top performers, the status of teachers on closer examination appears to

be in large measure the result of the implementation of specific policies and practices ... that are quite replicable.¹⁴³

Indeed, since the reforms of the 1970s, when teaching became a master's level profession, the status has improved and universities are seeing more applicants for teacher training than ever, says Jari Lavonen, Professor at the University of Helsinki.¹⁴⁴

There is a perception in the West that teaching is an easy career in Finland – a 'nice' career with eager children ready to learn. However, Lavonen says:

It is challenging work, especially in primary and lower secondary school, because of the policy to integrate all kinds of students in the classroom. Out of 20, four might have learning or behavioural difficulties and it is challenging to take care of all kinds of learners.¹⁴⁵

A young class teacher spoken to echoed this sentiment, adding that the freedom and autonomy teachers have in Finland make the job attractive. "It's nice to work here – you are quite independent as a teacher, although the politics of teaching is not always pleasant and dealing with parents can be difficult".

However, teaching is an attractive career choice and a highly regarded profession in Finland. Most (90%) trained teachers stay in the profession their whole working life.¹⁴⁶ Teachers are not monitored and salaries are not tied to performance (although there are bonuses for hard work or skills). Yet, field interviews indicated that teachers are dedicated and highly motivated because only the most dedicated and motivated people are selected to become teachers in the first place.

The path to becoming a teacher

All teachers in Finland, whether class or subject teachers, must have a master's degree to become a teacher. Subject teachers first major in their subject area and then complete pedagogical studies, while class teachers (primary) complete two advanced minors and pedagogical studies.

Eight universities in Finland offer teacher training. While there is more than one training facility, unlike Singapore with only one, it is still possible to efficiently manage eight. A Ministry employee was visibly taken aback when told that there are 28 training institutions in New Zealand.¹⁴⁷

Teacher education was brought into the universities in the 1970s in much the same way it happened in New Zealand in the early 2000s, recognising that teaching should be a research-based profession.

Indeed, while Finnish teacher training has strong theoretical and evidence-based underpinnings, like in Singapore and Germany, teacher training is still heavily practical. But first, a discussion on what is arguably the most important success factor in Finland – entry into teacher training.

Selectivity

The higher the demands and requirements, the more attractive something is.

– Hannele Niemi¹⁴⁸

Teaching is a highly selective career in Finland, with caps on the number of places in teacher training courses. As with Singapore, the Ministry together with Statistics Finland and the eight universities decide the number of teachers required every year (capping is followed

¹⁴³ Center on International Education Benchmarking (2013). *Finland overview: teacher and principal quality*. www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/finland-overview/

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Jari Lavonen, Head of Teacher Education. University of Helsinki, Helsinki. 15 May 2013.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Center on International Education Benchmarking (2013). *Finland overview: teacher and principal quality*. www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/finland-overview/

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Armi Mikkola, Manager Teacher Training. Ministry of Education and Culture, Helsinki. 14 May 2013.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Hannele Niemi, op. cit.

in other streams too such as law and medicine). The University of Helsinki receives 2,000–3,000 applications every year for primary school teaching, of which about 100 students are selected.¹⁴⁹ In 2012, 7,000 applicants from all over the country applied for 800 class teacher training positions (primary teacher).¹⁵⁰

Such a large pool of candidates means Finland can select the very best, but universities also have strict entry requirements and quality control gates in place. Rarely do trainee teachers drop out – about one person every two years. The quality controls at the beginning of entry into teacher training ensure that only the most suitable people become teachers.

Quality is also determined at entry into education faculties. Those wishing to sit the entrance examination into class teaching (primary teaching), which they decide when first going to university, receive a booklet of high-quality academic research papers one month before the exam. The booklet spans a range of disciplines related to education such as psychology, education and pedagogy. Lavonen says this literature is heavy reading; students also need to do independent research to grasp the concepts in the readings to be ready to apply in the exam what they have learned. In many ways, this process tests for the research mindset required to do the master's thesis to become a teacher.

Although universities in Finland are independent and not controlled by the Ministry, they have banded together to design this standardised entry test as a cost-saving measure and to be fair to those entering the teaching profession.

The second phase is decided by each university and includes a combination of assignments based on articles and books, essays, individual and group interviews, observed teaching and other group situations, different types of demonstrations, and psychological tests.¹⁵¹

Secondary school teachers first seek entrance into the faculty offering the subject of their choice. Even this is highly competitive: only one in four or five students is admitted to each course. After one or two years, they seek entrance into the faculty of education. Again, only the most highly motivated candidates are admitted.

Research-based education

Like Singapore, Finland's teacher education is underpinned by academic research but with a strong practical element. All teachers, regardless of whether they are teaching primary or secondary school, must do a five-year master's degree. Niemi explains that this is not to train teachers to become researchers per se, but for them to become critical and aware thinkers in their teaching practice:

Teachers need to become open-eyed critical and pedagogical thinkers so that research isn't just about conducting surveys and analysing data but also about how to internalise the attitude. Teachers need to be like a researcher in a laboratory, thinking about what they can do in a better way or what a student's behaviour says about his or her learning. The research element is important in getting teachers to be critical thinkers, and integrate research with their work in schools.

– Hannele Niemi¹⁵²

During their practicums, and the written reflections of the practicums shared in small groups, trainee teachers are encouraged to think how to become a pedagogically thinking teacher.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Jari Lavonen, *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Armi Mikkola, *op. cit.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Interview with Hannele Niemi, *op. cit.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

Bridging theory-practice nexus

It is important that teacher training happens in a setting that reflects and resembles the actual work of actual teachers.

– Olli Määttä

A defining feature of teacher education in Finland is the practical training. The eight universities that offer teacher training each own one or two schools that function as normal schools but specialise in training teachers, similar to New Zealand's old system of attaching 'normal' schools to training colleges. The second-oldest such school – the Normal Lyceum – is a beautiful 150-year-old brick building located in the centre of Helsinki and trains 170 subject (secondary) teachers per year.

The success of Finland's education system can be partly attributed to the amount of time trainee teachers spend in practical training and the quality of this training. In addition, 90% to 95% of faculty of education staff (at the University of Helsinki at least) have, in addition to research training (PhD), teaching backgrounds,¹⁵⁴ meaning they have practical and rich school experiences to teach from.

The sequence of training is also noteworthy. In Helsinki, training happens in four distinct phases with trainee teachers given increasing amounts of independence.

In the first session at the beginning of the school year, trainees spend a week observing teaching, almost like at ethnography, reflecting on their observations in small groups. In the second session, basic practice, they do supervised lessons and learn how to teach specific content. In the third session, field practice, trainee teachers are sent to municipal schools contracted to supervise students for three weeks. The fourth and

final session, advanced practice, is back in the training school attached to the university.

Teacher deployment

Teachers are hired in the same way in Finland as they are in New Zealand. Placements must be openly advertised, and the law mandates that the most suitable candidate is chosen. Aside from that, principals use their own processes to hire who they think are the most suitable teachers and make a recommendation to their boss at the municipality office. These recommendations are usually honoured, and principals keep a record of the process should their decision be questioned.¹⁵⁵

One principal spoken to for field research explains how he hires staff. About 100 candidates may apply for a position. After a curriculum vitae check, 40 go on to 'virtual interview' where they describe their philosophy of education. These are marked against 10 criteria. Six are asked to give a short lesson, which the vice principal and principal observe. They award points, and decide on the most appropriate candidate.

Despite the high quality of teachers to choose from because of the attractiveness of the profession, principals still go through a rigorous process to find the right teachers for their school. This is because teacher positions (and all public postings) are very safe in Finland as a legacy from the days of being part of Russia. In other words, teachers cannot be fired. As a principal says, "It is very important they are good teachers and will be a good member of staff as well".¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Jari Lavonen, *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Martti Hellström, Principal, Aurora Primary School, City of Espoo. 16 May 2013.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Teacher careers

Once teachers are past the training phase, they are extremely independent, and the career of a teacher in Finland in many ways is like in Germany. There are few career options aside from administration positions in schools – HODs, principals, assistant principals, and teacher trainers. There are also superintendents, but as one principal says: “They are not real bosses. They don’t control us.”

These hierarchies are the same in New Zealand, with layers of administration to ensure the smooth running of a school. But as one interviewee explained, “It is a very soft type of hierarchy”.

Arguably, there is no climbing the career ladder in the Finnish teaching profession because teaching is already the most well-respected job in society. Hierarchies exist on paper to efficiently manage a school, but the culture is of a flat structure. HODs are not given that title as such. Olli Määttä says “Actually, I’m just a teacher among others. People usually don’t like these titles because all teachers are equal”.¹⁵⁷

Ambition is frowned upon. In many ways, the lack of willingness to build a career structure promotes a collegiality akin to New Zealand teachers, who very much are part of a fraternity.

Surprisingly, high salaries are not the reason a teaching career is the number one choice of Finland’s best and brightest students.¹⁵⁸ The bulk of teacher salaries are decided at the national level, and these negotiations are concluded every one to three years between the trade union for education and local authority employers. However some teachers get bonuses for hard work or their skills, and the criteria for these bonuses are decided at the municipal level and sometimes at the school level as well.¹⁵⁹

Trust

You always have to remember the very Finnish word – trust – which is the total opposite of standardising or carrying out teacher observations or just plainly ticking the box. Teachers are given lots of academic freedom and autonomy because they are well educated and trusted.¹⁶⁰

In many ways Finland’s training system is remarkably similar to Germany’s: teachers all have master’s degrees, there is a heavy emphasis on practical training, and once a teacher becomes a teacher, they are trusted to close the classroom door. For example, principals rarely observe lessons in Finland. Table 5 shows how often school leaders observe teachers in the six countries studied in this report. Finland is even less likely to have principals observe lessons than in Germany.

This is surprising given the rhetoric on the importance of observing lessons and giving teachers feedback. According to Bill Gates:

Unfortunately there’s one group of people that have almost no systematic feedback to help them do their jobs better, and these people have one of the most important jobs in the world. I’m talking about teachers ... until recently, over 98% of teachers got one word of feedback: satisfactory.¹⁶²

But it is important to remember that Finland is able to trust its teachers because it only employs the most dedicated high achievers culled after a rigorous selection process and intensive training:

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Olli Määttä, op. cit.

¹⁵⁸ Center on International Education Benchmarking (2013). *Finland overview: teacher and principal quality*. www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/finland-overview/.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Martti Hellström, op. cit.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Olli Määttä, op. cit.

¹⁶¹ The category ‘never’ did not apply in the Singapore questionnaire.

¹⁶² Gates, B. (2012, July). Teachers need real feedback [Video File]. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/bill_gates_teachers_need_real_feedback.html

Table 5: PISA 2009: Percentage of principals answering, “I observe instruction in classrooms”

	Finland	Germany	UK	Singapore ¹⁶¹	Australia	Canada	New Zealand
Never	11%	3%	0%	n/a	1%	1%	1%
Seldom	79%	57%	7%	20%	34%	21%	30%
Quite often	9%	33%	49%	49%	52%	50%	49%
Very often	1%	7%	44%	31%	12%	27%	18%

Source: Interactive Data Selection Results 2009 – School Management, Behaviour and Activities, OECD. (2013).

‘Whatever it takes’ is an attitude that drives not just Kirkkojarvi’s 30 teachers but most of Finland’s 62,000 educators in 3,500 schools from Lapland to Turku.¹⁶³

An OECD report quotes a professor:

Because Finnish teachers are highly educated and are accustomed to being in full control of their own classroom, we have no tradition of principals actively visiting classes to monitor the quality of teaching in their schools.¹⁶⁴

While teachers are not directly accountable for school results, each teacher feels a responsibility for children’s education and “teachers are held accountable to community standards and values”.¹⁶⁵ The highly motivated trainee teachers are open to feedback through their study, and receive a lot of it.

As in Germany, there is very little mandated PLD in Finland. Teachers must do a minimum three days of PLD per year, but the average across the country is seven days depending on the municipality.¹⁶⁶ The OECD identified in a report some weaknesses in Finland’s PLD.

One possibility is that Finland’s PLD to improve student achievement and development, is not captured in the

official statistics. Singapore has moved to a model of less external and more school-based teacher development, and perhaps this is not reflected in the official statistics in Finland in the number of days spent in PLD. However, the number of classroom hours is reflected, and Finnish teachers spend less time in the classroom than in any other OECD country.¹⁶⁷ And although principals do not observe classroom teaching per se, teachers plan lessons together, observe each other’s lessons, and help each other develop as teachers.¹⁶⁸

Määttä says the old model of teacher meetings is changing towards a system where preparatory work is done in working groups that discuss issues. Every school has a student welfare team, usually comprising the principals, special education teacher, school nurse, school psychologist, social worker, study counsellor and the teachers of the students being discussed if needed. Parents of the child involved are also informed about the actions taken.^{169 170}

¹⁶³ Hancock, L. (2011, January). Why are Finland’s schools successful? *Smithsonian*.

¹⁶⁴ OECD (2010). *Finland: slow and steady for consistently high results*, p. 127.

¹⁶⁵ Center on International Education Benchmarking (2013). *Finland overview: teacher and principal quality*. www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/finland-overview/

¹⁶⁶ OECD (2010). *Finland: slow and steady for consistently high results*, p. 126.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Barber, M., & Mourshed, M. (2007). *How the world’s best-performing school systems come out on top*. McKinsey & Company, p. 28.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 122.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Olli Määttä, op. cit.

Leadership troubles in the waters

Traditionally, principals of schools have been teachers with administrative responsibilities. Increasingly in Finland, though, principals are being given extra responsibility.

Historically, the principal in Finland has simply been head teacher, first among equals as a member of the teaching staff with the added responsibility of representing the faculty to the rest of the society. But given the degree to which school budgets have been decentralised, the job is now much more demanding, for principals now have financial responsibility along with responsibility for the care and well-being of the students.¹⁷¹

This is similar to New Zealand's Tomorrow's Schools model. Principals, who have traditionally been pedagogical leaders, now must have a much wider skills set to run a school financially. As Niemi says, "The role of principals has become very demanding because they are under so many pressures" – raising concerns about attracting the right people to become principals.

Conclusions and summary

Finland's teacher policies have been successful, but it is naïve to think that importing any individual policy to the New Zealand context would produce equal results. Finland's whole is bigger than the sum of its parts. Like Singapore, Finland strongly values education. People at all levels of the education system, including students, are dedicated and committed to success.

Entry into teacher training is highly competitive. Finland selects only the brightest and the most highly motivated and dedicated students to become teachers. The profession is attractive because of the historical societal value Finland places on teachers, and because teaching is a highly professional and autonomous career. Excellent teacher training and a compulsory five-year master's degree raise the status of the profession and encourage teachers to be thinking practitioners, self-reflective, and able to use student data to improve performance.

But if another country wishes to model its education system on Finland's, should it first increase teachers' autonomy and limiting the emphasis on testing and accountability? Arguably this could improve the attractiveness of the profession, and allow more selectivity so that the cream of the crop become teachers? Or, should it build a strong and capable teaching workforce before granting that workforce full autonomy and trust?

The difference with many other jurisdictions is that Finland's extremely high standards for education and rigorous controls to ensure quality are not centrally prescribed. For example, universities have full autonomy on their selection procedures for entry into teaching, but these procedures are still rigorous. Principals are allowed to choose their own teachers and follow their own method of selection, but only because principals know the importance of selecting the right person for their school and the potential impact of hiring the wrong teacher.

¹⁷¹ OECD (2010). *Finland: slow and steady for consistently high results*, p. 127.

4.

England – the reformer

Rose Patterson

If people find it stressful that I'm demanding higher standards, then I'm not going to stop demanding higher standards.

– Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, United Kingdom¹⁷²

The first three chapters of this report looked at the slow and steady approach to education policy in Singapore, Germany and Finland. This chapter looks at relatively recent reforms in England.

In 2010, under the Liberal Democratic/Conservative Coalition Government, Michael Gove became Secretary of State for Education – the architect behind a series of radical education reforms that are facing fierce and substantial union resistance. The two main teachers unions, the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers and the National Union of Teachers have recently been striking against the 'dismantling of the pay system', conditions¹⁷³ and pensions.

Table 6 shows New Zealand performs much better than England. For one of the world's most prosperous countries, it is surprising that England's students are doing so poorly by international standards on the PISA test. So despite union resistance, bold reforms such as those Gove is introducing are needed to ameliorate low rates of student achievement, reduce gaping inequities, and improve the life opportunities of students.

The reforms, some of which will be discussed in more detail, include overhauling school qualifications and curricula, establishing Free Schools and expanding the academies programme, dismantling the pay structure for teachers and devolving responsibility to head teachers for the provision of pay, extending school days, and reducing summer holidays.

It is too early to detect the long-term impacts of these reforms, which if successful will still take some years to take root. Nonetheless, it is informative to study some of the ideas and rationale behind improving educational outcomes to see which of those could be adapted to New Zealand. The United Kingdom devolves responsibility to each country within, and this report focuses on England.

¹⁷² Taylor, R. (2013, May 18). Education Secretary Michael Gove is heckled as head teachers pass vote of no confidence in his reforms. *Mail Online*.

¹⁷³ e.g. longer school days and years, <http://www.teachers.org.uk>. United Kingdom/

Table 6. United Kingdom and New Zealand PISA results (2009)

	United Kingdom	New Zealand
Reading	25 th – 494	7 th – 521
Mathematics	27 th – 492	13 th – 519
Science	15 th – 514	7 th – 532

Source: OECD (2010). *PISA 2009 results: what students know and can do – student performance in reading, mathematics and science (Volume I)*.

The thinking behind reform

If you deregulate the structural system then you can have innovation on the ground that you never could have imagined.

– Michael Gove¹⁷⁴

The idea underpinning reform in the English education system is quite simple: through deregulation, reforms are designed to devolve responsibility to schools and head teachers, in an environment which already has strong accountability in place, and to drive up standards. The reforms have a free-market flavour. Gove says a free-market approach to education does not necessarily generate a greater degree of failure than a centrally controlled model, but it restores power to teachers and schools.

The combination of autonomy and accountability, according to the OECD, typifies high performing education systems.¹⁷⁵ The current reforms in England are designed to increase autonomy in a system with an already high level of accountability.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Michael Gove, op. cit.

¹⁷⁵ OECD (2011). *PISA in focus. school autonomy and accountability: are they related to student performance?* OECD.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Michael Gove, op. cit.

When you have the level of objective external accountability we do and increase the amount of freedom people have, then you give them the autonomy to be able to hit the accountability measures better. Wherever a significant amount of devolution hasn't worked as well as it should, proper accountability measures to draw meaningful comparisons are missing.

– Michael Gove¹⁷⁶

To compare, New Zealand first granted autonomy to schools through the Tomorrow's Schools reforms in 1989, and primary schools came under individual boards of trustees rather than regional school boards. NZ is similar to England with regards to accountability. Examination results have always been accessible to all schools and the wider public dating back to at least the 1970s, while the media have started publishing 'league tables' more recently.

In some ways, the autonomy England is granting its schools resembles aspects of the Finnish model which grants a large degree of autonomy. While there is little systemic accountability in Finland, it has a deeply embedded culture of responsibility to student learning and a highly professional teaching workforce, meaning external accountability mechanisms perhaps are not needed.

Freedom – the academy and free-schools movement

If you give head teachers more freedom so they have more control over what happens in their schools, then you make the job more attractive. The prerogative of a harlot throughout the ages has been power without responsibility. Head teachers have often had responsibility for what happens in their schools without the power to change it, which is why the job has been less than attractive.

– Michael Gove¹⁷⁷

Gove inherited a system where head teachers often had responsibility without power. To change this, schools demonstrating excellence are being granted the power to design and deliver an education that is appropriate for their students.

The main method in England for devolving power to school boards is by the conversion of schools to academies (which include Free Schools). This model is akin to the Partnership Schools to be piloted in New Zealand in 2014 where schools are run by private organisations and publicly funded – but are autonomous in deciding staff remuneration, curriculum and length of school days and terms.

Academy schools began in 2000 as a peripheral policy under the Blair Labour government to tackle disadvantage in urban areas. These schools are funded directly by central government in contrast to maintained schools (non-academy or Free Schools similar to public schools in New Zealand), which operate under local authority funding and control. ‘City academies’ were started in 2000 to deal with failing schools deemed as such by the Office of Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted). These ‘failed’ schools were closed and

reopened as academies. Sponsors included businesses, universities, charities and religious bodies, and were required to contribute 10% of the capital funding and responsible for appointing a head teacher and a governing body.¹⁷⁸

Ten years after the introduction of academies, there were only 200 academy schools in England out of 24,000 schools. Seeing the potential of academies to give schools more autonomy, the Coalition Government and Gove legislated to allow all kinds of schools to convert to academies, and a peripheral policy became a mainstream one. Since then, the expansion has been rapid. By September 2013, the number of academies had increased more than 15 times to 3,304. Academies and Free Schools now comprise over 13% of schools in England, and the government says “all schools should become academies or Free Schools”.¹⁷⁹

There are now two types of academies. The first type are as per the original policy – failing schools or ‘sponsored academies’, which are forced to convert to academy status and brought under new leadership and governance. Along with the initial thrust to ‘turn around’ failing schools, the policy is now used in a second way, to grant autonomy to high-performing schools. The majority of academy schools now are ‘converted’ academies. Schools rated ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted can voluntarily convert. Gove says it is prudent to grant freedom once a school demonstrates it will use the freedom responsibly. The policy is certainly popular. According to one survey, 84% of academy schools would recommend conversion compared to 1% saying no (the remaining are ‘not sure’).¹⁸⁰ And although only about 13% of schools are academies, two-thirds of secondary schools have academy status or are in the process of becoming an academy (a smaller proportion – only 6% – of primary schools are academies).¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Bassett, D., Lyon, G., Tanner, W., & Watkin, B. (2012). *Plan A+ unleashing the power of academies*. Reform and The Schools Network.

¹⁷⁹ Department for Education (2013). Number of open academies and Free Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.uk/researchandstatistics/statistics/keystatistics/a00214288/academies-and-free-schools>

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Department for Education (2013, September 6). Press Release: New generation of academy sponsors driving school-to-school improvement.

This huge uptake of academy schools is because schools are offered financial incentives to convert to academies. Unlike maintained schools, academies do not receive services from local authorities so are given additional funding to purchase services. Academy schools also receive a £25,000 grant to cover the legal and administrative costs of converting.¹⁸² Most converter academies (78%) cite the additional money as one of the reasons for converting, and 39% say it is the main reason.¹⁸³ Another poll found that nearly three-quarters of schools which intended to or had converted to academy status had done so because they believed it would help the school financially.¹⁸⁴

Free Schools

Academies also include Free Schools, which differ, as Gove says, in that they are “start-ups, and by definition, they provide people with an opportunity to have a clean sheet and operate unconstrained by what they might have inherited.” Those starting Free Schools must show evidence of demand from the local community.¹⁸⁵

The Free Schools policy was included in the Coalition agreement in 2010, and was designed to give parents choice and encourage competition.

The expansion of Free Schools is unprecedented, says Natalie Evans, Director of the New Schools Network, a group that supports applicants.¹⁸⁶ Three years after the policy, there are 174 Free Schools open in England with more than 100 approved to open from September 2014. This high demand is partly driven by a shortage of student places in schools.¹⁸⁷ The Education Funding Agency, which manages the procurement and negotiation of building space for the Department for Education (the only centrally controlled aspect of the Free Schools policy), is

struggling to cope with demand. As Evans explains, finding premises is “one of the most significant challenges” a Free School faces once it has been approved to open.¹⁸⁸

The application process to open a Free School has become more rigorous with every year of the policy. Mike Crowhurst, Head of the Development Programme for the New Schools Network, explains that the government receives around three applications for every new Free School that is approved to open.¹⁸⁹

The application process is not easy. It is bureaucratic and only those with a certain level of dedication and passion can see it through. The application form is 100 pages long, and the people who set up these schools usually have full-time jobs and complete the application process in their spare time. As Evans says, “There’s no question it is a labour of love and a difficult task. For a strong and committed group though it is doable.”

Free Schools in practice are mostly set up by teachers. Applicants must demonstrate financial and educational expertise, and capacity and expertise to provide a high standard of education.¹⁹⁰

After all this toil, are Free Schools worth it? Although parental demand has been high, Evans and Crowhurst say due to the fact that the programme is still in its early days (most Free Schools open with just one year of entry and take several years to build up capacity) there is a lack of detailed data available on the impact of Free Schools. However, the first 24 Free Schools that opened in 2011 have now had their first Ofsted inspections and 75% were judged ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted, compared to only 62% of maintained schools inspected in the same period.¹⁹¹

¹⁸² Bassett, D., Lyon, G., Tanner, W., & Watkin, B. (2012). *Plan A+ Unleashing the power of academies*. Reform and The Schools Network.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Sellgren, K. (2011, March 12). Money driving many schools to become academies – survey. *BBC*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/education-12712079>

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Natalie Evans, Director, and Mike Crowhurst, Head of Development Programme. New Schools Network, London. 23 May 2013.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

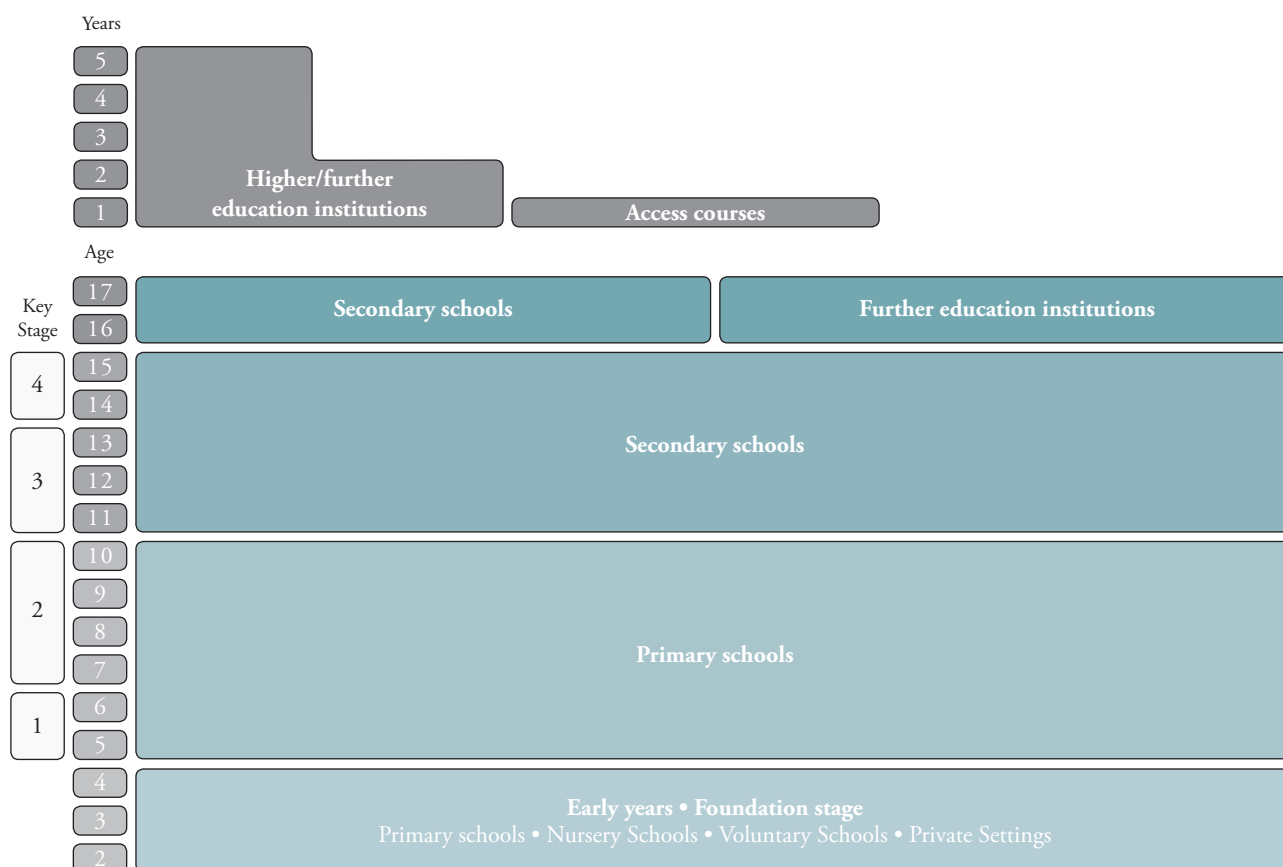
¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Michael Gove, op. cit.

¹⁹¹ Additional email communications with Natalie Evans, Director. New Schools Network. 5 Nov 2013.

Figure 5. School system in England



Source: European Commission (2013). *Eurydice highlights. The structure of the European education systems 2012/13: schematic diagrams*. Retrieved from http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/facts_and_figures/education_structures_EN.pdf.

The problem with accountability

The most powerful lever the government has is the accountability mechanism. It drives behaviour, more than it should.

– Sam Freedman, Director of Research, Evaluation and Impact, Teach First UK¹⁹²

There is much discussion in England about how school qualifications and accountability metrics are distorting teaching behavior (Gove is overhauling the qualifications framework). But before discussing this, some background on the

schooling and qualifications system is necessary.

Similar to New Zealand, students in England attend primary school from ages 5 to 10. Primary schooling occurs in two stages, key stage 1 (5 to 7 years) and key stage 2 (7 to 11 years). Students then largely enter comprehensive secondary schools, with key stage 3 (11 to 14 years) and key stage 4 (14 to 16 years), although there are still 164 selective entry schools in the UK as well. Students stay in secondary schools until 18, doing key stage 5 (also called ‘sixth form’) from 17 to 18 years, or go to training institutes.

The two main school qualifications in England are the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and

¹⁹² Interview with Sam Freedman, Director for Research, Evaluation and Impact, Teach First UK, London. 28 May 2013.

General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Level (A Level), although several other choices are available.

Students usually sit the GCSE during key stage 4 and this is the main qualification in England. The course takes two years and is a mix of internal assessments and exams at the end of units. Grades A to G are awarded. Some subjects are divided into two tiers. For example, a higher science tier allows students to acquire grades A*, A, B, C or D, and the foundation tier allows grades C, D, E, F or G.

The A levels are set during the two lower and upper levels of 'sixth form', and is more academically rigorous, preparing students for university.

Before October 2013, the main accountability metric in secondary schools was a 'floor standard', the proportion of students who attained five A* to C grades in GCSE, including mathematics and English. These results were posted for each secondary school in league tables. However, there were concerns these measures distorted teacher behaviour.

In working towards that metric, teachers gained the most if they focussed on the threshold between D and C grades. Freedman says, "Students on either side of this metric get less attention because they are less important to the accountability metric".¹⁹³

The government has introduced a 'progress for everybody' measure and is investigating options into a long-term view of accountability, such as the proportion of students in employment, education or training six months after leaving secondary school.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Interview with Sam Freedman, op. cit.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ *The Huffington Post*. (2013, June 11). Gove's GCSE exam overhaul defended by Elizabeth Truss.

More changes to qualifications and curriculum

The other main motivations for reforming GCSE are to drive up standards, with Gove arguing that employers are having to provide school leavers more education, and to end grade inflation (where students' grades have been improving while more valid tests of achievement have been stagnant). There are plans to abolish internal assessment and return to an external exam system, and to change letter grades to numbers.

Among reforms designed to grant schools autonomy, ironically Gove is introducing a more centrally prescribed curriculum. The Association of School and College Leaders is open to the changes but critical of content changes:

There is a difference between an engaging curriculum that stretches and motivates students, and harder exams, which for some students could lead to disengagement, boredom and failure.¹⁹⁵

Gove has introduced a 'back to basics' curriculum to be taught in maintained schools from 2014, prescribing what children should be able to know and do at certain levels. To illustrate, figures 6 and 7 show excerpts from the English and New Zealand curricula.

The new English curriculum, while more prescriptive than New Zealand's and the previous English curriculum, allows schools more freedom in implementing it. Schools at a local level are expected to provide a "broad and balanced" curriculum based on local school needs. While it has come under major criticism, the knowledge-versus-skills debate in education is another false dichotomy (see the first report in this series). As an expert panel for the review of the National Curriculum notes:

Figure 6. English curriculum – year 1 reading

Pupils should be taught to:

- apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words
- respond speedily with the correct sound to graphemes (letters or groups of letters) for all 40+ phonemes, including, where applicable, alternative sounds for graphemes
- read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words containing GPCs that have been taught
- read common exception words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound and where these occur in the word
- read words containing taught GPCs and –s, -es, -ing, -ed, -er and –est endings
- read other words of more than one syllable that contain taught GPCs
- read words with contractions [for example, I’m, I’ll, we’ll] and understand that the apostrophe represents the omitted letter(s)
- read aloud accurately books that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words
- re-read these books to build up their fluency and confidence in word reading.

Figure 7. New Zealand curriculum – level 1 listening, reading and viewing

Processes and strategies**Students will:**

- acquire and begin to use sources of information, processes, and strategies to identify, form, and express ideas.

Indicators:

- selects and reads texts for enjoyment and personal fulfilment
- has an awareness of the connections between oral, written, and visual language
- uses sources of information (meaning, structure, visual and graphophonic information) and prior knowledge to make sense of a range of texts
- associates sounds with letter clusters as well as with individual letters
- uses processing and some comprehension strategies with some confidence
- is developing the ability to think critically about texts
- begins to monitor, self-evaluate, and describe progress.

Some educationalists emphasise subject knowledge and discount the significance of more developmental aspects of education. There are also many who foreground the development of skills, competencies and dispositions whilst asserting that contemporary knowledge changes so fast that ‘learning how to learn’ should be prioritised. We do not believe that these are either/or questions. Indeed, it is impossible to conceptualise ‘learning to learn’ independently of learning ‘something’. Our position is therefore that both elements – knowledge and development – are essential and that policy instruments need to be deployed carefully to ensure that these are provided for within education.¹⁹⁶

Capacity building: ‘school-to-school’ improvement

Schools are collaborating on a scale that has never been witnessed before - raising standards for pupils.

– Michael Gove¹⁹⁷

During field research for this report, policy think tank *Reform* hosted a roundtable seminar with Sir Michael Wilshaw, Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills. The seminar was attended by education editors from major UK newspapers; Members of Parliament; head teachers; and other leaders in education. During a discussion on giving schools more autonomy, one of the contributors makes this poignant comment:

The quality of these initiatives depends on the quality of those implementing them and as long as that is variable, the quality of the initiative will be variable.

New Zealand’s model of self-managing schools has similar problems. Schools with capable financial capability and strong governance have done exceptionally well under this model, while others have not.

The traditional view of building teacher and leader capacity is to share excellence across the system with a middle layer between schools and central government:

[Education] needs to be facilitated by a “middle tier” or “mediating layer” sitting between schools and government ... More flexible and innovative alternatives, including academy chains, have developed in recent years.¹⁹⁸

Reform notes that school improvement cannot be ‘done’ to schools. “This is the wrong approach, since school improvement work will be most effective if schools ‘own’ it themselves”.¹⁹⁹

England is building, from the ground up, structures that allow the most entrepreneurial and the strongest leaders and schools to share their practice across the system to develop capacity. There are several mechanisms for this, for example, chains of academies are forming.

According to the Department for Education, there are now 348 schools leading chains of schools and 1,660 schools operating within chains. Box 4 shows the purported benefits of this model.

Gove compares the academy networks to Singapore, a small island nation acting as one large academy chain: “What we want ... is a number of mini Singapores”.

¹⁹⁶ Department for Education (2011). *The framework for the national curriculum – a report by the expert panel for the National Curriculum Review*.

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Michael Gove, op. cit.

¹⁹⁸ Bassett, D., Lyon, G., Tanner, W., & Watkin, B. (2012). *Plan A+ unleashing the power of academies*. Reform and The Schools Network.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 43.

Box 4. Benefits of academy chains

All these academies are now benefiting from working together, using the freedom and flexibility of academy status, to raise standards. Examples include:

- headteachers moving across schools in the chain to gain, and pass on experience and expertise
- classroom teachers running school-based teacher-to-teacher training, sharing best practice across the chain
- sharing of extra-curricular facilities, including in sports, drama, music and arts
- sharing of central services, including HR, finance, catering and IT
- procurement organised across chains, slashing costs and creating efficiencies

Source: Department for Education (2013, September 6). Press release – New generation of academy sponsors driving school-to-school improvement. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-generation-of-academy-sponsors-driving-school-to-school-improvement>

Schools are developing “systems of lateral accountability with schools voluntarily agreeing to undergo annual reviews by their peers”.²⁰⁰ The *Reform* report notes, “It is possible to have deep accountability without a centre”.²⁰¹ This thinking is similar to Finland with its deep and shared culture of responsibility for student learning. Arguably, systems where teachers own their own accountability are better than those mandated from the centre. “Decentralised accountability can also mean quicker and more effective intervention when something goes wrong, or if signs of deterioration emerge”.²⁰²

Echoing Singapore’s example of how competition need not be at the expense of collaboration, the Reform report notes:

Competition can drive collaboration very effectively: if every school needs to improve then every school has an incentive to collaborate. Competition between schools is not a zero-sum

game, since the whole system can be better; one school improving does not mean that another must get worse ... competition and collaboration are not then, mutually exclusive, but rather ... mutually reinforcing.²⁰³

Evans points out that three years into the Free Schools programme, chains are starting to develop. ‘Good’ and ‘Outstanding’ Academies (as rated by Ofsted) are increasingly wishing to replicate their models because they are so oversubscribed and want to offer their schools to more young people in their areas; secondary schools too want to set up primary schools and vice versa. “So you’re starting to see increasingly nascent small chains of schools growing families of five to six schools in a network”.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 50.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Natalie Evans and Mike Crowhurst, op. cit.

Teachers in England

Teacher training

England is also changing its teacher training. The traditional route, which is continuing alongside new school-based routes, is university-based training. Those with degrees can undertake a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), or do a Bachelor of Education, a Bachelor Arts, or Bachelor of Science with a Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) course. Candidates must have minimum levels of literacy and numeracy. Primary teaching, Physical Education, and history courses are popular and competitive.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Department for Education (2013). *Teacher training option: post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE)*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/teacher-training-options/university-based-training/pgce.aspx>

Teaching schools

Collaboration is at the heart of the teaching school model.

– Department for Education²⁰⁶

In 2011, the National College for School Leadership designated 121 schools as ‘teaching schools’. Schools form an alliance supported by the teaching school. Any school can apply to be designated as a teaching school. These schools become ‘accredited providers’ of ITE and lead professional development.

²⁰⁶ Department for Education – National College of Teaching and Leadership (2013). *What’s involved in being a teaching school?* Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/index/support-for-schools/teachingschools/teachingschools-programme-details.htm>

²⁰⁷ The Leader (2013, July 30). Schools Direct programme trashed as teacher training misses target. <http://www.theinformationdaily.com/2013/07/30/teacher-training-crashes-as-dfe-schools-direct-programme-trashed>

²⁰⁸ Tickle, L. (July, Monday 8). Lower fees, fewer essays, what’s not to like about Schools Direct? *The Guardian*.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

The programme is set up to ensure a steady supply of teachers, but has run into major difficulties. As at April 2013, half the school-based places were vacant. There are concerns about the future supply of teachers, and universities that provide high quality training are thinking of abolishing teacher-training courses because of the uncertainty. The former Schools Commissioner for London, Professor Tim Brighouse, says after the General Teaching Council and the Training and Development Agency for Schools were abolished, no other organisation has taken the responsibility of securing a sufficient supply of teachers.²⁰⁸ There are also concerns that the Schools Direct programme does not offer the solid grounding a university does.²⁰⁹

However, if supply problems are solved, as schools and networks of schools share best practice about attracting and recruiting good teachers, it does fit under the general theory of giving more autonomy to schools. The advantage is that schools are able to select the top candidates from the cohort, because schools are highly motivated to be selective about whom they train as it has a direct impact on their school and student learning.

The Guardian reported this about a 22-year-old teacher:

For the mathematics training job here I had a whole-day interview, from 9am until 4pm. First was a meeting with the head, then a pastoral interview, a departmental interview, an organized lunch, and I had to teach a 25-minute lesson with a small group. Then I had a literacy and numeracy test, and I even had to take an A-level paper.²¹⁰

In many ways this is like the process of hiring new teachers in Finland, where schools design their own robust practices in place to hire the right people for the job.

However, the popularity of teaching in Finland means that there is a highly dedicated and motivated pool of candidates to select from, regardless of whether they are hired directly by schools or selected for ITE by the faculties of education. Bringing teacher training into schools does nothing to improve the quality of the pool of candidates to choose from.

Teach First

If Teach First has done nothing else, it has improved the attractiveness of teaching as a career for university finalists.

– Sam Freedman²¹¹

While England has recently shifted the weight of teacher training to schools from universities, another more long-standing teacher training route deserves mention.

As mentioned in the first report in this series, Teach First is in its inaugural year in New Zealand. The programme is modelled on Teach for America and Teach First UK.

Sam Freedman, Director for Research, Evaluation and Impact at Teach First UK, was an adviser to Gove and contributed to the Free Schools movement in England.

As he explains, Teach First began in 2003 with 180 participants. The programme now recruits 1,300 participants per year; Freedman predicts this will rise to 2,000 by 2015. About 400,000 students from low-income communities have now been taught by Teach First teachers.

The programme recruits, through a rigorous selection process, graduate university students who have at least a second class honours upper division. The programme is the largest recruiter of Oxbridge students and largest graduate employer more generally. Whereas 10 years ago, very few top-university graduates went into teaching, now 10% of Oxbridge graduates go through the Teach First programme.

Freedman says the selection process is rigorous:

We have a very clear bar for entry and we do our own assessment. We run interviews, group assessments, etc. They have to hit a certain bar in that assessment. We would rather under-recruit than take people who aren't hitting that bar. For us the bar is the most important thing. If we ever start to dip below that, we know the whole thing is going to fall apart because the quality of the teachers we put into schools is absolutely essential.²¹²

Teach First relies on schools having a demand for teachers – the motivation to ensure only high quality teachers complete the programme is essential to the programme's future.

Trainee teachers complete a two-year programme, undertaking a summer residential course before teaching in schools where more than half the students come from the poorest 30% of families. Participants simultaneously work towards a teaching qualification (PGCE) with a tutor from a university offering teacher training. The tutor and a school mentor work closely on assessments, but the university awards the qualification and the QTS. A minority of participants choose to do a master's degree in their second year.

²¹¹ Interview with Sam Freedman, op. cit.

²¹² Ibid.

One criticism is that participants commit for only two years, but Freedman says that among teachers who come through the usual route to teaching “turnover is pretty high anyway” (65% of Teach First participants complete a third year). Despite doubts over individuals staying in teaching, the aim is to “inject passionate, articulate people into the classroom”.²¹³

But it is the long-term potential of the programme that is most interesting. Freedman says 70% of those who have gone through the programme are still involved in education in some way. From earlier Teach First cohorts, there are now seven head teachers, around 80 senior leaders or deputy heads, and around 350 middle leaders. 35 have now set up their own charities. Educational leadership, while beyond the scope of this report, is a crucial part of creating school environments that encourage high quality teaching.

Teach First is now expanding to provide leadership training through Teaching Leaders for middle head of department type leaders, and Future Leaders for head teachers.

Similar to Schools Direct, the Teach First programme bridges the theory-practice nexus, something all jurisdictions grapple with. Singapore partly bridges it by ensuring practicums are done in the particular school the teacher will work at upon graduation. Finland’s training facilities own the schools in which trainee teachers do their practicums. In Germany, trainee teachers do a two-year practical apprenticeship after their university training and pedagogical studies. Teach First has learned from these models.

On whether teacher training should be more theoretical or practical, Freedman says “it shouldn’t be either or” but “more about sequencing”. He believes it is vital to learn the practical classroom management tools early in one’s teaching career.²¹⁴

An interesting development in Teach First is a heavy emphasis on observation. Teach First is developing a library of videos of teaching. Freedman says how comfortable participants are with observation depends on how it is done:

If observation is set up as a punitive activity, teachers will feel uncomfortable and it won’t work well. However if it is set up as a whole school development, people tend to like it.²¹⁵

Despite all these positives, Teach First is not a panacea. John Roberts, Chief Executive of Edapt (which provides teachers with support in individual employment matters) says while Teach First has had wider positive impact on the perception of the teaching profession, practically, Teach First operates only in the larger urban centres and only 1 in 400 teachers train through Teach First. However, given that many Teach First participants will move into leadership roles in education and elsewhere, the experience of working in schools is likely to have a positive impact on education policy across the board in the long term.

Pay and performance pay

Pay is only one tool; nobody enters teaching because they want to make money, but that shouldn’t be exploited.

– Michael Gove²¹⁶

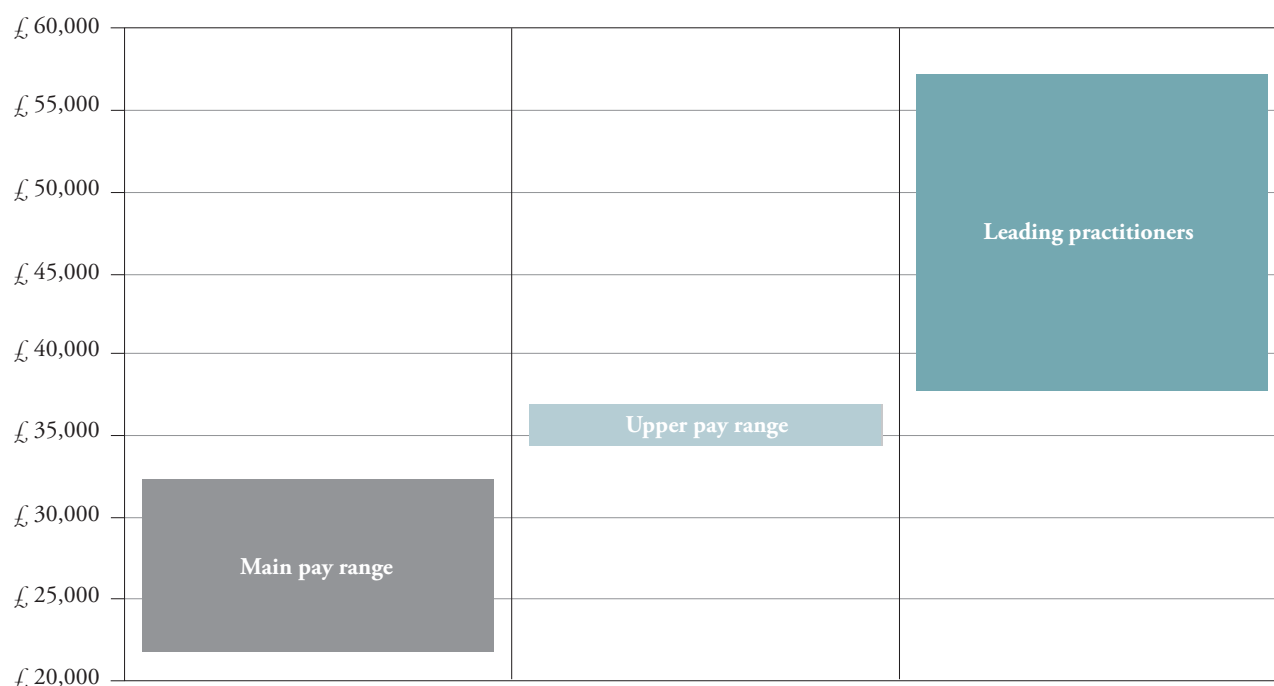
Research shows that teachers go into the profession out of commitment and the desire to make change, but leave because of a lack of recognition. As Gove says:

²¹³ Interview with Lucy Lee, Researcher. Policy Exchange, London. 22 May 2013.

²¹⁴ Interview with Sam Freedman, op. cit.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

Figure 8. Minimum and maximum teacher salaries for (September 2013) for England and Wales (excluding London)



Source: UK Department for Education. (2013). *School teachers' pay and conditions document 2013 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions*. Retrieved from <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/130806%202013%20stpcd%20master%20final.pdf>

Having their pay increased is important not so they can buy a bigger Chevrolet but because it is a way of conferring recognition.²¹⁷

Until recently, England faced the same problem as New Zealand, in that excellent teachers were not recognised by pay and teachers moved automatically up the pay scale every year. The Upper Pay Scale (UPS) in England was originally designed to reward excellent performance, but most teachers continued into the UPS with time served. Under the old system around 140,000 teachers (40% teaching workforce) received annual incremental pay increases on the Main Pay Scale.²¹⁸

Gove argues that the best way to role model excellence is to accelerate those who are performing well.

If you remove automatic progression with teachers who are not performing well, schools can redeploy a finite pot away from those who are not performing to those from whom you wish to secure better performance.²¹⁹

From September 2014, teachers will no longer progress automatically. Instead, head teachers will pay staff within a minimum and maximum point on whichever pay scale applies (see figure 8). All pay progression is based on proven performance and reviewed annually under the school's appraisal system.

Performance-related pay is a contentious issue in education. Like in New Zealand, teachers unions in England fear that student achievement data would be directly linked to pay. Freedman too is wary of performance-related pay:

²¹⁶ Interview with Michael Gove, op. cit.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Interview with Lauren Thorpe and Kimberley Trehwitt, op. cit.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

There's a lot of conflation by payment by results and performance-related pay. Paying by results would be disastrous because all the distortions that happen with the wider accountability system happen 10 times over if you base people's pay on exam results.²²⁰

Although head teachers can link pay to results, Freedman thinks most will set a wider range of objectives because they are aware of the potential for distortion if results are the only focus.²²¹ The Department for Education recommends schools assess teachers' performance on a variety of factors, including student progress and development, contributing to other student areas (e.g. behaviour problems), and contributing to the wider school. Distortions are already occurring, with teachers steering children towards easier modules. "It is the responsibility of the exams regulator and the government to design those tests to ensure distortions do not happen", says Gove. One reason for moving to test-based rather than module-based (teacher judged) assessment is to prevent such problems.

In Singapore too, increased remuneration is partly based on student achievement, but not solely. But Singapore is centrally controlled, whereas England is devolving responsibility to head teachers.

Gove explains that schools allocate salaries within their overall school budgets. Inherent in the new system of giving head teachers freedom to design their own pay systems is that to be fair to teachers, proper performance management systems need to exist alongside.

Wilshaw says, "It's a nonsense that promotion through incremental progression should not be linked to the quality of teaching. I met in the course of my headship career teachers who aren't committed and still expect a salary increase."²²²

It also offers head teachers the autonomy to ensure the teacher-pupil ratio is appropriate for the class or subject. For example, mathematics may be more effectively taught in large classes while other subjects or students with higher needs may require smaller classes.

About half the head teachers already have these pay flexibilities, as the flexibilities are already available for academy schools. "Few academies are deviating from the main pay scales", say Thorpe and Trehwhitt.²²³ *Reform* research carried out in 2012 found that nearly two-thirds (65%) of academy schools had neither changed staff pay and conditions nor planned to do so, and 40% said there was no need to change.²²⁴ Simply giving schools more autonomy does not ensure they will innovate and improve, partly due to a culture among teachers: 60% said national pay scales make it hard to make changes. Roberts says, "Head teachers want to reward good staff, and are happy to be flexible, but they understand the complexity of measuring performance and also often don't want to cause internal conflict".

Yet academies that do use their freedoms with pay do so in very interesting and innovative ways. For example, the Harris academy, a chain of schools in South London gives bonuses for punctuality and attendance.²²⁵

Given that many teachers already go to the UK to teach because of high demand there, there is scope for losing more excellent teachers to better remuneration in England. The potential impact of creating a market-based system is that schools will pay teachers more for high demand subjects (e.g. mathematics and science), thereby attracting a greater pool of good mathematics and science teachers.

²²⁰ Interview with Sam Freedman, op. cit.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Garner, R. (2013, May 22). Reforms to teachers' pay 'will mean bigger class sizes'. *The Independent*.

²²³ Interview with Lauren Thorpe, Research and Corporate Partnership Director and Kimberley Trehwhitt, Senior Researcher. *Reform*, London. 23 May 2013.

²²⁴ Bassett, D., Lyon, G., Tanner, W., & Watkin, B. (2012). *Plan A+ unleashing the power of academies*. Reform and The Schools Network.

²²⁵ Interview with Lauren Thorpe and Kimberley Trehwhitt, op. cit.

Towards professionalism

Edapt

Roberts, a former Teach First participant and now head of Edapt, says teachers mainly join unions in England (and likely elsewhere) for legal protection. “For 96% of teachers, the primary reason for joining is in case a child made an allegation against them or they were called into a disciplinary case”. Edapt does not take part in industrial action but provides legal services, for which there is a growing space: Many teachers do not believe in strikes because of the damage to students. 44% of teachers surveyed by Edapt said the right to strike was not important to them.

Edapt sees increasing membership during strong industrial action and union conferences. On the conflation between unions representing industrial issues or professional issues:

The unions often say they’re representing on behalf of the pupils but people tend to feel that unions are just representing the interests of the teacher, which is fair. Just be clear about who you are representing.

A Royal College of Teachers

A strange thing is happening in the tumultuous world of education. There has been an outbreak of passionate consensus. The unions agree with it. Michael Gove supports it. Teach First wants to see it. What is this idea that has unified such unlikely bedfellows, and why is it so powerful? – Charlotte Leslie, MP²²⁶

In mid-2010, soon after the Coalition government came to power, Gove abolished England’s General Teaching Council. “Its remit was never clear: was it supposed to advocate or regulate, to police or champion?”²²⁷

In early 2012, the Education Select Committee reported on how to attract, train and retain the best teachers. The report recommended establishing a professional body of teachers. MP Charlotte Leslie, who is a champion of the idea, was inspired by the historic Royal Colleges for surgeons and physicians, where “excellent practice is celebrated, and proper standards are set, pushed and protected”. Leslie distinguishes unions from the royal colleges, saying the latter would also help deal with poor performance from within the profession. “We would not tolerate an incompetent surgeon, but a bad teacher too can have a devastating effect on a child’s life.”²²⁸

In April 2013, the Royal College of Surgeons published a collection of essays, *Towards a Royal College of Teaching*²²⁹ and the Prince’s Teaching Institute (PTI) has been facilitating the establishment of a Royal College. The PTI is also leading a Committee of Teachers and a commission of education leaders (e.g. head teachers, university representatives, subject associations, teaching unions) to author a discussion document. Consultation occurred in June and July this year, and responses will be published soon.

The key idea behind the Royal College is that it is driven by teachers, not politicians. As Leslie explains:

It can’t be politicians who create it. That would defeat the point. It must be driven by the profession itself.²³⁰

²²⁶ Leslie, C. (2012, May 1). Teachers should be given a Royal College education. *The Telegraph*.

²²⁷ Kelly, G. (2011, July 29). Editorial – Few mourned passing of the GTC, but there’s a gaping hole where independent regulator should be. *TES Newspaper*.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ The Royal College of Surgeons of England (2013). *Towards a Royal College of teaching: Raising the status of the profession*.

²³⁰ Ibid.

Gove echoes the sentiment:

It is a very good idea but government should steer clear of it because, by definition, an effective Royal College is a professional body.²³¹

About his vision for the Royal College, Gove says:

I don't have a vision because if I was the one with a vision I would be the one leading it. I mustn't lead it. I must stand back. But my advice to those forming it is that the body will command credibility if it is to act as a voice for higher standards in teaching and celebrate great teaching. It should be clear about what that involves rather than trying to be an arm of the state or an echo chamber for discontent.²³²

A Royal College can be resistant to political change. The difference between it and union representation is a Royal College would be clear about what it would represent – and what it wouldn't (industrial issues). The unions say they represent industrial and professional issues, but the two cannot be untangled.

Conclusions and summary

Since 2010, Gove has overhauled the poorly performing English education system by granting more autonomy to high-performing schools to design and deliver education, and by driving up standards. Autonomy has been granted by expanding privately-run publicly-funded academies to comprise 13% of schools in England. This policy includes 'Free Schools' that are set up from scratch.

According to Gove, and supported by OECD research, the best-performing education systems grant schools high levels of autonomy combined with strong accountability systems, which England already has. In saying this, it is imperative that accountability systems are designed to drive desired behaviour, and there is a lot of reflection in England about driving to more holistic student outcomes.

One argument is that devolving responsibility to schools can create wide gaps in performance – schools with teacher and leadership capacity and an entrepreneurial spirit can do very well, while schools without that capacity can flounder.

Yet policymakers in England are redesigning the system to provide incentives for collaboration, and an environment that allows networks of collaborating schools to emerge to share capacity throughout the system without top-down control. As such, there is talk of establishing deeper systems of teacher-led accountability, much in the same way that Finnish teachers have a deep sense of responsibility for their students' learning. The establishment of a teacher-led Royal College of Teachers that is clearly distinguished from industrial representation and independent of government will likely further embed this sense of professional responsibility. In addition, while the unions have a place to

²³¹ Interview with Michael Gove, *op. cit.*

²³² *Ibid.*

represent industrial issues, not all teachers wish to be active in political resistance – spurring the emergence of organisations like Edapt, which provides individual legal representation.

The model of teacher training in England has also changed dramatically. Many jurisdictions struggle to bridge the theory-practice nexus where new teachers are unprepared for the realities of the classroom. The solution is to shift teacher training capacity to schools that partner with universities to better balance the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching. This model may mean better selection procedures as well because schools are responsible for hiring those on the programme and would bear the direct impact of bad choices. However, with teacher unions striking in England, arguably it may not be the most attractive profession at present. Teaching needs to be an attractive profession in order to attract a large and high quality pool of candidates to select from.

From 2014, head teachers will also have autonomy to design pay systems, within a minimum and maximum, that best meet the needs of their own school. This policy has bravely dealt with a major problem in the English system that New Zealand also suffers from: teachers automatically move up the pay scale and there is little opportunity to properly recognise excellence through pay.

It is too early to see the long-term impacts of these reforms but it is certainly a space to watch.



5.

Ontario – rebuilding trust

Rose Patterson

Similarly to Finland, there was surprise in 2000 with PISA results, where Canada found itself at the top of the international league tables, by contrast to previous international comparative assessments conducted in the 1980s and 1990s.²³³

Canada is an important country to study for its education policy because, as an OECD report notes, it is larger and culturally heterogeneous compared with the other leaders in the PISA studies (e.g. Hong Kong, Singapore and Finland),²³⁴ all of which have the advantage of serving small and culturally homogeneous populations.²³⁵ Ontario, the largest province in Canada and home to 39% of Canada's population, is categorised by McKinsey & Company as a system that has shown sustained improvement over five years or more²³⁶

The opposite of England?

At face value Ontario is a contrast to England's free-market model of educational reform. An OECD report makes the distinction: "The key to motivation [behind reform] was not individual economic calculations but rather the chance to be part of successful and improving schools and organisations".²³⁷ There is, for example, no performance pay for teachers. While England is setting the scene for organic change, where

dismantling structures theoretically allows for innovation on the ground, Ontario has worked towards 'whole system reform'.²³⁸

Despite the philosophical differences in how England and Ontario are trying to achieve educational success, both systems ultimately recognise the importance of building capacity among teachers 'at the coal face', combined with strong systems of accountability. Education reform expert Michael Fullan says, "Our strategy in a nutshell is capacity building with a focus on results".²³⁹

Literature on the success of Ontario's system over the last 10 years focuses on the climate of trust the current centre-left government has established with teachers since they came to power in 2003. However, a more in-depth examination reveals that many of the policies implemented by the previous conservative government, while unpopular with teachers, set the stage for success. Granting more autonomy to schools, like in England, is only possible when strong systems of accountability are already established.

Ontario actually learned from the failed 'informed prescription' model used in England in the 1990s as described by Barber, where "you do your homework at the centre, you get informed and then you pretty much prescribe the curriculum and the instructional methods".²⁴⁰ Instead, Ontario:

²³³ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Mourshed, M., Chijoke, C., & Barber, M. (2010). *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better*. McKinsey & Company.

²³⁷ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD, p. 75.

²³⁸ Fullan, M. (2011). Whole system reform for innovative teaching and learning. Retrieved from <http://www.michaelfullan.ca/media/13435855110.html>

²³⁹ Michael Fullan, Education Reform Expert and Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto.

²⁴⁰ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

... put seed money into the field to encourage local experimentation and innovation, sending a strong signal that teacher-generated solutions to weaknesses in reading and mathematics performance were likely to be more successful than solutions imposed from above.²⁴¹

This sounds remarkably similar to what England is now trying to do – move away from centrally prescribed methods and trust that great solutions will be found at the local level. While there has been system alignment towards the high-level goals (see next section), the government has not been prescriptive in how schools achieve those goals. “We did almost no mandating of specific strategies – we got them to develop their own plans. We didn’t micromanage schools or districts in this process. We empowered them.”²⁴² As Linda Staudt, Director of Education, London District Catholic School Board, explains: “Imposing goals isn’t going to work. What works is getting to the heart of why we’re all here”.²⁴³

Like England, Ontario has many mechanisms to share good practice across the system, known as ‘lateral capacity building’. For example, Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) data can be cross-referenced with socio-demographic data to highlight schools

that are doing well and serving a particular profile of students. These schools are given funding to support other schools. Teachers and principals from more challenged schools are brought together to share notes once a year.

Clear targets

When the McGuinty Government came to power in 2003, it had clearly defined targets – to increase literacy and numeracy to 75% of primary school students meeting provincial standards, and to increase high-school graduation rates from 68% (in 2003) to 85%. The high-school graduation rate is now 83%.

Now 68% of Grade 3 students meet the provincial standard, up from 61% five years ago.²⁴⁴ The provincial standards are high – Richard Franz of the Student Achievement Division at the Ontario Ministry of Education (Ministry) notes that the standard is the equivalent of a B grade, well above the PISA level of competence.²⁴⁵

The small number of clearly defined education targets is considered one of the hallmarks of Ontario’s educational success:

²⁴¹ Ibid., p. 76.

²⁴² Barber, M., & Mourshed, M. (2009). *Shaping the Future: How Good Education Systems Can Become Great in the Decade Ahead. Report on the International Education Roundtable*. McKinsey & Company.

²⁴³ Workshop with Linda Staudt, Director of Education, London District Catholic School Board. Ministry of Education, Toronto. 4 June 2013.

²⁴⁴ http://www.eqao.com/pdf_e/13/InfoGraphic_2013Release_en.pdf

²⁴⁵ Interview with Richard Franz, Director of Research, Evaluation and Capacity Building Branch, Student Achievement Division. Ontario Ministry of Education, Toronto. 3 June 2013.

Table 7: Ontario’s mean scores on reading, mathematics and science in PISA (2000 to 2009)

	PISA 2000	PISA 2003	PISA 2003	PISA 2009
Reading	533	530	534	531
Mathematics	524	530	526	526
Science	522	515	537	531

Source: EQAO (2010). *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2009: highlights of Ontario student results*. Ontario.

You can't underestimate the value of having a limited number of very concrete goals that you can measure and know if you're making progress, and that everyone agrees on. The common purpose and the alignment towards that purpose is essential.
 – Richard Franz²⁴⁶

What do the teachers need to do to respond to the needs of the students? What do the principals need to do to respond to the needs of the teachers? What does the district need to do to support the principals? What does the Ministry need to do ...? When that is all aligned it really works well".²⁴⁸

Many of the interviewees for the field research mentioned the three goals for education. "School boards have taken the three provincial goals to heart. Every teacher in the district needs to know what you're focussing on".²⁴⁷ Staudt says the alignment of the system is a real strength:

Ontario has gained buy-in from people throughout the system to gear towards these goals.

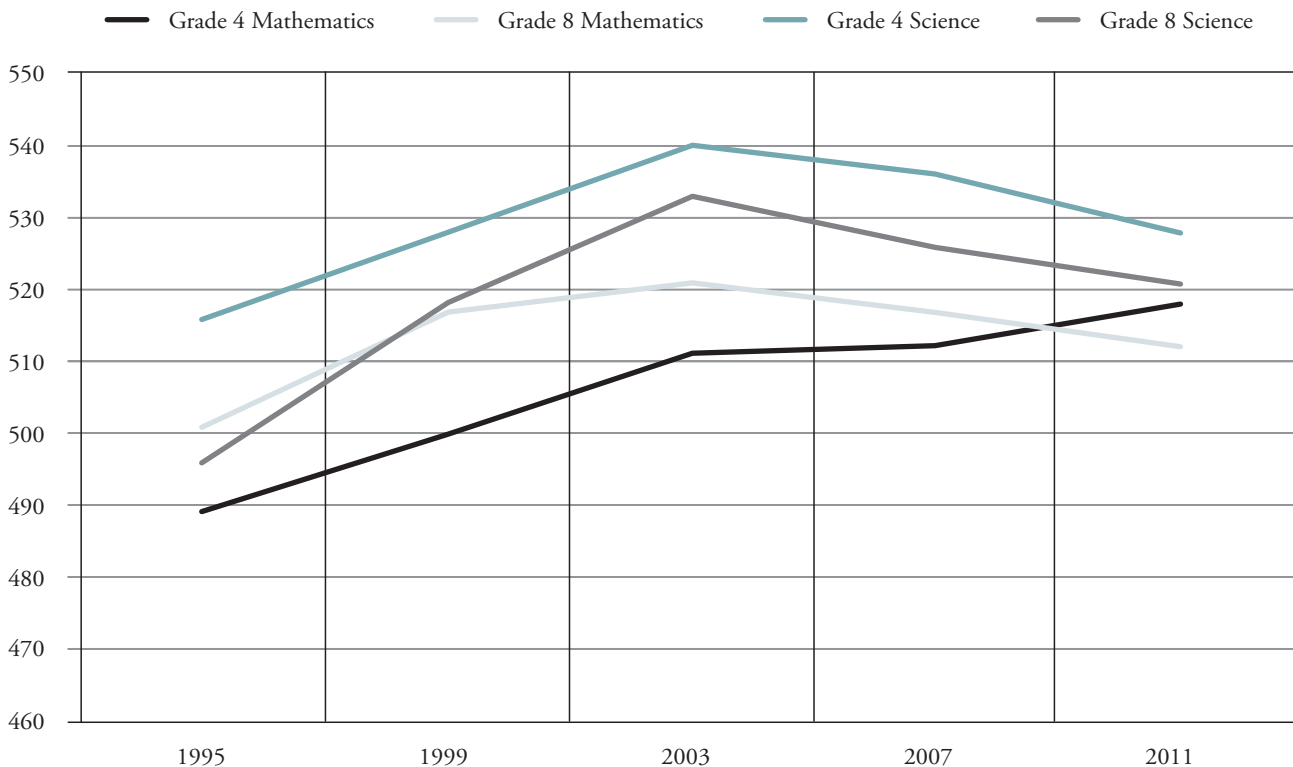
Franz does note that Ontario's education goals have not yet been tested by an incoming government. Whether the goals stands the test of time, like Finland, whose educational goals have stood the test of 20 governments and more than 30 ministers of education since the 1970s, remains to be seen.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Workshop with Linda Staudt, op. cit.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

Figure 9. Grade 4 and 8 TIMSS results 1995 to 2011 – Ontario



Source: Education Quality and Accountability Office and the IEA (2012). *Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), 2011. Ontario report.*

Is it really that good?

Ontario is exemplified as a successful education reformer, and much of the commentary on Ontario attributes success to current policy. For example, the OECD says, “Since 2000, Canada has become a world leader in its sustained strategy of professionally-driven reform of its education system”.²⁴⁹ Indeed, Ontario saw success in that time. Ontario raised the school leaving age from 16 to 18, putting pressure on schools to keep students engaged.²⁵⁰ The improvements in high-school graduation rates may have been partly due to this powerful policy lever.

There are concerns about declines in mathematics performance in provincial tests of Grade 3 and Grade 6 students in Ontario. Since 2007, there have been sustained improvements in provincial reading and writing.²⁵¹ However, a quick scan of overall achievement measured by internationally comparable tests of student achievement tells a different story.

The same OECD report that attributed success to reforms in the last 10 years shows that there were no real improvements in PISA scores from 2000 to 2009 in reading and mathematics, with slight improvements in science (see table 7).

TIMSS showed improvements between 1995 and 2003, and then a steady decline since, in mathematics and science (see figure 9).²⁵² PIRLS shows no statistically significant differences in reading literacy between 2001 and 2011.²⁵³

Despite this criticism, Ontario is still performing at a much higher level than New Zealand in all the internationally comparable tests. For example, while New Zealand performed much below (486) the center-scale point (500) in the TIMSS study in 2011 in Year 4 science, Ontario scored well above (518). Ontario significantly outperforms New Zealand in all other internationally comparable

measures of student achievement and has a much more equitable system.

An equal education system

Canada’s education system is one of highest performing in the world on PISA tests, and students do well regardless of socio-economic status.²⁵⁵ Canada has one of the highest rates of immigration in the world and more than a quarter (27%) of students are immigrants.²⁵⁶ There is no difference in PISA scores between ‘new’ and ‘old’ Canadians, nor between those who speak the language of school instruction at home and those who do not.²⁵⁷

While it is easy to be in awe of a system that serves immigrant populations well, it is also important to remember that a large proportion of new Canadians are from East Asian families where education is valued. “The fact that 60% of immigrants are selected on the basis of their ability to make an economic contribution creates a highly educated immigrant class”.²⁵⁸ However, like Finland and Singapore, which have used policy to build on cultural success factors, Canada has also deliberately implemented policy to support ‘new Canadians’, especially those who come to school speaking a different language. In 10 years, the 24 percentage-point gap between English-language learners and native-English speakers in standardised testing has reduced to 8 percentage points.²⁵⁹

²⁴⁹ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

²⁵⁰ Interview with Richard Franz, op. cit.

²⁵¹ Education Quality and Accountability Office. (2013). *Highlights of the provincial results: assessments of reading, writing and mathematics, primary division (Grades 1-3) and junior division (Grades 4-6), and Grade 9 assessment of mathematics, English language students, 2012-2013*.

²⁵² Education Quality and Accountability Office and the IEA (2012). *Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), 2011. Ontario report*.

²⁵³ Education Quality and Accountability Office and the IEA (2012). *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study. Ontario report*.

²⁵⁴ Note that the study was not conducted in 1999 for Grade 4 – the mean figure of 1995 and 2003 is taken to demonstrate the trend.

²⁵⁵ OECD. (2010). *PISA 2009 results: overcoming social background – equity in learning opportunities and outcomes (Volume II)*.

²⁵⁶ Stewart, V. (2012). *A world-class education: learning from international models of excellence and innovation*. ASCD: Virginia.

Table 8. Canada PISA results 2009

	Canada	Ontario	Alberta	New Zealand
Reading	527 (6 th)	531	533	521 (7 th)
Mathematics	527 (10 th)	526	529	519 (13 th)
Science	534 (8 th)	531	545	532 (7 th)

Sources:

OECD (2010). *PISA 2009 results: What students know and can do – student performance in reading, mathematics and science (volume 1)*.

Knighton, T., Brochu, P. & Gluszynski, T. (2010). *Measuring up: Canadian results of the OECD PISA study*.

The performance of Canada's youth in reading, mathematics and science. Ministry of Industry. Canada.

An overview of the school system

Each province or territory in Canada is responsible for its own education system, and Canada is the only country in the world with no national body responsible for education.²⁶⁰

Canada has achieved success on PISA scores across its provinces despite a limited to non-existent federal role. The best explanation for this is that different jurisdictions will tend to blend in with one another. The power of ideas and the possibilities of diffusion can therefore be sufficient to generate good practice.²⁶¹

Ontario is overseen by the Ontario Ministry of Education (Ministry), under which are 72 locally elected school boards (there is no such middle layer in New Zealand), under which there are about 5,000 schools.²⁶² The vast majority of students (95%) attend publicly funded schools. Much like the mantra in Singapore, Ontario's goal is that every school is a good school. However, students can choose from one of four publicly funded school

systems, English Public, English Catholic, French Public and French Catholic.

District school boards hire teachers and principals, and the board of trustees are elected at the same time as local government councillors, etc. Salaries, maintenance and facilities are paid for centrally by school districts.

Citizens vote for school trustees in the school districts where they pay property taxes, but the province redistributes funding across districts based on a funding formula. Half is distributed on head count and the rest on other socio-demographic factors. Elementary school is from age 5 to 13 and secondary school from age 14 to 18.

²⁵⁷ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 70.

²⁵⁹ Interview with Richard Franz, op. cit.

²⁶⁰ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ontario Ministry of Education (2013). *Education facts: schools and school boards*. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/educationFacts.html>

Trust building

... the new strategy seeks to address distrust as a core problem and aims to generate a virtuous cycle of greater performance leading to higher levels of trust, which in turn generates more energy for continued improvement.

– OECD²⁶³

Many reports attribute Ontario's educational success to a climate of peace and working with teacher unions since the liberal government came to power in 2003. While trust building has been important, it oversimplifies the story. Some argue that the climate of trust has reduced the attrition rate of new teachers by two-thirds.²⁶⁴ However, teacher oversupply (detailed later) in Ontario may be more of a factor in this than anything else. Teaching jobs are difficult to come by and those who get jobs hold on.

At the beginning of the 1990s, there was an urgent need for reform in many areas, including ITE and PLD for teachers.²⁶⁵ To address this, in 1993, the Minister of Education (of the centre-left Ontario New Democratic Party-led government) appointed a Royal Commission on Learning. The mandate of the Royal Commission was "to present a vision and action plan to guide Ontario's reform of elementary and secondary education". Many of the 150 recommendations in the report, which was released in 1995 a few months before provincial elections, were implemented by the newly elected Progressive Conservative-led (centre right) Government.²⁶⁶

By many accounts it was a difficult time for teachers. The government alienated teachers, introduced pen-and-paper tests to measure teacher performance, and reduced professional development. Principals were removed from the unions with the intention of making them

managers to hold teachers to account. The number of school districts was reduced; the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) was established; and an outcomes-based curriculum and standardised report cards were introduced.

The government bought television advertising space denigrating the teaching profession. "Morale was low and the relationship between the government and teachers was highly acrimonious".²⁶⁷ In 1997, teacher unions organised a two-week strike, the largest ever in North American history.²⁶⁸

When the Liberal Party was elected in 2003, Premier Dalton McGuinty made education the top priority. Minister of Education Gerard Kennedy said, "We needed to re-establish trust between government and the profession".²⁶⁹ Indeed, Kennedy focused on regaining trust to build on some good policies implemented by the Conservatives. In many ways, the Conservative government played 'bad cop' in implementing unpopular policies that needed to be implemented, and then the Liberal government played 'good cop' to bring teachers on board. As one source explains "The government said, 'We've had so much structural reform. We're now going to express our confidence in the teaching profession and work with teachers'".

Not all agree that the 'peaceful labour relations' have been good. Some say the liberal government was elected "in part because they promised to revoke the Professional Learning Program, a mandatory programme of professional learning brought in by the Conservative government".²⁷⁰ A source indicated that the unions disagree:

²⁶³ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD, p. 68.

²⁶⁴ Ben Levin, as cited in Stewart, V. (2012). *A world-class education: learning from international models of excellence and innovation*. ASCD: Virginia.

²⁶⁵ Interview with Kathy Anstett, External Relations Officer, and Richard Lewko, Director of Corporate and Council Services, Ontario College of Teachers, 4 June 2013.

²⁶⁶ Interview with Kathy Anstett and Richard Lewko, op. cit.

²⁶⁷ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD, p. 70.

²⁶⁸ <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/canada/Nunavut-to-Yukon/Ontario.html>

²⁶⁹ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*. OECD, p. 73.

²⁷⁰ Interview with Kathy Anstett and Richard Lewko, op. cit.

Some people say it is easy to create labour peace if you're just giving the unions everything they want. They gave us some of what we wanted, not everything ... they didn't cave on everything. We didn't win every fight.

There is no doubt labour peace over the 10 years, and government working with unions as partners to reform the system, contributed to a more peaceful climate. As Premier McGuinty said: "We promised peace, stability, respect, smaller classes, higher test scores and higher graduation rates. Today, seven years later, we haven't lost a single day to a teachers' strike". The strategy of the Ontario government was to:

... make peace with the teachers unions that had been demonized by the previous administration and with the teachers that had been so badly demoralised, and they invited them to join them in thinking through a reform program that would improve student performance.²⁷¹

The Ontario Education Partnership Table was started in 2004, bringing together education stakeholders two to four times a year.²⁷² But it is the government's attitude towards teachers that is most telling. Franz says, "Most teachers really want the best for the kids, to be effective, and to prepare students for a better life – and they are dedicated". The liberal government started with the assumption that teachers are professional and wanted to do the right thing. But cooperation with teachers happened only after strong systems of accountability and regulation were established.

Accountability

There is a culture in Ontario, even among teacher unions, of the importance of accountability. As one source explained:

Unions cannot say no to accountability. That's not a fight they can win with the government and it isn't even a fight that does their members any good. You have to be accountable. Governments are accountable and they need their education systems to be accountable.

An accountability policy worth further discussion is standardised testing for students at the end of Grades 3, 6 and 9 in reading, writing and mathematics. Asked whether this policy has caused 'teaching to the test', Franz responds "Well if they are teaching to the test then that's a good thing because the test is based on the Ontario curriculum. So in effect, they would be teaching to the curriculum". Another source echoes this attitude: "A simple analogy is a driver's test. If you teach to the test then you're teaching to drive, and that's a good thing".

There was acknowledgement from interviewees that there are dangers in narrowing the curriculum. However, the test is 'low stakes' and mostly used for diagnosis rather than to gain entry into special schools. Testing is tied to a detailed curriculum setting clear expectations of what children should achieve at each age, and implemented across the province. While the content is prescribed, there is a great deal of flexibility in how teachers implement it.²⁷³ The unions do not like standardised testing, but one source explained "the government likes the kind of data that testing provides so it can show improvement".

Another policy change for improving accountability was removing principals from teacher unions. Prior to this there

²⁷¹ Tucker, M. (2011). *Standing on the shoulders of giants: An American agenda for education reform*.

²⁷² Stewart, V. (2012). *A world-class education: learning from international models of excellence and innovation*. ASCD: Virginia.

²⁷³ Interview with Richard Franz, op. cit.

were conflicts as it was difficult for principals to take disciplinary action if required when teachers and principals were both part of the unions.

There are different types of accountability. First, all governments have to report to the public on how they spend their money and the outputs. Second, there is a deeply embedded sense of responsibility and ethics among teachers. A source explains that this pure form of accountability is not going away – the public in all jurisdictions will always hold the education system to account. But the second is equally important. This concept is similar to the Finnish sense of responsibility and professionalism. “A remarkable effect of collaborative practice is that it serves as a mechanism of peer accountability, substituting for other formal accountability measures.”²⁷⁴

The Ontario College of Teachers

The Ontario College of Teachers (the College) has done a remarkable job in making teaching a more professional career. It has three systemic goals: to ensure Ontario students are taught by licensed and qualified teachers, to accredit the programs and providers that prepare teachers and to discipline those teachers who breach standards of conduct.²⁷⁵

The College is much like the planned Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (currently the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC)). The College is responsible for investigating public complaints concerning professional misconduct and fitness to practice, accrediting ITE and in-service programmes and providers, developing standards, and issuing, suspending and revoking teacher registration. Richard Lewko, the College’s Director of Corporate and Council

Services, says they consider themselves a consumer protection agency acting in the public interest.

The College publishes information about the registration status and any disciplinary issues of all teachers on a website. Lewko says there is a lot of debate within the profession about this:

Members have pushed back asking why we air dirty laundry and saying we should be talking about the good things. But we’re not here to advocate for teachers. We’re here to protect the public.²⁷⁶

Many reports on Ontario show a system that invests trust in teachers, so it was interesting to hear this acknowledgement that although the majority of teachers are doing a good job, there are disciplinary issues with teachers that need to be addressed to protect the public. This airing of dirty laundry is not, however, popular with teacher unions.

The College was borne out of a recommendation by the 1995 Royal Commission on Learning to establish a self-regulating professional body of teachers. Similar to the idea of a Royal College of Teachers in England, and a reformed NZTC, the body would be separate and distinct from advocacy organisations.

Before its establishment in 1996, unions were responsible for disciplinary matters, taking recommendations to the Minister of Education. Anstett and Lewko say the Minister at the time was rejecting many recommendations because they were not passing the ‘societal’ test. For example, a teacher who had been in a sexual relationship with a student was only asked to stand down for three months. It was becoming difficult for the Minister to accept those recommendations and it was cumbersome to deal with individual cases.

²⁷⁴ Mourshed, M., Chijoke, C., & Barber, M. (2010). *How the world’s most improved school systems keep getting better*. McKinsey & Company.

²⁷⁵ Interview with Richard Lewko, op. cit.

²⁷⁶ Interview with Kathy Anstett and Richard Lewko, op. cit.

The College has been up and running for 15 years now and is a successful international example of a self-regulating body. By contrast, the NZTC has been deemed as not fulfilling its mandate; Gove abolished the General Teaching Council which he says “busy-bodied and patronised teachers”. The British Columbia College of Teachers, the only other self-regulating body for teachers in Canada, was deemed dysfunctional and was dismantled in 2011²⁷⁷ as it had difficulties separating public issues from advocacy interests. Lewko says “Organisations that lose sight of their mandate to operate in the public interest do not do well”.²⁷⁸ Most people elected to the council in British Columbia were union activists, which undermined the very point of the organisation.

Part of the College’s survival has been due to being clearly distinct from advocacy interests, with effective governance and clear education on what council members are there to do. Not all agree that the College is useful. Sources say the unions do not believe the College represents the views of teachers, and argues that the unions themselves provide the professional voice the College claims to provide. However, Lewko and Anstett say there have been huge improvements. Although the College was initially seen as an “initiative of the Tory government to go after teachers”, and some teachers still harbour resentment, younger teachers only know the College as a professional body.

Effective governance

Ontario is a diverse province, with two official languages, a large geographic area, and four types of school boards. As such, the council is large, with 37 members, to ensure the diversity of voices is heard. While this diversity is considered important, Lewko and Anstett say council

members are not there to represent or be accountable to a particular constituency. Upon appointment, their job is to represent the public interest.

Of those 37 individuals, 23 are elected by membership and 14 are political appointments to those who tend to be loyal to the government of the day.

Unlike the British Columbia College of Teachers, the College has managed to stay independent from teacher unions, while bringing teachers on board via the influential unions. Interestingly, the first registrar of the College was an ex-union boss, which helped establish credibility with teachers.²⁷⁹ In addition, adjudicated disciplinary panels were supported by independent legal counsel, including retired judges in the first few years to give the formalities credibility.²⁸⁰ Initially, the College was set up in a hostile environment. Teachers could not understand why they should pay a yearly fee to a body that could revoke licences and punish misconduct. This good leadership from the beginning helped the College survive.

Of the 23 elected positions, union representatives are eligible to run in 19, which means that 19 of the 37 positions could be represented by union interests.

However this is largely avoided. Council members swear an oath of office to act in the public interest and avoid conflicts of interest, and attend an orientation with experts in governance, self-regulation, accountability and transparency. As a result, those affiliated with the unions tend to separate themselves from union advocacy issues.

You have the separation – you can be involved in your union because you are interested in social issues or are interested in working together as a collective, and separate professionalism from that and accept the necessity of operating in public interest.²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ Sarna, N. (2010, December 10). Government report raises serious concerns about the BCCT. *Education Law Blog*. Retrieved from <http://educationlawblog.ca/government-report-raises-serious-concerns-about-the-bcct/>

²⁷⁸ Interview with Kathy Anstett and Richard Lewko, op. cit.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

“Self-regulation with strings”²⁸²

Even with this seemingly successful model, there is still the question of ‘who will watch the watchmen?’ In 2006, the provincial government put into place a ‘public interest committee’ to advise the Council. The unions were complaining that it wasn’t a truly self-regulating profession because teachers did not hold the majority on the council. The Minister increased the number of teachers who were elected so they had the true majority, but balanced it out with the oversight of the public interest committee. Anstett says, “This was very telling. The Minister seemingly did not completely trust unions with unfettered control”. Despite the rhetoric of the council members to completely act in the public interest, Lewko says the public interest committee has been the driver behind policy changes.

The Ministry also has the power to override, and did so in the early days when union influence might have been more powerful. While the College is supposed to be arms-length from the government and independent from unions, it still must act in accordance with the government of the day. The Ministry still has the authority to override decisions by the College.

The future of union influence

Currently, teachers in Ontario must pay over CAD\$1,000 per year in union fees. Many feel the annual fees do not necessarily represent them. Lewko explains that if a conservative government comes to power in the next election, they have indicated a willingness to remove the statutory obligation to join unions. This is similar to the trend in England – some people do not feel the need to be represented as a group and many are joining alternative organisations.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Interview with Richard Franz, op. cit.

²⁸⁴ Workshop with Linda Staudt, op. cit.

Changing the culture of expectations

In the past, people would say, look at my students, look at where they’ve come from. They’re poor, they are experiencing chaos in their lives. What do you expect?

– Richard Franz²⁸³

On the inability of teachers to correct for social disadvantage, Franz says, “We’ve taken that excuse off the table. It is true that no system in the world has ended the impact that socio-economic background has on education but we can mitigate it”. Changing teacher attitudes has not been too difficult because teachers do want their students to succeed.

The Statistical Neighbours application enables schools to find other schools serving similar socio-demographic profiles and shows that improved outcomes are possible for students from difficult backgrounds. A source explains that teachers were caring and devoted but did not have high enough expectations. “Some of the teachers that we hear about all the time were very caring and devoted teachers but somewhat their expectations for their students were not high enough”. This was echoed by many of the interviewees, and certainly rings true in New Zealand.

Inherent in this is the importance of relationships:

Students want the educators to know them, look out for them etcetera. Everything else is great, but if we have that relationship, it is that what keeps them in school.²⁸⁴

Teacher training

What attracts teachers to the profession?

Corroborating international research, teachers in Ontario are primarily motivated by wanting to make a difference in students' lives, followed by wishing to share subject knowledge they are passionate about. A survey of teachers found that “material rewards rise in importance over time, approaching but not exceeding the importance of making a difference”.²⁸⁵ Nevertheless, teaching is a well-paid career in Ontario.

Background

Teacher training was brought into universities in the 1970s and currently takes one year. Those wishing to become secondary teachers must study two subjects; elementary teachers are generalists. There are two paths to becoming a teacher: consecutive (taking the degree and then the one-year teaching programme) and concurrent (taking the degree and the teaching programme at the same time).

Like in all the jurisdictions studied in this report, there is a gap in practical training in Ontario. A survey of teacher graduates in 2012 asked what could be done to strengthen teacher training. Respondents asked for longer practicums, more supervised teaching opportunities, and more opportunity to observe experienced teachers.²⁸⁶ More than half (56%) said more classroom management techniques should be emphasised in teacher training, and 80% said they wanted professional development opportunities in these areas.²⁸⁷

Selectivity

The selection process for candidates is completely up to the universities and varies greatly. “There is significant range in how you get into a faculty, what they look for, and what is required”.²⁸⁸ However, overall it is still highly selective and an OECD report posits that this is what sets Ontario apart.²⁸⁹ Teacher training institutions select teachers from the top 30% of cohorts,²⁹⁰ and candidates must have high Grade Point Averages to gain entry into teacher training.

Teaching is about to become more selective, as Ontario moves to a two-year teacher training programme (still undergraduate). There will be half as many graduating but double the time in classrooms. Anthony says: “If it is hard to get into a programme, you get a solid grounding, and you have a really high chance of getting a job. That gets you the best candidates.” The change to two years has brought the length of teacher training in line with other provinces in Canada, to deal with more material being ‘stuffed’ into a one-year course. The reduced graduation rate will also help with Ontario’s teacher oversupply problem.²⁹¹

Oversupply

Extending teacher training to two years has been done in part to ease the major issue of teacher oversupply in Ontario. The gap between demand and supply of teachers has been around 8,000 teachers per year for the last four years and these effects are cumulative. There is currently oversupply of about 30,000 to 50,000 teachers. Only one in three 2011 graduates who searched for employment were employed in teaching jobs, and only one in three of those had as much work as they wanted.²⁹² The oversupply issue has been

²⁸⁵ Ontario College of Teachers. (2012). *Transition to teaching 2012*.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Interview with Paul Anthony, Director, Teaching and Standards Branch. Ontario Ministry of Education, Toronto. 3 June 2013.

²⁸⁹ OECD (2010). *Strong performers and successful reformers in education: lessons from PISA for the United States*, p. 70.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Interview with Paul Anthony, op. cit.

²⁹² Ontario College of Teachers. (2012). *Transition to teaching 2012*.

attributed to slowing retirements due to improved morale, reduced school student enrolment numbers, and an increased supply of teachers from training faculties.

One argument is that without caps on numbers, faculties of education have been ‘cash cows’ for universities. Teaching is a popular choice and universities have been enrolling larger numbers than required for the workforce to fund other programmes. In May 2011, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for Ontario capped the funding for education courses, saying, “the supply and demand is so out of whack that teacher’s college enrolments needed to be culled”.²⁹³

Is an oversupply an issue for the quality of student learning? While it is unfair on those who train and cannot get work, one argument is that oversupply and competition motivates teachers to perform better. Those who are lucky enough to get a job in this tight market work hard. One survey found only 27% of those graduating in 2011 considered their job security excellent or good compared with 72% of those who graduated in 2002.²⁹⁴

University performance indicators

Arguably one of the best indicators of a teacher training provider’s ability to produce high quality teachers is the employment rate of those teachers, and satisfaction among employers (schools). The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities surveys graduates and employers to produce standardised measures for each of the 24 providers of tertiary study in Ontario.²⁹⁵

The results for the 1997 to 2008 cohorts of education graduates show high levels of employment six months after graduation, hovering at 95% over time and across tertiary providers. This does not match teacher employment data collected

by the College. This survey is carried out across faculties (not just teaching) and is likely to only report on general employment rather than employment in the field of endeavour.²⁹⁶ Nevertheless, such a mechanism, if done right, has the potential to provide those wishing to become a teacher a way of determining which university is most likely to lead to job success.

The teaching career

Upon graduation, teachers apply to school boards for a position in a school. Unlike New Zealand, they do not get to choose which schools they will teach in.

New Teacher Induction Programme

We don’t expect from the faculty that they’re going to be 100% prepared in every single way, so it was really a second step in that professional and continual learning of the teacher

– Jim Strachan, Teaching Policy and Standards Branch, MOE²⁹⁷

Issues around the theory-practice nexus exist in Ontario too, but with a different expectation. Faculties of education provide the theoretical underpinnings required for a professional career in teaching, and there is little expectation of ‘school readiness’.

The New Teacher Induction Programme (NTIP) was borne out of recognition that new teachers need support to develop their capability. The Ministry funds boards to offer the programme and expects the NTIP programme to offer three components: an orientation to the board and the school, professional development (supported by research that shows it is helpful for new teachers, e.g. classroom management), and a mentoring programme. Aside from these

²⁹³ Dehaas, J. (2011, June 15). Two-thirds of new teachers can’t find full-time work. *MacLeans on Campus*.

²⁹⁴ Ontario College of Teachers (2012). *Transition to teaching 2012*.

²⁹⁵ Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. (2010). Employment rates – 6 months – education programs by institution, 1997-2010. Retrieved from <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/programs/osaprates/kpi/pdfs/2010/edu6mos.pdf>

²⁹⁶ Details of the methodology are not provided by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

²⁹⁷ Jim Strachan, Education Officer, Teacher Policy and Standards Branch. Ontario Ministry of Education, Toronto. 4 June 2013.

overarching components, it is up to school boards to design their own programmes.²⁹⁸

The NTIP is tied into performance appraisal as an accountability measure. Principals must conduct two performance appraisals during the year for new teachers, looking at instructional practice and student achievement, and must receive a ‘satisfactory’ rating. At the end, the College is notified that the new teacher has completed their NTIP programme.

Interestingly, unlike New Zealand, there is no reduced workload for mentors or mentees to partake in the NTIP programme, who use their PLD Professional Activity days (six per year) to work together.

The mentoring aspect of the NTIP programme is seen as the cornerstone of its success.

The power of mentoring is the de-privatisation of practice. I’m not just in my classroom doing my thing. I have a safe person I know who is not evaluative, who isn’t going to judge me, who I can go to with my issues. It is not just the teacher who is learning but the mentor as well.²⁹⁹

PLD

Like Singapore, Ontario is heavily invested in developing PLCs. Teachers are given release time to work as a team on improving student learning, researching solutions, implementing them and monitoring the results. As Franz explains, “This has deepened the understanding and discourse on instruction like nothing I’ve ever seen in my life.³⁰⁰ The principal’s role in creating a school culture to allow for these PLCs to flourish is essential”.

The story in Ontario reflects a worldwide evolution of how teachers are now developing their capacity and

developing professionally in schools. Franz says, “The way we run professional development is evolving from sessions in the grand ballroom to the job-embedded collaborative learning in classrooms in schools. It’s geared to teachers working on their practice together.”³⁰¹ And similar to Germany, Singapore, England and Finland, “It used to be that teachers would close the door to the classroom, which was their domain: now more and more often they are in each other’s classrooms, they’re puzzling over how to make something happen, and increasingly they are doing it together.”³⁰²

In addition, teachers improve their employability by taking self-funded accredited ‘additional qualifications’ (AQ). Teachers are employed by district school boards, and do not have a choice as to where they will be posted. By taking AQs in high demand to enhance their employability with the school board, they raise their chances of being posted to an area of their choice.³⁰³ This is an effective mechanism in Ontario to ensure teachers are upskilling and becoming more qualified in the areas of high demand. The College on its publicly searchable registrar shows all the qualifications that registered teachers in Ontario have.

Ontario also has the Teaching Learning and Leadership Programme (TLLP). As one source explained:

We were looking for a way to develop teacher-directed learning that would also lead to the sense of being a teacher leader. We wanted meaningful professional learning, not this mandatory stuff. We wanted to develop teacher leadership and knowledge mobility.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Interview with Richard Franz, op. cit.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Interview with Paul Anthony, Director, Teaching and Standards Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education, Toronto. 3 June 2013.

The TLLP is an example of teacher-led rather than centrally controlled PLD and is run in partnership with the teacher unions.

Career structure and performance

While there is no official career path for teachers who wish to stay in the classroom, the structure of school boards means there is a lot of upwards mobility. Aside from the first year, when teachers are appraised twice, teachers have performance appraisals once every five years. This is for accountability but also for development. Teachers make a learning plan once a year to identify goals.

Summary and conclusions

Many of the reports on Ontario's educational success point to the liberal government's willingness to work with the teachers' unions, and trusting teachers again. No doubt this is true, but it is only one part of the picture. The strength of the teaching profession seems to come from a mix of the following factors. There is high trust and autonomy overall, balanced by strong self-led regulatory body (the College) to deal with disciplinary issues on the margins and enhance professionalism. There is a strong commitment to capacity building to enhance teaching practice, and a belief from leadership that teachers want to do well by their students. Strong accountability mechanisms introduced under the last government hold teachers to high standards.

The previous government implemented unpopular policies with teachers, and marginalised teachers in the process. However, internationally comparable metrics of success show student achievement improved during the

conservative government's time and declined since the liberal government came to power in 2003. Internal measures of success however have been favourable.

The government has injected enthusiasm back into teaching and it is a popular career, to the point where Ontario now has an oversupply of teachers. Universities select the top one-third of the cohort, and the oversupply, while problematic for some, does make for a more competitive job market. As a result, graduates are upskilling with additional qualifications.

While there is no official career structure for teachers, there are many leadership opportunities (developing leadership capability has been a cornerstone of the Ontario system, although not covered in this report) and teachers are well paid.



6.

Australia – a top 5 contender?

John Morris

It was fun while it lasted Finland, but we're going cold on you. We thought your schools had the secret but our new infatuation is with Asian school systems. The Prime Minister seems to agree. The government has set a new goal that would see Australia get into the top 5 school systems in the world..."

- Stephen Dinham and Catherine Lomas Scott³⁰⁴

The OECD currently ranks Australia's education as the eighth best in the world,³⁰⁵ and according to UNESCO figures, Australia has one of the highest ratios of enrolment in primary and secondary education in the world.³⁰⁶ According to the OECD:

Australia's schools have positive learning environments, strong pedagogical leadership and well-prepared teachers, all supported with an effective evaluation and assessment framework. Students' instruction times and teachers' teaching time are among the highest across OECD countries.

Despite these positives, Australia, like New Zealand, has a great variation in achievement when measured by ethnicity, socio-economic status and geography. To achieve the aspirational target set by the Federal Government to become a 'top 5' country, as measured by PISA results, Australia will require continual improvement in the day-to-day teaching and development of effective instructional leadership in all schools.

Schooling system

Education is primarily the responsibility of the states and territories. Each state or territory government provides funding and regulates public and private schools within its jurisdiction.

Australia's compulsory schooling structure follows a two-tier model of primary and secondary education. Schools are classified according to sources of funding and administrative structures into one of three categories. In 2010, 65% of children attended Government schools (public or state schools); 21% attended Catholic schools; and 14% attended independent schools (private schools).³⁰⁷

Government schools are run by their respective state or territory government. Although they offer free education, schools ask parents to pay a voluntary contribution fee.

Government high schools can be either open or selective. Open Government schools accept all students from their defined catchment areas. Selective Government schools have wider catchment areas and are considered more prestigious,

³⁰⁴ Dinham, S., & Lomas Scott, C. (2012, September 14). Our Asian Schooling Infatuation: The Problem of PISA Envy. *The Conversation*.

³⁰⁵ OECD (2013). *Education Policy Outlook: Australia*.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

offering placements to the top performers in the Selective High Schools Test taken by Year 6 students. These schools are intended to provide a more academically stimulating and educationally enriching environment.

Catholic schools receive substantial funding from the Federal Government as they are considered a vital education option to provide choice outside the public sector, as Australia has a relatively high percentage of Catholic families. Parent-paid fees are compulsory, making it possible for these schools to afford a higher standard of education and sporting facilities than most Government schools.

Private schools also receive government funding. However, school fees are much higher than in Government or Catholic schools. As a result, private schools enjoy a prestigious reputation for attaining some of the best academic results, school grounds and facilities, and sporting and extra-curricular activities in the country.

and settings gives parents a wide range of choice.

School funding

Another unique feature of the Australian school system is the complex funding mechanisms in the three different sectors. State and territory governments are the main public funding sources for Government schools, and provide 27% of total recurrent government funding for independent schools. The Australian Government is the main public funding source for non Government schools.

A major issue for Australia is that funding for schools lacks transparency and coherence. Numerous studies show it is difficult to determine how individual schools are funded. This lack of transparency prompts concerns about efficiency and equity in education, particularly given the prevalence of private schools. Evidence, including a study commissioned by the Federal Government,³⁰⁹ indicates that Government schools, which are the most affected by inequitable funding, become less attractive to students from upper socio-economic backgrounds who move to private schools. With restricted resources, Government schools have a growing share of students needing the most support.³¹⁰

The Federal Government's commissioned Gonski Report found that as well as lacking coherence and transparency, current school funding arrangements were unnecessarily complex and duplicated funding in some areas.³¹¹ There was also an imbalance between the funding responsibilities of the Federal Government and state and territory governments across the schooling sectors, and existing funding systems made it difficult for governments and policymakers to decide how best to fund schools. The report recommended changes to funding

Non-government school sector

Australia is unusual in its school system in that the private school sector is larger (14%) compared to other similar countries like New Zealand, where under 4% of students attend private schools.³⁰⁸

Independent schools are not-for-profit organisations with sound autonomous governance arrangements and cater to a significant and growing share of Australian students. In 1970, only 4% of children attended independent schools. These schools have strong community links and a comprehensive range of accountabilities to parents and other stakeholders. The diversity of independent schools in type, size and focus, educating boys and girls, children with special needs and students from overseas and educational programmes

³⁰⁸ Ministry of Education (2012). Education Counts: Roll by Regional Council and Authority 1 July 2012. Retrieved from http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/maori_education/schooling/6028

³⁰⁹ Gonski, D., Boston, K. et al. (2011). *Review of funding for schooling – final report*. Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Canberra.

³¹⁰ OECD (2013). *Education policy outlook: Australia*.

³¹¹ Gonski, D., Boston, K. et al. (2011). *Review of funding for schooling – final report*. Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Canberra.

Table 9: PISA 2009, TIMSS 2011 and PIRLS 2011 means and rankings

	PISA 2009 Reading	PISA 2009 Mathematics	PISA 2009 Science	TIMSS 2011 Year 8 Mathematics	TIMSS 2011 Year 8 Science Mathematics	PIRLS Year 4 Literacy
Finland	3 rd (536)	6 th (541)	2 nd (554)	8 th (514)	5 th (552)	3 rd (568)
Singapore	10 th (527)	2 nd (562)	4 th (542)	2 nd (611)	1 st (590)	4 th (567)
Canada	6 th (524)	10 th (527)	8 th (529)	n/a	n/a	12 th (548)
New Zealand	7 th (521)	13 th (519)	7 th (532)	16 th (488)	15 th (512)	23 rd (531)
Australia	9 th (515)	15 th (514)	10 th (527)	12 th (505)	12 th (519)	27 th (527)
Germany	20 th (497)	16 th (513)	13 th (520)	n/a	n/a	17 th (541)
England	25 th (494)	28 th (492)	16 th (514)	10 th (507)	15 th (529)	11 th (522)

Sources:

Telford, M. (2010). *PISA 2009: our 21st century learners at age 15*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Mullis, I., Martin, M., Foy, P., & Arora, A. (2012). *TIMSS 2011 international results in mathematics*.

International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Chamberlain, M. (2013). *PIRLS 2010/11 in New Zealand: An overview of national findings from the third cycle of the Progress in International Reading Study (PIRLS)*. Ministry of Education. Wellington.

Martin, M., Mullis, I., Foy, P., & Stanco, G. (2012). *TIMSS 2011 international results in science*. International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

mechanisms, including a move towards needs-based funding.

In response, the Australian Government introduced the Australian Education Bill 2012 which incorporated recommendations from the Gonski Report. The bill, which pursues a national vision for schooling reform, was passed in mid-2013 but not all states are supporting it. States still have overall control of education so this legislation may not be implemented in all states.

Performance of the schooling system

TIMSS, PIRLS and PISA data indicate that Australia faces a huge challenge in achieving its goal of being in the top 5 countries for these tests.

The TIMSS study shows that Australian students were significantly outperformed by between 6 to 18 countries in Years 4 and 8. Apart from a small improvement in Year 4 mathematics between 1995 and 2007, performance in mathematics and science has stagnated over the past 16 years. The PIRLS study shows that Australia's year 4 students ranked 12th internationally in reading literacy. Many Australian Year 4 students have substantial literacy problems, with around one-quarter not meeting the intermediate benchmark – the minimum proficiency standard.

Academic achievement is not the only problem. Nearly one in 10 students in Years 4 and 8 is disengaged from school.

Although Australia is one of the highest PISA performers among OECD countries, results have not improved since 2000. The

reading literacy of Australian 15-year-old students has fallen sharply over the past decade. Australia's results slipped in mathematics but held ground in science.

An overview of the teaching workforce

Between 2001 and 2011, the teaching staff increased by 17% and in 2011, around two-thirds (64%) of teachers were working in Government schools and one-third (36%) in non-Government schools. With the rise of the private school sector, the number of teaching staff at non-Government schools has increased at around triple the rate of teaching staff at Government schools over this time.

Like all of the countries studied for this report, females comprise a higher proportion of teaching staff than males. At primary schools, the gender divide is greater. Only 19% of primary school teachers are male, compared with 42% at secondary school. However, women continue to be underrepresented in leadership roles. In the primary sector for example, only 57% of school leaders are female, and in the secondary sector, 61% of school leaders are male.

A 2012 survey of one-third of Australian teachers confirmed an ageing teaching workforce. The most common age band is 51 to 55 years, and average age of secondary teachers has increased since 2007 while primary teachers' average age has decreased slightly.

Like New Zealand, there are concerns about the lack of teachers who are specialists in their subject areas. About one-third of Year 8 students are being taught mathematics and about 15% taught science by teachers 'out-of-field'. These teachers may lack the pedagogical and content knowledge to provide adequate advanced support for high-achieving

students, or an alternative structure for students who have learning difficulties or are disengaged.

Teachers' salary scales

Pay rates for classroom teachers in Australia vary from state to state. Each state has its own pay scale and like New Zealand, teachers progress up the scale based on years of experience. Starting salaries for graduate teachers with four years of tertiary training range from AUD\$45,000 to AUD\$55,000. The pay scale for experienced classroom teachers is AUD\$78,000 to AUD\$85,000. Salaries for HODs, principals and deputy principals range from AUD\$80,000 to AUD\$150,000. Overall, teachers' salaries are above the OECD average, and have risen steadily by around 13% since 2000 at all education levels. In 2010, teachers at all levels earned about 91% of the earnings of other workers of a similar age and education level.³¹² Teachers in Victoria recently received a considerable pay increase to make them the best-paid teachers in Australia.

Staff-pupil ratios

In 2011, the student-to-teaching staff ratios of Government and non-government schools were relatively similar, reporting 13.9 and 13.6, respectively. Independent schools recorded the lowest ratio (12.1), while Catholic schools recorded the highest (15).

From 2001 to 2011, the overall student-to-teaching-staff ratios in Australia decreased from 14.8 to 13.8. Government and Catholic schools reported decreases in student-teacher ratios from 14.8 to 13.9 and 15.9 to 15, respectively. Independent schools reported a decrease from 12.8 to 12.1.

³¹² OECD (2013). *Australia: Education at a Glance*, p. 2.

Table 10. Staff in Australia's schools: A snapshot

	Primary Teachers	Secondary Teachers	Primary Leaders	Secondary Leaders
Average age	42.1 years	44.5 years	49.5 years	50.2 years
Proportion of females (%)	81%	57%	57%	61%
Most common salary range (\$)	\$71k-\$80k	\$71k-\$80k	\$101k-\$110k	\$112k-\$140k
Average workload – all school-related activities (hours per week)	45.8	46.0	55.7	58.9
Average workload - face-to-face teaching (hours per week)	23.3	19.2	6.1	3.5
Average number of days spent in professional learning over the past year	8-9 days		13-15 days	
Average length of time at current school (years)	7.2 years	8.4 years	7.3 years	8.1 years

Source: McKenzie, P. (2012). *Painting a picture of the teaching workforce. Research Developments*, 27, p. 4.

Primary schools also saw an overall decrease in student-teacher staff ratios from 17 in 2001 to 15.6 in 2011. Secondary schools decreased from 12.5 to 12 over the same period.³¹³

Job satisfaction

The 2012 workforce survey of around a third of teachers found that job satisfaction is relatively high in Australia (90%) and has improved since 2007.³¹⁴ The most satisfying aspects of the job were the sense of collegiality and the chance to develop positive working relationships with parents. The least satisfying aspects were the low value that society places on teachers' work, the consequent low status of the profession, and the amount of administrative and clerical work required.

Retention issues remain a major issue for the profession. Despite high job satisfaction, 7% of primary and 10% of secondary teachers indicated they

would leave teaching permanently before retirement for better opportunities outside school because of the heavy workload.³¹⁵

The unattractiveness of the current career structure in teaching is creating a retention issue as only 11% of primary teachers and 9% of secondary teachers said they intend to apply for a senior management role. Reasons given included high time demands of the job, desire to stay in the classroom for as long as possible, and difficulty maintaining a satisfactory work-life balance.³¹⁶

In addition, one-third of secondary school leaders and almost 50% of primary leaders could not commit to how long they would stay in the role. Improvements that would help them stay included more support staff, reduced workload, fewer top-down changes, fewer student management issues, greater autonomy, and higher pay.³¹⁷

³¹³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013). Education and work: school teachers. Retrieved from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/2f762f95845417aeca25706c00834efa/459c3882fad473a2ca2570eb0083be84!OpenDocument>

³¹⁴ McKenzie, P. (2012). *Painting a picture of the teaching workforce. Research Developments*, 27.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

Quality of Australian teachers

The aptitude of new teachers has fallen considerably.

– Andrew Leigh and Chris Ryan³¹⁸

We know two important things about teaching and learning. The first is that the quality of the classroom teacher is the major in-school influence on student learning. The second is that teacher quality varies widely.

– Stephen Dinham³¹⁹

Factors hindering quality teaching

Strengthening the teaching workforce in Australia is a major focus for the future. The highly competitive labour market in Australia and the ‘war for talent’ heightens the need to actively recruit and retain quality teachers. However, a review of the literature on teaching quality in Australian schools identifies the following factors as undermining this drive to improve teacher quality, many of which are not unique to just Australia:

- Entry standards too low
- Bigotry of low expectations
- Archaic lock-step salary scale
- Inadequate links between teacher training institutions and school practitioners
- Varying quality of induction and support for beginning teachers
- Isolation of the classroom
- Variable quality of educational leadership in schools
- Difficulties in removing poorly performing teachers
- Unequal and inequitable distribution of teacher expertise
- Disruptive and disengaged students

- Conditions of work that reinforce low status of teachers
- Negative community perceptions of teachers

Ensuring Quality Teaching

The biggest equity issue in Australian education today isn’t computers, new buildings or equipment. It is the need for each student to have quality teachers and quality teaching in schools supported by effective leadership and professional learning in mutually respectful community contexts.

– Stephen Dinham³²⁰

As with all the countries visited for this report, as Australia moves into the ‘knowledge age’ and an increasingly competitive global economy, the quality of schooling must continue to improve to give students the best chance to succeed. The key mechanism to ensure this happens is to raise teacher quality.

So far the Australian government seems to have specialised in offering “a variety of simplistic, populist approaches to the challenge of improving teacher quality”.³²¹

Some of the standard, predictable, fragmented and ad hoc responses include merit- or performance-based pay, raising entry standards to teaching, higher teacher pay, smaller class sizes, standardised testing, and sacking poorly performing teachers.

Clearly, a much more comprehensive and integrated approach is needed to ensure success in this challenge. The Business Council of Australia’s research paper on this topic advocates a totally different national approach to raising teacher quality, and thereby student achievement, by revitalising teaching and making it a career of choice.³²² In many ways this is similar to the Ontario approach

³¹⁸ Leigh, A., & Ryan, C. (2008). How and why has teacher quality changed in Australia? *Australian Economic Review*, 41.

³¹⁹ Dinham, S. (2011, August 22). Teaching needs a new deal. *The Age*.

³²⁰ Dinham, S. (2013). Improving Teacher Quality in Australia. *Canada Education*, 53.

³²¹ Dinham, S., Ingvarson, L., & Kleinhenz, E. (2008). *Time for a national approach to teacher quality*. Australian Policy Online.

³²² Ibid.

of revitalising the profession rather than concentrating on punitive approaches.

More recently, the multifarious pieces of the quality teaching puzzle are showing signs of slowly coming together, and educational change is focusing on core issues rather than fiddling around the edges. Developments of late include introducing a common national testing regime; mandating a national curriculum; creating the ‘My School’ website which allows open access to the achievements of every primary and secondary school in Australia; and tying new national teaching standards to compensation. The last change in particular could raise the status of teaching, lead to more quality graduates entering the profession, raise retention levels, and develop top quality teachers.

Attracting the best graduates

Currently, teaching is not a profession of choice for the most talented Australian academic graduates or higher secondary school students. The average academic level of those studying and entering teaching fell from the 70th to the 59th percentile of academic achievement between 1983 and 2008, which is “a substantial decline in the academic aptitude of the typical teacher”.³²³

While academic ability does not guarantee great teaching, the McKinsey research of 2007 stated that the top performing school systems attracted trainee teachers from the top third of the graduating class, while poorly performing systems selected teachers from the bottom third of graduating high school students. There is general consensus that the first step in improved outcomes in education is to attract the best people into teaching. In Australia, it is clear that the quality of talent choosing teaching as a career is in steep decline, and the country is not

producing graduate teachers that meet the education system’s needs.³²⁴

Lawrence Ingvarson, Principal Research Fellow at the Australian Council for Education Research and Stephen Dinham, Chair of Teacher Education at the University of Melbourne, say entry standards to ITE are too low and criticise universities for being irresponsible in reducing intake requirements, with too many poor quality trainee teachers being accepted.³²⁵

Only the University of Melbourne has an appropriately high criterion for entry (over 90 in the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank [ATAR] scores) while some ITE programmes accepted trainees with results below 50. In 2012, the University of Ballarat had a cut-off score of 47.2 to enter the education degree programme. Deakin University had cut-off scores from 50.5 to 70.95 for its education degrees, and the cut-off score at the St Albans campus of Victoria University was only 53.3.³²⁶

In 2012 only 5% of students entering undergraduate teacher education programmes had ATAR scores above 90, compared to an average of 28% across all courses. Less than half of entrants were from the top 30% of the year 12 cohort compared to 86% for engineering and 72% for health.³²⁷

This means Australia is recruiting into the primary teaching programme trainees from the middle third of graduates, raising questions about the ability and subject knowledge of prospective teachers. A Year 12 pass in key subjects such as mathematics and science is not a requirement in most states for entry into ITE. The University of Melbourne in its submission to the House inquiry on teacher training stated that “an insistence of Year 12 mathematics would have results in half of the currently accepted applicants being rejected”.³²⁸ The submission argues that “the current practice whereby universities are free to

³²³ Leigh, A., & Ryan, C. (2008). How and why has teacher quality changed in Australia? *Australian Economic Review*, 41.

³²⁴ Rickards, F. (2013). Lost in a Forest of Irrelevance. Working White Paper, 2013, p. 12.

³²⁵ Interviews with Lawrence Ingvarson, Principal Research Fellow, Australian Council for Educational Research, and Professor Stephen Dinham, The University of Melbourne, May 2013.

³²⁶ Cervini, E. (2012, September 11). Lessons yet to be learnt on teaching. *The Age*.

³²⁷ Ingvarson, L. (n.d). What happened to the National Statement for the Teaching Profession? Personal copy of unpublished paper, p. 2.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.17.

enrol students in teacher education courses until they fill course quotas, regardless of academic ability, clearly needs to be reviewed.”³²⁹

Academic achievement is of course not the only measure universities should use to select prospective trainees. The University of Melbourne recently developed an online tool to inform the selection of candidates for teaching. The tool will be used from 2014 to select trainee teachers with the highest potential to become great teachers by measuring a candidate’s aptitude for teaching based on the qualities excellent teachers possess in literacy, numeracy, cognitive ability and personality.³³⁰

Several reports into teacher quality in Australia have recommend setting higher entry standards into teacher training: ATAR scores for teaching should not fall below the 75th percentile; all entrants to primary teaching should have studied English, mathematics and science to year 12; and the accreditation of teacher education courses that do not attract high quality applicants should be reviewed.

Of course there are significant costs for universities in streamlining selection processes to determine entry into teacher education courses; interviews, structured references, written applications, and portfolios all add to the cost. Some evidence suggests that rather than overemphasise the entry criteria, more attention could be focused on the capabilities graduates have at the end of their course.³³¹ Common sense would suggest that both inputs (selection of the best candidates) and outputs (quality of graduate teachers) are significant factors in developing excellent teachers.

Further recommendations propose that teaching needs to become a postgraduate career at primary and secondary school levels, and some primary level specialist teachers need to be trained, particularly in mathematics and science.³³² As Dinham

points out, “the practice of taking people straight from school, training them as teachers, and sending them back to school, often in the same geographical area from which they have come, is no longer appropriate.”³³³

If entry requirements to undergraduate programs are allowed to continue to decline there will be a heavy price. All the effort around improving the quality of teachers, the quality of teaching and student achievement in this country will be undermined.

- Stephen Dinham³³⁴

Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

Teacher education matters ... while we found wide variation in the reported quality of teacher education programs, we did not find that teacher education is unnecessary.

- Lawrence Ingvarson³³⁵

Teacher education seems to have very little impact on the students of graduating teacher candidates.

- John Hattie³³⁶

The debate about ITE is ongoing throughout the developed world, and concerns about the quality of teacher preparation are mirrored worldwide. In Australia, there have been several reviews of ITE in the last 20 years but data on the effectiveness of ITE is based on surveys of graduates, teachers and principals – the data, while useful, does not fully inform policy and practice in teacher education.

³²⁹ Dinham, S., Ingvarson, S.L., Kleinhenz, E. (2008). *Teaching talent: the best teachers for Australia's classrooms*. The Business Council of Australia.

³³⁰ Interview with Field Rickards, Dean of Education Faculty, University of Melbourne, May 2013.

³³¹ Interview with Professor Mayer, University of Victoria, May 2013.

³³² Interview with Field Rickards, University of Melbourne, May 2013.

³³³ Dinham, S. (2013). *The quality teaching movement in Australia: losing our confidence, losing our way and getting back on track* [written speech from Phillip Hughes Oration]. Australian College of Educators, 28 February 2013, p.10.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³³⁵ Ingvarson, L. (2013). *What makes a teacher education course effective?* ACER news.

³³⁶ Hattie, J., Anderson, M., & Clinton, J. (2013). *Developing an evidence-based model for the effects of teacher education programmes on teacher candidates*. Working White Paper, p. 8.

Within Australia, there are great variations in the ITE programmes offered. There is, however, as John Hattie says, a ‘family resemblance’ across the many programmes offered by the 38 tertiary providers accredited in Australia.

Trainee teachers generally study pedagogy, classroom management, subject content knowledge, and school practicums. The universities provide the theory, methods and skills; the schools provide the setting in which that knowledge is practised; and the beginning teachers provide the individual effort to apply the knowledge. Hattie is particularly critical of the efficacy of current ITE programmes: “Long standing and frequent criticism indicates these models have little influence on the practices of teacher candidates”.³³⁷

Changes to the traditional model of ITE

In 2000 The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) requested accredited ITE providers to stipulate graduating standards for trainees and then provide evidence that all graduates were reaching these standards. This represented a major shift from the earlier paradigm because it meant that graduation from the teacher training course would not be based on time or the supposed quality of the teachers and programmes offered by the university. Instead, evidence of standards reached would be the sole deciding factor.

More recently, the University of Melbourne introduced the ‘clinical practice’ model of ITE. This is a radical departure from traditional ITE courses, and is based on the medical model. It is an ‘interventionist’ model to educate trainee teachers to deliberately intervene to ensure all students achieve or exceed their learning potential.

Clinical practice therefore is based on teachers’ use of evidence to analyse when a student is most ready to learn, intervene to support learning, and evaluate the impact of the intervention on the learner. As Field Rickards, Dean of Education Faculty at the University of Melbourne says, “Clinical teaching is the process by which educators address the individual needs of every learner – from gifted students to those that need extra help”.³³⁸

In clinical teaching practice, professional partnerships are formed with groups of neighbouring schools. Schools within these groups provide placements for three to eight trainee teachers. A designated school in each group acts as the base for the practicum seminar. Exemplary teachers are appointed from the base school as ‘teaching fellows’ (0.5 loading), who ensure the consistent and coherent delivery of the practicum. Teaching fellows work closely with the ‘clinical specialist’, an academic who teaches in the programme and mentors and monitors trainees; he or she also delivers the practicum seminar.

When seen in this light, teaching is a complex profession that requires high calibre individuals. “It is intellectually challenging, requiring advanced levels of analytical thinking and clinical judgement”.³³⁹ Hence, there is the need for top-tier graduates who can make a significant impact on the learning outcomes of all Australian students.

³³⁷ Hattie, J., Anderson, M., & Clinton, J. (2013). *Developing an evidence-based model for the effects of teacher education programmes on teacher candidates*. Working White Paper, p. 4.

³³⁸ Rickards, F. (2013). *Focusing on the learner - charting a way forward for Australian education*. The University of Melbourne.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.12.

Strengthening the profession

The solution to improving teacher quality lies in combining two present agendas: the national teaching standards ... and the call for bonus, merit or performance pay to reward and drive improvement in teacher effectiveness.

– Stephen Dinham³⁴⁰

Appraisal

According to Jensen, “Australia’s systems of teacher appraisal and feedback are broken”.³⁴¹ A recent survey of teachers by the Grattan Institute found:

- 63% said appraisals were done purely to meet administrative requirements
- 91% said the best teachers do not receive the most recognition or reward
- 71% said poor performing teachers are not dismissed.³⁴²

There is no one effective universal approach to appraisal in Australian schools; instead, departments and schools are implementing their own approaches. In addition, performance management in education typically runs the risk of being seen as administrative processes focused on form-filling and limited in its real impact on performance or development.

In other words, appraisal is little more than a tick-box exercise with no links to improved teaching or teacher professional development. The current appraisal systems “have failed to overcome the traditional teacher culture of privacy and territoriality”.³⁴³ Yet a meaningful appraisal system is vital given that such systems, which are directly linked to improved student achievement, can increase teacher effectiveness by 20% to 30%.³⁴⁴

However, several key issues can be overcome in any effective performance management system. Currently, the systems are too complicated, too technical, and not transparent; more than a third of performance management focuses on process and form-filling rather than conversations to improve performance and learning; appraisers are concerned about giving negative feedback; and almost half of senior managers are not committed to following performance management processes.

Another issue is the highly bureaucratized nature of teaching in Australia. Jensen strongly believes that appraisal should not be centralised but be the responsibility of schools. While Jensen recommends choice, he recommends that schools use at least four of the following eight methods found to be most effective in assessing and developing teaching and learning:

1. student performance and assessments.
2. peer observation and collaboration.
3. direct observation of teaching and learning.
4. student surveys.
5. parent surveys.
6. 360-degree assessment.
7. self-assessment.
8. external observation.³⁴⁵

The role of the principal in setting up such a system is integral. School principals need to set clear objectives, develop explicit expectations of teachers and students, and identify and promote effective teaching. In addition, they must ensure that all employees are well trained in appraisal procedures and understand how their individual goals must be aligned with school goals.

³⁴⁰ Dinham, S. (2011, August 22). Teaching needs a new deal. *The Age*.

³⁴¹ Jensen, B. (2011). *Better teacher appraisal and feedback: Improving performance*. Grattan Institute, p. 3.

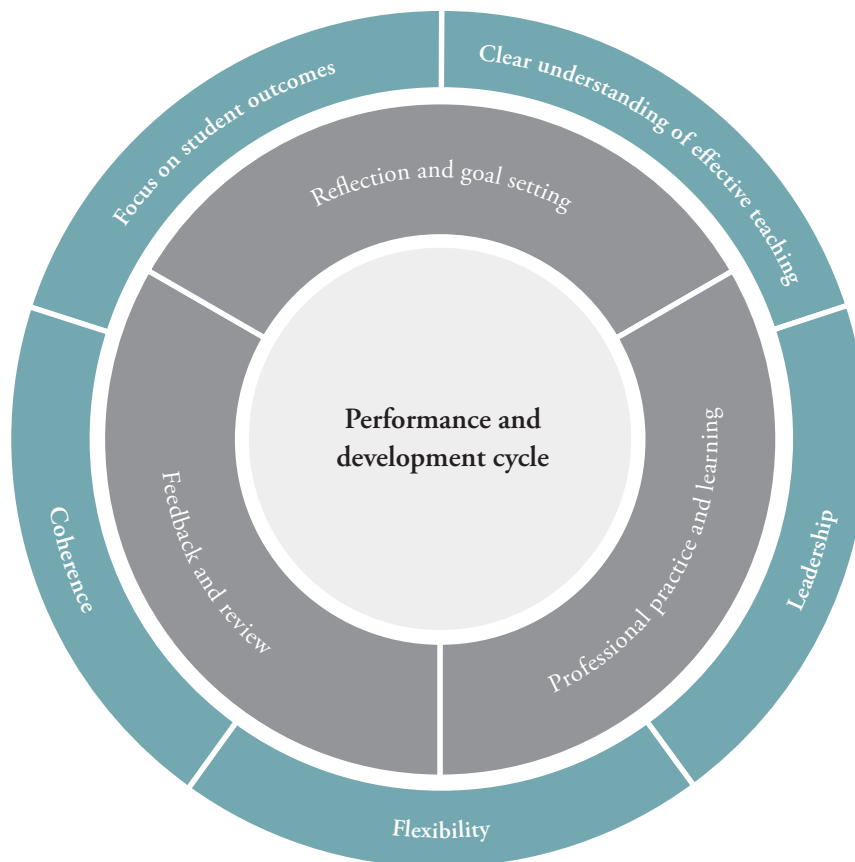
³⁴² *Ibid.*

³⁴³ Cited in Ingvarson, L. (2012). *Comments on the productivity commission draft research schools workforce report*. Australian Council for Educational Research.

³⁴⁴ Jensen, B. (2011). *Better teacher appraisal and feedback: Improving performance*. Grattan Institute, p. 3.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Figure 10: Performance and development culture



Source: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2012). Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework, p. 3.

While the methodologies listed reflect the breadth of evidence most often cited in international research on teacher effectiveness – and are widely accepted – sustained improvement will not necessarily occur unless this approach is accompanied by a culture change in schools, and by aligning appraisals with teachers' career structures and procedures to recognise good teachers and address underperformance.

Improving teacher performance and recognising excellent teaching will require more than just tweaking existing appraisal systems. Changes must be bold and help transform teaching into a profession with professional responsibilities and

professional models of accountability. This is where Australia wants to go.

Teacher performance and development framework

In 2012, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), in consultation with education stakeholders, developed a performance management framework. The framework represents a consistent national approach to teacher performance and development, and outlines critical factors for creating an effective performance and development culture in schools. Importantly, the

wide consultation followed to create this framework included teaching unions, an essential component in ensuring the successful implementation of any appraisal system.

Figure 10 shows “a structure for appraising, developing and refining teaching practice, and recognises the entitlement of teachers to receive feedback and support”.³⁴⁶ The various components of the model are interwoven and provide a useful way of developing a valid and effective appraisal system. The feedback loop in this model is important because, as in any area of performance quality, feedback is essential to learning and improved performance.

While this framework stresses consistency, it is also a flexible system which acknowledges that all schools are different and need to respond to their different contexts and histories; hence, the elements may look different in each school. What is common is the importance of the principal in leading teaching and learning, and in creating a culture of performance and development within the school.

A vital component of this framework is the clear understanding of effective teaching according to the National Professional Standards for Teachers (“Standards”), which outline what teachers should know and be able to do at four career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished, and Lead Teacher. Each standard is organised around the domains of professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional engagement.

These standards provide the basis for reaching a shared understanding of what effective teaching looks like in a particular school at a particular time, and have been well received by academics and education commentators.

Still to be decided is whether this will remain purely a framework for different states and employing authorities to develop

their own assessment methods, or whether AITSL will operate one profession-wide certification system as in other professions.

The Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) has a definite view on this:

A fragmented system would be inefficient and would almost certainly undermine comparability and its ability to provide teachers with a respected portable professional certification.³⁴⁷

Professional certification to promote and recognise successful teaching

Linking appraisal to teaching career structures has always been a challenge. Australia is grappling with linking teacher pay to performance – and thereby incentivising teachers. While there may be agreement that the lock-step salary structure for teachers is outdated and provides few incentives and little recognition for professional learning, there is clear disagreement on how to fix matters.

Australia’s aim is to use the new AITSL standards to introduce a system to certify and reward teachers at the highest two levels of the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers. There is widespread support for this move but implementation is proving difficult.

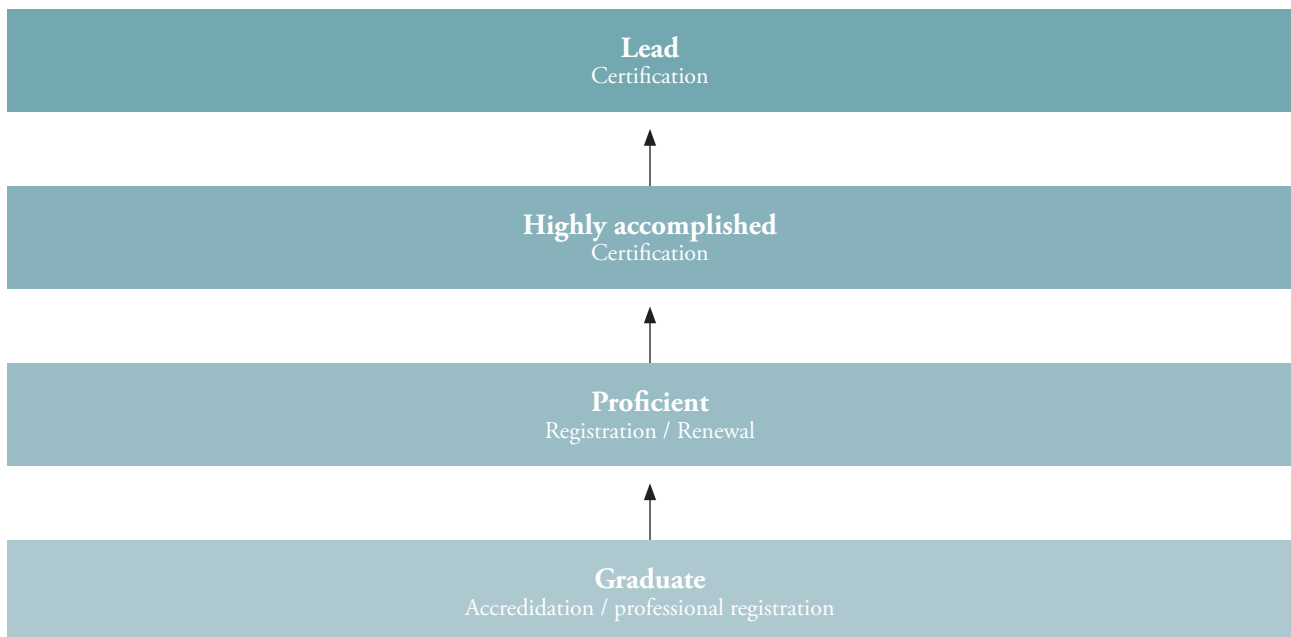
Ingvarson argues strongly for a standards-based professional learning and certification system along the lines of the AITSL proposal that has the potential to overcome the lack of clarity about what teachers should get better at, the lack of incentives to attain high teaching standards, and the low level of ownership and control that teachers have over their professional development.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2012). *Australian teacher performance and development framework*, p. 3.

³⁴⁷ Ingvarson, L. (2013). Where is the profession in the national partnership on teacher quality? *ACER News*.

³⁴⁸ Ingvarson, L. (2013). *Professional certification: promoting and recognising successful teaching practices*, p. 1.

Figure 11: Australian Professional Standards for Teachers



Source: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

This certification should be a career step that all teachers aspire to and be open to all teachers based on demonstrated attainment of the standards and for having met the required professional learning. Unlike bonus pay schemes, this is non-competitive as it is standards-based. The concept has four interlocking pieces of a jigsaw – standards, certification, recognition and professional learning.

The remarkable consensus over the last decade about the desirability of such a system led to the creation of AITSL in 2010. This new organisation was charged with developing and implementing a nationally consistent certification function.

AITSL has made some progress but Ingvarson believes it lacks “the capacity to ensure that Australia gains the respected profession-wide certification that it needs”.³⁴⁹

As things stand, the issue is still live, with some progress on implementation. But “establishing such a system is a complex enterprise, politically and technically”,³⁵⁰ especially as states value their autonomy in matters of education.

If the implementation of such a profession-run certification system is successful, teaching would benefit immeasurably in Australia because it would attract the best graduates because teaching would for the first time be able to offer appropriate and attractive salary progression and working conditions to achieving teachers.

AITSL has developed the basic architecture of a nationally consistent certification system for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers. The major challenge is for the system to prove itself to be a valid and reliable indicator of effective classroom teaching,

³⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 15.

and the profession needs to take greater responsibility for its operation and build a sense of ownership and commitment to ensuring its success.³⁵¹

Ingvarson believes that to ensure the success of professional certification, Australia must establish an independent national professional body responsible for its development and operation. His suggestion of an Australian College of Teaching that promotes and recognises highly accomplished professional practice in teaching and school leadership echoes similar moves in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Until this happens, the teaching profession will remain “leaderless and powerless”³⁵² and without an independent voice.

innovation, collaboration and opportunity. This is the only way the profession will be able to attract bright and talented teachers who will make a difference, and to retain them for longer. This is the challenge for the immediate future if Australia hopes to realise its goal of a top 5 placing in the world’s education league tables.

■

Summary and conclusions

The education reform process in Australia is focused on improving the teaching profession rather than introducing even more structural, administrative, curriculum and assessment reforms that have proven not to be the ‘silver bullet’ to improve student achievement.³⁵³

The AITSL framework highlights what is required to build a comprehensive and effective approach to high teacher performance and development that is the key to continual improvement. There is a growing body of evidence that shows teachers thrive in a culture focused on improving teaching that leads to improved student outcomes. The framework is therefore characterised by frequent feedback, coaching and access to high quality PLD.

The framework is also a major step forward in raising the attractiveness of the teaching profession in Australia, but even more needs to be done. There is a need for positive changes in the workplace that will create a culture of high performance,

³⁵¹ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁵² Ibid., p. 10.

³⁵³ <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/>

Conclusions

Jurisdictions around the world know the importance of teachers, and are working out how to strengthen their teaching professions. Some have done it better than others. This journey was about unpicking policy and cultural factors to think about what kinds of ideas could be applied in the New Zealand context. The forthcoming third report in the series will make policy recommendations for strengthening the teaching profession here. The research for this report uncovered key themes that seem to lead to success in world-class education systems.

The best countries are able to make the teaching career an attractive one. This raises the status of the profession, attracting greater numbers and a higher calibre of people into teaching, which allows more selectivity so that the very best and brightest become teachers. This is the kind of positive self-perpetuating cycle New Zealand needs to get into. So what do the best jurisdictions do?

Select the best teachers

Successful jurisdictions include several gates of quality control to ensure that the best people become teachers. Singapore's teachers now have to do a stint of teaching as part of the selection process, enabling the Ministry to assess whether candidates have the appropriate disposition and dedication to be teachers, and allowing the would-be teacher to understand something about the realities of teaching. Germany's teachers must pass a difficult examination to enter university, and sit more difficult exams at the end of teacher training, including observations of their relationships with

students. Finland's selection processes include difficult examinations as well.

Selection into teacher training is important, as are selection processes for school employers. In Finland, like New Zealand, school principals have overall responsibility of hiring teachers. The Schools Direct model in England where schools select and train teachers puts the choice of the most appropriate candidate in the hands of the school. It becomes unnecessary to prescribe how a teacher should be employed because principals are motivated to get the very best teachers and can design their own hiring procedures.

Make teaching a highly qualified profession

Teacher training has been brought into universities over the last 40 years worldwide. This has its upsides: it raises the status of teaching, and encourages teachers to take a research-orientation to their work and to gain deeper understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of pedagogy. Singapore is encouraging teachers to study towards master's degrees. All Finnish teachers now must have master's degrees and Germany teachers study at master's level as well.

Bridge the theory-practice nexus

One of the unintended consequences of bringing teaching training into universities is that teachers are now less prepared for the classroom. This problem is certainly not isolated to New Zealand, which is partly addressing this with the

induction and mentoring programme for beginning teachers. Ontario is following a similar course, and Germany already has a two-year apprenticeship for teachers. Finland has a staggered approach, alternating between university and school-based training in schools owned by the universities. Singapore offers 22-24 weeks of practicum in the schools where trainee teachers will be posted in their first two years of employment, and every test and assignment has a practical application. England is shifting the weight of training to schools rather than universities. The University of Melbourne in Australia has adopted a medical model of teacher training where teachers are trained in schools. None of these methods of practical training take away from the academic pursuit of pedagogy – it need not be a false dichotomy – instead, trainee teachers are learning to ground academic thinking in reality.

Encourage mature professionals into teaching

As teaching workforces age worldwide, jurisdictions are attempting to encourage older people into teaching. This has several benefits: it brings those with diverse professional experience into the classroom. By opening up some of the supply of teaching jobs to more mature people, it restricts places for first-career teachers, making it more competitive and therefore more selective. Third, it sends a signal that teaching need not be a career for life. Although it is important to retain teachers who enjoy their work, teaching is a difficult career and there is the risk of burn out.

However, older people are put off by the burden of extra study and the associated cost and opportunity costs. Singapore is now recruiting one in four ‘side entrants’

to the profession. Course fees are fully covered. Germany too is recruiting some side entrants. And England is training professionals from other careers directly in schools and paying them from the beginning.

Offer career progression

The Singapore ‘teaching track’ and the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Australia are models of career progression for classroom teachers. The Singapore model shows competition need not be at the expense of collaboration as career progression rests on working with others to help them develop their teaching practice.

Interestingly, Germany and the high-performing Finland have little PLD or career progression for teachers. Yet it is notable that Finland has the least amount of classroom contact time, freeing up time to plan and work with others to improve student learning, which is very much at the heart of this highly dedicated teaching workforce. All teachers are considered equal, but teaching is the most respected profession in Finland, so it is already a high status profession.

Other jurisdictions where teaching is not so well respected need to create structures to encourage growth and development to retain the best teachers and make it a more attractive profession.

Offer remuneration commensurate with skills, not years in the job

In England, school principals are being given a lot more autonomy to pay their staff as they wish within minimum and maximum salary bands. The potential benefits include placing a premium on subject-teachers high in demand.

Excellent teachers stay in the system. But it also relies on having highly effective school leadership so that remuneration is fair. Singapore aligns remuneration with career progression, and Finnish principals pay bonuses to high performing teachers.

Embrace the benefits of competition to enhance collaboration

Related to career progression and remuneration is the concept that competition need not be seen as an ugly thing, if done in the right way. Competition can be about everybody lifting their game together to produce better outcomes for students. Although Finland does not consider itself competitive, this is cultural, not structural. Becoming a teacher is incredibly competitive and teachers who are highly skilled are paid bonuses. Career progression in Singapore rests on the ability to collaborate with others.

Allow teachers to lead their own profession through school-based PLD

Worldwide there is strong tide shift away from ‘ballroom’ style PLD in one-off external courses, to a sustained approach to working with colleagues in the school on PLD focussed on student outcomes. As mentioned above, while Finland does not include this as PLD in official statistics, teachers work together in teams to improve student learning. Some systems provide release time to work in ‘Professional Learning Communities’ (PLCs). In England, the dismantling of centrally-controlled structures is allowing for schools to ‘chain’ together to build and share capacity across the system. Collaborative work in Ontario has changed teacher expectations of what students can achieve.

Devolve autonomy to schools to hit accountability measures better

Successful jurisdictions like Ontario recognise the importance of accountability to the public. Accountability measures introduced in the 90s and early 2000s in Ontario, while unpopular at the time were incredibly important for driving up standards. Now that those accountability measures are firmly in place, in the last 10 years the Ontario government has stepped back to trust teachers and schools. England has accountability mechanisms in place and is now giving schools the autonomy to design their own methods of teaching and learning to better hit those accountability measures. In saying this, accountability measures must be very carefully designed, as they can distort teaching and learning.

Embed a deeper sense of responsibility and professionalism

Beyond the public external accountabilities, what is really desirable is a more deeply embedded and teacher-owned culture of peer accountability. This is emerging as a result of teachers working together more in places like England and Ontario. Finland’s teachers have a deep sense of accountability to parents and students.

Encourage professional bodies of teachers

The other method of embedding a deeper sense of professionalism is by teachers coming together as a professional group. The Ontario College of Teachers, a self-regulating body of teachers has been effective at dealing with the teacher discipline issues in the interest of the public and is an effective regulator. Ensuring it is

separated from industrial advocacy issues is essential.

However, something to watch in England, which goes beyond the regulatory style body, is the establishment of a Royal College of Teachers. It will not be an arm of the state nor of the unions, and has great potential for teachers to come together to spearhead the profession.

Build capacity laterally, not centrally

Inherent in many of these factors that lead to success – shifting the weight of teacher training into schools, establishing proper career structures and associated remuneration for classroom teachers, encouraging school-based PLD, embedding a deeper sense of responsibility and professionalism, and building a truly teacher-led professional body, is the idea of lateral capacity building. Centrally controlled prescriptive systems take professionalism away from teachers. Systems that allow teachers and schools to share practice see student success and a greater sense of professional ownership.

Do not see teachers as the enemy

Governments that work with teacher unions have seen more success, particularly when strong accountability mechanisms and regulation is already in place. While in England, unions are striking against reforms, Germany's teacher unions recognised after their poor results in PISA that they needed to get out in front of educational reforms. Ontario has managed peaceful relations with teacher unions over the last 10 years, and started with the assumption that teachers want to do the right thing.

The next report

These are the broad themes from the overseas research, but the ideas will need to be carefully considered for appropriateness of fit to the New Zealand context. The third report in this series will discuss how policy ideas from these jurisdictions could be adapted to address the problems identified in the first report.

What we do know is that successful school systems overseas invest in teachers and recognise the importance of teacher quality. They create aspirational career structures that help attract and retain top people in the profession, which raises the status of teaching. By valuing teachers, these jurisdictions have ensured that teaching is a high calibre, self-respecting profession.

Teaching, worldwide, is becoming the professional career it deserves to be. New Zealand's teachers deserve the same professional recognition.



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