



Equity and excellence: feasible or fantasy in school programming?

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Wicked Problems: some guiding thoughts

Wicked Problems are unique to their context even if like problems in other contexts.

Addressing Wicked Problems requires asking good questions rather than finding neat solutions.

For Wicked Problems the role of leaders is to acknowledge that they do not have the answer to the Wicked Problem and to engage the community to address the problem.

Solutions to Wicked Problems are often not right or wrong but pragmatic or good enough.

Solutions to Wicked Problems need to focus on directly on fixing the problem itself, not a form of re-education or reskilling that fixes the people.

Solutions to Wicked Problems are often not final but ongoing.

Ritter & Webber 1973

Grint 2008



Equity and Excellence: Goals of education for young Australians

Goal 1:

Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence

Goal 2:

All young Australians become:

- successful learners
- confident and creative individuals
- active and informed citizens

Achieving these educational goals is the collective responsibility of governments, school sectors and individual schools as well as parents and carers, young Australians, families, other education and training providers, business and the broader community. (MCEETYA, 2008,p.8)



What is equality?

What is equity?

What is excellence?

Equality: every human being has an absolute and equal right to common dignity and parity of esteem and entitlement to access the benefits of society [and education] on equal terms

Equity: every human being has a right to benefit from the outcomes of society [and education] on the basis of fairness and according to need

Chapman & West-Burnham, 2010, *Education for social justice: Achieving wellbeing for all.*

Excellence: In what terms? By what measures? From whose perspective?



In relation to the student you have been allocated...

A puzzlement/wondering about ...

- achieving equity?
- achieving excellence?



Excellence *and* equity according to the Melbourne Declaration?

- access to high-quality schooling free from discrimination
- build on local cultural knowledge & experience of Indigenous students as a foundation for learning, & work in partnership with local communities
- improve learning outcomes of Indigenous students to match those of other students
- ensure socioeconomic disadvantage ceases to be a significant determinant of educational outcomes
- reduce effect of other sources of disadvantage
- ensure schooling contributes to a socially cohesive society that respects & appreciates cultural, social & religious diversity
- encourage parents, carers, families, the broader community & young people themselves to hold high expectations for their educational outcomes
- promote a culture of excellence in all schools, by supporting them to provide challenging, & stimulating learning experiences & opportunities that enable all students to explore & build on their gifts & talents
- promote personalised learning that aims to fulfil the diverse capabilities of each young Australian. (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 8)



How will we do it?

- developing stronger partnerships
- supporting quality teaching and school leadership
- strengthening early childhood education
- enhancing middle years development
- supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions
- promoting world-class curriculum and assessment, [including national testing]
- improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds
- strengthening accountability and transparency [including nationally comparable reporting about schools]. MCEETYA, 2008. p. 8.



BUT!

How equipped are students/families to “play the game”?

Pierre Bourdieu: How do schools *reproduce* societal inequalities?

Different forms of capital to which we have access in society & connections between them:

- **Economic capital** – financial resources – relates to costs of schooling
- **Cultural capital** – can be transmitted by families and communities or deliberately cultivated by individuals/groups – allows participation in the culture of schooling-educational qualifications/standards the institutionalized form of this
- **Social capital** – material or symbolic resources accessible through membership of social networks or relationships – family, neighbourhood, community, clubs, old school ties

Different *habitus* - enduring dispositions, where we feel comfortable, what enables/constrains our choices – including how comfortable we feel in the school institution/community – not just class or SES

Bourdieu, P. (2004). The forms of capital. In S.J. Ball (Ed.) *The RoutledgeFalmer reader in sociology of education* (pp.15-29).



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From the perspective of your role...student, parent/carer, Principal, classroom teacher

- What are the opportunities for achieving equity and excellence for this student/you?
- What are the challenges for achieving equity and excellence for this student/you?
- How might this student be seen as enriching the school community?
 - What positive things might be said/thought about them/you?
- How might this student be seen as a problem for this school community?
 - What troubling things might be said/thought about them/you?



Form a planning team around this student...

- What are the key priorities for planning for this student?
 - Learning
 - Support
 - Relationships/inclusion
- How might the planning for this student be incorporated into planning for all students?
- What are the implications in terms of resources, policies, attitudes/values, professional learning?



Universal design for living and learning



Retrofit or design to include all from the start?



Out of role reflections

- What was new or seen anew?
- What was comforting or uncomfortable?
- Further puzzlements/wonderings/questions?

1 recommendation for others to consider about achieving equity *and* excellence for all students...

1 recommendation for yourself or your school to take away...what might you do differently or be affirmed in doing more often...

