

ED 375 107

SP 035 484

AUTHOR Wake, Andrew; Danaher, Patrick  
 TITLE Student Performance Standards and Queensland Teacher Education.  
 PUB DATE 4 Jul 94  
 NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Teacher Education Association (24th, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, July 3-6, 1994).  
 PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS \*Academic Standards; Educational History; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Government Role; \*Government School Relationship; Higher Education; \*Minimum Competency Testing; Politics of Education; \*Preservice Teacher Education; \*Professional Autonomy; School District Autonomy; \*State Standards; Teacher Response  
 IDENTIFIERS \*Australia (Queensland)

## ABSTRACT

This paper considers the implementation of Student Performance Standards (SPS) in Queensland, Australia, and their implications for teacher education. Student testing procedures in various Australian states and territories are described. A theoretical framework, grounded in Australian educational history, is elaborated for understanding the political ramifications of SPS. S. J. Ball's explication of market, management and, particularly, curriculum controls over public education is applied to show how explicit emphasis on student performance is linked to wider forces promoting an instrumentalist and managerialist view of schooling. The emergence of statewide testing is seen as: a quality control measure designed to ensure that schools are producing human resources tailored to the needs of a post-fordist economy; an attempt to shape the quality, character, and content of classroom practice; and a potential step toward monitoring the performance of teachers and schools, making comparisons among them, and linking these comparisons to performance-related pay awards. The paper concludes that SPS constitutes a not entirely desirable response to a series of complex educational and political changes within and outside Australia. SPS represents in microcosm what is a broader challenge to the celebration of diversity and the recognition of heterogeneity that ought to underpin any teacher education program. (Contains 16 references.) (JDD)

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# *Student Performance Standards and Queensland Teacher Education*

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Paper presented at the 24th annual conference of the  
Australian Teacher Education Association, Gardens Point  
Campus, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, 4  
July 1994.

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## Abstract

The development of Student Performance Standards (SPS), and their implementation in Queensland schools, represent in microcosm several issues of policy, politics, and practice. The elaboration of publicly available aggregations of individual students' fulfilment of learning outcomes is intended by the Goss Labor government, among other things, to make Queensland government teachers and schools more directly accountable for their performance.

While public accountability *per se* is both necessary and desirable, initiatives such as SPS assume a different character when they are considered in the light of theories of control of schooling (Ball, 1993). Specifically, SPS as an instrument of curriculum control can be seen as interacting with forms of management and market control to make learning in Queensland more narrowly conceived and more neatly packaged than has hitherto been the case.

In this paper, we consider some of the implications for Queensland teacher education of the implementation of SPS. In particular we elaborate a theoretical framework, grounded in Australian education history, for understanding the political ramifications of SPS; we describe student testing procedures in various Australian States and Territories; and we consider the scheme's implications for current and future teacher education courses in Queensland.

# *Student Performance Standards and Queensland Teacher Education*<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

Superficially, the recent trials of Student Performance Standards (SPS) in selected English and Mathematics classes in Queensland government secondary schools has little direct relevance to future directions in teacher education in this State. A more considered examination of SPS indicates, however, that it constitutes a not entirely desirable response to a series of complex educational and political changes within and outside Australia. These changes have important implications for both public education and teacher education. In this sense, SPS represents in microcosm what is a broader challenge to the celebration of diversity and the recognition of heterogeneity that the authors believe ought to underpin any teacher education program.

We have presented a brief overview of SPS and some of our objections to the scheme elsewhere (Wake & Danaher, 1994).<sup>2</sup> This paper elaborates and recasts that argument in terms of a theoretical approach to education policy making, student testing procedures in various Australian States and Territories, and implications of SPS for current and future teacher education courses in Queensland.

## **A Theoretical Framework**

Ball (1993, p. 106) refers to "three main forms of control...being used in the UK in an attempt to capture, specify, and delineate teaching". Ball claims, with justification, that the imposition of these control measures tends to reconstruct and redefine the meanings and purposes of

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<sup>1</sup>The authors are grateful for financial assistance in attending this conference provided by the Faculty of Education at Central Queensland University. Professor Leo Bartlett gave critical feedback on an earlier version of the paper which was helpful in reformulating the presentation of ideas. The authors accept responsibility for the views expressed in the paper.

<sup>2</sup>It should be noted that the original text for this article had to be extensively reduced to conform to the journal's editorial requirements. Requests for copies of the original text, in which the argument is presented more extensively, should be addressed to the senior author.

teaching as both vocational practice and mental labour. The forms of control can be grouped under three headings: curriculum; the market; and management.

With some modifications, these forms of control are being used in Australia for similar purposes. While they are not entirely new, these controlling mechanisms are being applied in novel ways in both the United Kingdom and Australia. Ball's article concentrates on management controls, which have certainly been important historically in the Australian context; this paper devotes greater attention to recent developments in curriculum controls.

For most of this century, public schooling in Australian jurisdictions has been under the centralised control of State Departments of Education. This contrasts with the British tradition of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) having a significant influence over curriculum. The other form of control - the impact of market forces - varies with each LEA but, in general, zoning regulations effectively preserve the monopoly position of a publicly funded school in a given area. In recent years, the British Government has attempted to develop a national education policy within the existing rubric of apparent local control and self management - a policy that has involved changes in all three forms of control. Ball's article was largely a response to those changes.

In the United Kingdom, a national curriculum is a radical departure from previous practice. Similarly, exposing schools to market forces has given greater emphasis to image and impression management, which Ball claims is now more important than the educational process that it is designed to reflect. The new management controls are in a 'no hands' mode - preserving the appearance of local control but in fact steering from a distance. British schools must now deal with "ex-post accountability based upon quality or outcome assessments" (Ball, 1993, p. 111). According to Ball, this new emphasis on performativity "constitutes a more subtle, yet more totalising form of control of teachers than is available in the top-down prescriptive steering of state fordism" (1993, p. 111).

Ball identifies the ideological underpinnings of these changes as relating to "the campaign among conservative cultural restorationists...to reestablish streaming and class teaching" (1993, p. 107). He sees the increased emphasis on the operation of market forces as fostering that confusion of relations among people with relations to things that Marx called "commodity fetishism", a mistaken identification that he describes as basic to Thatcherism and "consumer politics" (1993, pp. 108-109).

The peculiar dilemma for Thatcher's government was to establish national planning and centralised control in a system that had largely been characterised by 'muddling through' and decentralisation. The secret of her success was the removal of key decisions from public inspection and debate. Major shifts in social and cultural policy were described as administrative improvements aimed at enhancing efficiency. The new managerialism was not a mere efficiency strategy; it was a cultural revolution that affected the entire social fabric of the country. That the changes were socially divisive did not matter, as the majority of politically active citizens believed that their material well being was likely to improve - and material well being, if not affluence, had become the motivational force of the nation.

The changes were wrought with public discussion focusing on their consequences rather than on their causes. Devolution, self management, privatisation, and entrepreneurship were largely thought of in positive terms by the managerial class. School principals became school managers oriented towards budgets, the market, entrepreneurial activities, and the drive for efficiency. This was presented as a value free world of consensus, collaboration, and self control, although Ball comments that the discourse was actually polyvalent "[i]n classical Foucauldian terms" (1993, p. 114). The manager is constructed in a new mould - "empowered but stressed, liberated but anxious" (1993, p. 115).

Rank and file teachers either adopted the new value system or held to traditional values and notions of education as intellectual and moral development. Those who adhered to tradition are becoming increasingly marginalised as time passes. This marginalisation arises from the seeming irrationality of any alternative viewpoint. As Marcuse (1964, p. 9) put it when addressing a previous generation on a related issue:

...in the contemporary period, the technological controls appear to be the very embodiment of reason for the benefit of all social groups and interests - to such an extent that all contradiction seems irrational and all counteraction impossible.

The new forms of control are not merely tools used for the dissemination of ideologies; they are an integral part of the cultural ethos of a post-fordist capitalist system. School managers and teachers do not teach about competition in a market economy; they actually perform acts that characterise and typify the capitalist mode of production.

Writing in reference to Australia, Nadebaum (1991, p. 4) identifies the new economic mission for schools in the following terms:

The education industry is no longer regarded as just a recipient of government funds, but as an integral part of an overall economic reform strategy for all Australian manufacturers and service industries - the key to skilling and re-skilling of the workforce and to restoring this nation's international competitiveness.

The emergence of statewide testing in Australia is therefore not an atavism resurrecting ancient bureaucratic controls, but an integral quality control measure designed to ensure that schools are producing human resources tailored to the needs of a post-fordist economy.

### **Curriculum Control - The Australian Experience**

The Australian experience of curriculum control starts at almost the opposite end of the management spectrum to that of the United Kingdom. Many Australian teachers have little experience in any form of control other than "the top-down prescriptive steering of state fordism" (Ball, 1993, p. 111). Until relatively recently, all Australian State Departments of Education maintained tight control over all aspects of schooling. These Departments are now attempting to create an illusion of self regulation, self management, or regional and local autonomy, whilst in fact retaining the substance of "top-down prescriptive steering" and centralised planning and control.

Under the older centralised systems, the schools were very much state institutions intruding into local communities. Despite the lack of ownership, many communities took pride in their schools, although not all with the same degree of enthusiasm. Parents and Citizens Associations were largely fund raising committees to provide useful, sometimes necessary, equipment not provided by State Departments of Education. This system of state fordism persisted for close on a century of public schooling in Australia.

The disadvantages of Australia's centralised system of education administration were noted by visitors such as Freeman Butts (1955) and locals such as W. F. Connell (1970). A somewhat technical exposition of the limitations of centralised systems was provided by Archer (1984), who used as her examples the flexible localised system in England contrasted with the highly centralised and rigid French system. She could just as easily have used any Australian State prior to the 1980s as an example of a rigid, centralised system. Archer's book presented a reasoned and persuasive argument for the disadvantages of centralisation, chief among which is the necessity for those outside the central bureaucracies to engage in political manipulation in



order to bring about change and improvement.

Examples of political manipulation are common enough in the history of Australian schooling. A representative situation occurred with the banning of SEMP and MACOS in Queensland (which has been well documented by Smith and Knight [1981]). These curriculum innovations were introduced to Queensland state schools through the departmental bureaucracy. A few individuals with no formal departmental links but with fundamentalist religious beliefs found some of the materials offensive. These individuals lobbied the then Premier to have the materials banned. This was done by executive fiat without public inquiry or discussion. Some time later an inquiry was conducted.

Under the centralised system in operation at the time, an outside pressure group of very small size was able to lobby effectively through direct political manipulation. This could be regarded as desirable, as it appears that the school system was responsive to community demand, but, as only select pressure groups had access to the government, the system actually concentrated power and influence in a very small number of people. Under this system, those parents and citizens who had genuine concerns about educational issues but who did not have the necessary political connections were almost totally disempowered.

The Australian centralised educational bureaucracies were resistant to reform because the controls were specifically detailed and covered most curriculum and management decision making. The only external source of influence over Departmental decision making was the Minister of Education or, when university entrance was a consideration, the universities' control of entrance testing. In most States, university academics had significant input into the terminal examinations that formed the basis of university entrance selection.

In Queensland, the University of Queensland exercised a powerful controlling influence over the senior certificate examination, but it relinquished that control in the early 1970s, just at the time that there was a dramatic increase in the number of available tertiary places. By the 1970s tertiary placement had come to mean placement in either a college of advanced education (CAE) or a university, so the University of Queensland's relinquishment of control was not entirely an unselfish act.

The centralised Department of Education in Queensland made all other significant management decisions. It determined where schools would be located, the hours that they would be open,



the length of the school year, the appointment of the principal, the numbers and types of teachers, the sizes of classes, and so on.

Unusually, Queensland did not include a strict zoning system as part of its managerial controls: that is, parents were and still are able to choose the government school to which they sent their children. In other States, until very recently zoning has tended to protect schools from competition from other schools, each school having a monopoly over enrolments in its own catchment area. When allied to per capita funding, de-zoning and deregulating this monopoly exposes schools to the full effect of market forces.

Although the Queensland approach might have appeared deregulatory (and therefore in keeping with economic rationalist ideology), it was not directly linked with per capita funding, and in practice most parents had only a limited choice of available government schools. The reason for this is the relatively sparse population and the considerable distance between publicly funded schools in Queensland. The Queensland government has not been prepared to subsidise the costs of transporting school students across zonal boundaries, so an effective limitation has been in operation. However, the fact remains that, unlike Victoria and New South Wales, Queensland government schools have been exposed to a form of market competition for many decades. That this has not been a major concern for most school administrations in Queensland is explicable by the fact that schools have been very much the same - staffed by personnel with similar backgrounds and training, equipped in similar ways, built to a common plan, and, most importantly of all, following a common curriculum based on centrally prescribed syllabi.

In the 1970s the provision of general curriculum guides, as a replacement of the previous prescriptive and comprehensively detailed syllabi, was generally viewed as a liberating move that acknowledged the increasing professionalism of teachers. These teachers were now for the most part educated for three years in independent CAEs, as opposed to undergoing instruction for two years in departmental training colleges.

Despite the removal of the prescriptive syllabi, the controlling hand of the central Department of Education was nearly as strong as previously. Although teachers were reassured that inspectors were experienced resource persons intended to help rather than police teachers, there was still a prevailing belief among teachers that heterodoxy in educational practices would result in an unfavourable and unrequested transfer. As most of Queensland's geographical area is uninhabited and isolated, there was no shortage of unfavourable locations to which one could

be transferred. Comments by Directors General that some teachers had to learn what the Department expected of them did not encourage innovation or risk taking.

The adoption in the early 1970s of the Radford report, which recommended the abandonment of external independent testing at the termination of year twelve, was somewhat surprising, given the unwillingness of the Department and a succession of Ministers of Education to grant teachers too much autonomy. However, the substantive reasons might have been pecuniary rather than educational. The University of Queensland had refused to conduct the traditional external examination, and the State Department was faced with the possibility of following the New South Wales model of paying teachers large sums of money to mark examination papers during the summer vacation. The Queensland Department chose the cheaper option of having the teachers mark their own students' work and comparing samples at moderation meetings. This was all done in the time for which teachers were already being paid, so the additional costs were minimal.

Still loath to trust teachers too much, the Department moderated the entire system by standardising school scores against the results of ACER's Australian Scholastic Aptitude Test (ASAT). As the ACER tests used in any one year were the results of the previous cohort, the actual outcomes were often disputed.

Elsewhere in Australia, the managerial tradition had largely been centralised and administrative. Conservative State governments, sharing Thatcher's ideological commitments to free enterprise and privatisation, embraced many aspects of managerialist strategy. Where devolution has progressed furthest, such as in Victoria, school managers tended initially to perceive the changes as empowering. But it was not until the realisation that devolution and increased efficiency meant removal of support services and reallocation of funds outside of schools that alarm bells sounded.

The most vocal reactions in Victoria responded to the closure of schools. In some instances parents and teachers united in strong public protest but were unable to modify government policy decisions, based as they were on economic rationalist grounds.

The emergence of economic rationalism as the dominant political ideology in western societies has altered the control mechanisms over teachers and schools. Economic rationalism emphasises privatisation, deregulation, and open competition (Pusey, 1991). These features

contrast sharply with traditional features of Australian educational practice. The introduction of self management, devolution, and autonomy is consistent with economic rationalism, but to empower schools and their communities to have a decisive influence over the education of their students would be a complete break with the Australian bureaucratic tradition.

The British example has shown Australian educational planners a way of creating an illusion of self management, whilst in fact tightening controls and reducing the available room for the professional autonomy and judgement of teachers. The Victorian government has adopted this scheme with enthusiasm; the New South Wales government with some reservations; and the Queensland government with a great deal of ambivalence and uncertainty.

### **State and Territory Testing Procedures**

Having established that centralised student assessment systems constitute an important part of the curriculum form of control over teachers' work (and students' lives), we proceed in this section to a description of testing procedures being pursued in the various Australian States and Territories. Particular attention will be drawn to the system to be implemented in Victoria, which in many ways is moving at the greatest pace in Australia today and offers a model of what Queensland might like to become - or alternatively an object lesson in what to avoid.

Media reports of the issue of standardised testing suggest a certain momentum and inevitability about the extension of the procedures to all Australian States and Territories.

New South Wales, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory already have standardised tests; Queensland is currently reviewing its pilot testing program; and South Australia is expected to introduce standardised tests soon. (Painter, 1994)

This sentiment is echoed, although in a predicably more measured tone, by an Australian Council for Educational Research study (Lokan & Ford, 1994) of Australian school testing programs, interestingly commissioned by the National Industry Education Forum (NIEF) (Lokan, 1994).

In preparing this summary of statewide testing and assessment programs in the Australian States and Territories, it became clear that this particular time (late 1993 and early 1994) is a time of potential change in thinking about testing and assessment more than it is a time of stability. (p. 2)

The ACER review notes considerable variation among States and Territories in how widely test results are distributed to schools and made publicly available. The review's authors also cite a practice that they claim places Australia "at the forefront of such developments around the world": the use of descriptive reporting, whereby "student, school or State results are described within hierarchies of skill levels along a range of achievement continua in terms of identified educational tasks" (p. 2).

Table One depicts the various statewide testing programs in the Australian States and Territories as of early 1994.

STATE/TERRITORY	TEST 1	TEST 2
Australian Capital Territory	Profiles in all 8 learning areas; trials only	
New South Wales	Basic Skills Testing Program: Literacy; Numeracy Years 3, 5, 6	Year 10 Reference Tests: English, Maths, Science
Northern Territory	Primary Assessment Program: English, Maths Years 5, 7; ATSI 11-16 y-o	Year 10 Assessment: English, Maths
Queensland	Under review	
South Australia	Attainment Levels: Field trial likely at primary level Basic skills test piloting under investigation	
Tasmania	Under review	
Victoria	Under review	
Western Australia	Monitoring Standards in Education: Studies of Society; Environment Years 3, 7, 10	

**Table One: Statewide Testing/Assessment Programs 1994, Australian States and Territories (adapted from Lokan & Ford, 1994, p. 6)**

In April 1994 the Victorian government announced the introduction of skills testing for Victorian primary school students from 1995, in a program called the Learning and Assessment Project. Competing arguments immediately following the announcement (Painter, 1994) reflected the various agendas of the relevant stakeholders. Education Minister Hayward referred to the need to provide an independent statewide measure of student performance, and to the value of identifying students needing remedial attention (when compared with statewide standards) and directing government resources to needy schools. He cited anticipated benefits as including improved reporting to parents and accountability among parents, teachers, and schools. Mal Sandon, opposition spokesperson for education, related the scheme to the government's alleged policy of "ensuring competition between schools". Libby O'Connor, deputy president of the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association, expressed concern that standardised tests lead to measurement driven curriculum, whereby teachers teach "to the test" and neglect the broader curriculum. Peter Lord, president of the Federated Teachers' Union of Victoria, argued that standardised tests fail to improve educational quality, and that the government's administrative procedures did not preclude school principals from publishing the aggregate test results of their respective student populations.

Although it is not the central concern of this paper, one possible outcome of aggregated individualised achievement testing being implemented in most, if not all, Australian States and Territories is the prospect of national comparisons of the results of such testing. In providing qualified support for the idea of "a uniform set of achievement benchmarks", Ann Morrow, Head of the Schools Council, indicated her expectations of how the proposal might operate in practice:

We cannot ignore the demands to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of Australian schooling and we may, in fact, find such indicators helpful in defending the role and purpose of public education provision...[but performance indicators should not be treated as] an excuse to embark on a massive program of data collection which would be too onerous for system authorities to maintain.

Rather we need to collect a few salient statistics which will enable us to compare education outcomes over time, across State boundaries and internationally.

(Cited in Queensland Institute for Educational Administration, 1994, p. 4)

It seems clear that the trend is towards expanding rather than contracting statewide testing programs in Australian schools. Responses to the proposed Victorian Learning and Assessment

Project reveal the multiplicity of reasons for and attitudes to this trend. In combination with the theoretical framework (outlined in the previous section) of covert, even disguised, controls of various types over public schooling, this situation constitutes the context for considering the trialing and implementation of SPS in Queensland schools.

## Student Performance Standards in Practice

In June 1992 the Queensland Department of Education distributed to State school teachers an information booklet about student performance standards (Queensland Department of Education, 1992). Performance standards were defined as "sets of descriptions which give teachers benchmarks for determining student performance in key strands (e.g. measurement) of a given curriculum area (e.g. mathematics)" (p. 2). The stated rationale for introducing the scheme is worth citing in full:

Parents are asking for a clearer indication of what is being learnt in schools. Many also want a common system of reporting on student performance. As well, some employers and community groups want to know about the outcomes of schooling, and whether their expectations are being maintained over time. Teachers and administrators who have been working towards meeting such requests want system-wide agreement about standards for schooling. They have called for the introduction of common sets of Standards and want them used statewide. This would help schools that are experiencing student turnover because of increasing family mobility.

At the school level, Performance Standards would provide:

- students with useful information to assist their learning;
- a common guide for teaching and learning in a given curriculum area;
- a common basis and similar language for reporting on student performance and progress;
- useful information for making decisions about resource allocation to better meet the needs of students, both as individuals and group members.

At the system level, Performance Standards would provide:

- public statements of agreed expectations for learning in schools;
- a means of informing the community about the quality of student performance in school programs;



- an indication of whether there is a need to modify support provisions and teaching-learning patterns to ensure all students' educational needs are met. (p. 2)

Later the information booklet refers to simultaneous moves by "the Australian training sector" to develop "a competency-based national system of assessment, reporting, and certification" (p. 7). Two other statements relevant to this paper are also made. The first is the disclaimer that "the Department would not support using the Standards" to compare schools, classes, or teachers in Queensland", and the accompanying acknowledgment that "many complex variables" affect the performances of individual students, and that "many of these variables are outside the influence or control of teachers" (p. 10). The second is two separate references to teachers' professional development.

Standards also will enhance current teacher understanding of departmental syllabuses and encourage the use of such documents for planning, assessment, and reporting purposes. Teachers will not be expected, however, to implement a syllabus and its Standards without some guidance and support. Professional development will be offered to help teachers understand, appreciate, and use the Standards for designated curriculum areas. (p. 9)

At the system level, statewide sampling may highlight a shortfall in meeting the learning needs of certain groups of students. This may raise significant implications for curriculum development, resource allocation, teacher pre-service education, and professional development. (p. 10)

Sixteen months after the publication of the information booklet, an update provided by one of the regional offices of the Queensland Department of Education (Capricornia Regional Office, 1993) presented a concentrated *raison d'être* for the scheme:

Student Performance Standards...are related to the development of national curriculum statements, national profiles for reporting on student progress in the compulsory years, and key competencies for reporting on progress in the post-compulsory years. (p. 4)

The update emphasised that "the standards are a reporting framework, not a curriculum or assessment framework" (p. 4).

There are no externally imposed 'tests' attached to the standards and there are no specific tasks assigned to specific levels. For example, a class could be given a certain tasks and different students would produce work that is clearly at a



number of levels. It is **not the task** that determines a level, it is the way the student performs at that task. (p. 4)

The remainder of the update reported trials of the scheme in English and mathematics in selected primary and secondary schools in the region.

What is particularly striking about the documentation accompanying the trialing of SPS is the juxtaposition of political and bureaucratic requirements of accountability, references to employer demands for standardised outcomes, and reassurances that social justice issues, special needs, and individual versatility and variability will not be sacrificed when the scheme is introduced. While we accept the need for public accountability, and we acknowledge the right of employers to articulate their expectations of public schooling, we remain sceptical that teachers and students will be able to resist the cumulative effects of a process whereby individualised becomes standardised reporting and comparison becomes competition.

### **Implications for Teacher Education in Queensland**

Queensland teacher educators cannot ignore the emergence of student performance standards; their introduction and use will continue and expand to change the face of teaching. The possibilities for precise specification of skills and competencies and, possibly, values and attitudes as well are too attractive to those who control or seek to control the nation's destiny.

The opposite reaction to outright rejection is embracing the procedures with enthusiasm. We consider that this option has little to recommend it. The weaknesses and possible abuses are too obvious to allow indiscriminate adoption, but not sufficiently fatal to prevent their introduction.

A better response is to make the best use of the procedures as far as they are compatible with broadly conceived educational purposes. At the first level, teacher educators should ensure that preservice teacher education students are aware of the possibilities inherent in the new forms of control. Some of these possibilities are advantageous in offering practising teachers greater flexibility in designing learning experiences. The limiting and potentially anti-educational possibilities should also be examined. Education students should be encouraged to ask what educational purposes, if any, are served by these measures.

Teacher educators should assist their students - prospective teachers - to develop a heightened awareness of what constitutes such purposes. Although examining the nature and purposes of

education is not as fashionable as it once was, the new forms of control over schooling create a need that must be recognised.

Although distinctions among schooling, training, indoctrinating, and educating are relatively easy to make, popular usage still identifies educating with schools, and economists commonly mistake schooling for training. This compounds the confusion referred to earlier of identifying personal well being with the consumption of goods and services and societal well being with the accumulation of capital.

The cumulative effect of these misunderstandings is that the learning experience is perceived only as an instrumental good - merely creating opportunities for improving one's trading value in the job market. If education is viewed in such purely instrumental terms, there can be little objection on educational grounds to the sacrifice of individual development and social change for the illusory benefits of consumer durables and personal services.

An education that concentrates entirely on technically exploitable knowledge is at best one dimensional, at worst fused with forms of domination. As Marcuse (1964, p. 158) expressed it:

Today, domination perpetuates and extends itself not only through technology but *as* technology, and the latter provides the great legitimization of the expanding political power, which absorbs all spheres of culture.

Submitting to forms of domination is not merely an affront to human dignity, it constitutes a loss of human freedom. It is the freedom to make meaningful choices, especially of an ethical or aesthetic nature, that distinguishes humanity from other species. Without that freedom we are less than human. The new forms of control seek to remove much of that freedom by removing from public discourse, or severely restricting, all questions pertaining to knowledge constitutive interests.

In Habermas' (1971) view, technical cognitive interest is only one of several possible categories of knowledge constitutive interest. Under the new forms of control the emancipatory interest is at risk. Where the dominant interest is technical-cognitive, education is not valued for self reflection and personal and social development but rather for the goods it directly or indirectly produces. This is not mere commodity fetishism as marxists would have it; it is a form of enslavement. The new forms of control value human endeavour only when it is

measured by its economic productivity - they thereby narrowly limit human potential.

Undergoing learning experiences in order to attain learning outcomes predetermined by others prevents the learner from engaging in those forms of self reflection that lead to transformation of the person. If personal transformation is not the major purpose of education, then it is at least one among few. By limiting the possibility of self transformation, the new forms of control limit the nature of education itself.

Teacher educators have a vital role to play in these issues: first, in returning the purposes of education and the nature of learning outcomes to the domain of public discourse; second, in helping to ensure that instrumental interests do not dominate all aspects of curriculum construction and development; and finally and most importantly, in keeping alive the awareness that a valuable human culture is one that promotes a thoughtful and engaged way of life.

## Conclusion

This paper has elaborated some of the authors' concerns with the introduction of Student Performance Standards to Queensland schools. Specifically, we applied Ball's explication of market, management, and particularly curriculum controls over public education to show how explicit emphasis on student performativity is linked to wider forces promoting an instrumentalist and managerialist view of schooling. These forces were shown as fitting rather too neatly into the history of curriculum development and control in Queensland. An account of moves to statewide testing of student performance in the various Australian States and Territories was followed by a description of the rationale and mode of trialing of SPS in selected Queensland schools. Implications for teacher education in Queensland were discussed in terms of Marcusean and Habermasian concerns about social domination and the loss of opportunities for emancipation.

Anticipating that at least some respondents to this paper might express alarm at its somewhat extravagant language, we consider it fitting to close with an extract from Ball's analysis of the British national curriculum, informed by the work of Foucault - including "his extravagant language" (1993, p. 106).

In general terms there is an increase in the technical elements of teachers' work and a reduction in the professional. The spaces for professional autonomy and judgement are reduced. A standardisation and normalisation are imposed upon

classroom practice. The curriculum provides for standardisation and testing for normalisation - the establishment of measurements, hierarchy, and regulation around the idea of a distributionary statistical norm within a given population. *This begins with the testing of students, but raises the possibility of monitoring the performance of teachers and schools and making comparisons between them. There is also the possibility of linking these comparisons to appraisal and to performance related pay awards...*In all this there is a concern with the quality, character and content of teachers' labour and increasingly direct attempts made to shape the quality, character, and content of classroom practice. (1993, pp. 106-107; emphasis added)

Rather than presenting a focused opposition to Student Performance Standards *per se*, we have located our concerns about the scheme in a wider framework of pervasive and overt controls over teachers' work and students' learning. We have sought in this paper to draw attention to those controls and their implications. In doing so, we hope to have demonstrated at least one important lesson of SPS for Queensland teacher education.

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