Educational Research by Association
AARE presidential addresses and the field of educational research

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and

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Educational Research by Association is an archive of an archive. It is a collection of eleven Presidential Addresses delivered over the last 40 years to the annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) and published annually in AARE’s academic journal, the Australian Educational Researcher (AER). However, it is more than an archive in that the selection and the opening essay seek to plot, evaluate and contribute to definitions of education research and its functions and purposes in a changing world, and to consider its impact, broadly defined, in both actual and desirable or normative terms. In pursuing this agenda, the book highlights a number of key issues that have become important in educational research over time, particularly in Australia but also around the globe. These include defining education research as a field, including AARE’s location within that field and the positioning of the presidents’ Addresses therein. They also include questions about the purposes of education research, which implies as well the issue of the readership for such research. The selection also touches on matters of dissemination, publication and diffusion and impact more broadly, raising matters of publication and the various and competing outlets for publication of education research, nationally and increasingly on an international scale. Issues of quality, including associated politics, also come into play, as do questions of the relationship of education research to education policy and practice. These latter questions have become more significant in state policies framed by a new public management that call for evidence-based policy. The opening essay by Bob Lingard and Trevor Gale, two former AARE Presidents, traverses these matters generally and in respect of this archive of Presidential Addresses, helping to define educational research in an increasingly globalised world.
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*AARE Presidential Addresses and the Field of Educational Research*

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FOREWORD

The presidential address at the annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education is one of the traditional highlights of the program, along with the Radford Lecture. The president is invited to give this address very near the end of his or her term of office, after having led the association through the previous year. On this official platform, each retiring president is given the right to speak to the membership about the key issues that they see impacting on Australian educational research at that particular moment in history, from their own particular perspective. Like all members of AARE, the presidents of the association are passionate researchers, and their personal research interests and activity will inform their presidential address, but these addresses are not seen as advancing the president’s own research agenda – they are written and delivered for the association, and the presidential address, year after year, adds to the weave and pattern of the association’s history.

Each one, each year, contributes to the record of what AARE thinks it is about and, as this important collection demonstrates, they have marked our changes and evolution as an association, as we have become who we are today over a span of nearly forty years. In less than one year as the current president, I have found that it is easy, as a member of the Executive, to use the collective ‘we’ when I speak about AARE. I have become personally invested in the work of the association, and I care about our membership, our activities, our reputation and our healthy growth as an association, so that the idea of AARE is marked and strengthened. The presidential address at the AARE conference has an important symbolic function for the association in this regard: it brings us together and identifies us, once a year, as identifiably ‘us’ – an association of people who share, in all our diversity of epistemological, methodological, political and institutional allegiances, a commitment to educational research that will make a difference in and for our universities, agencies, departments of education, schools and preschools, colleges and community settings. As the president addresses ‘us’ and shows us who we are, we mark ourselves and re-make ourselves as a group, from year to year.

AARE began archiving presidential addresses in 1974, when Bill Radford’s was published in the association’s journal, the *Australian Educational Researcher*. In bringing together a collection of eleven selected presidential addresses from 1974 to 2008, Trevor Gale and Bob Lingard, both ex-presidents themselves, have made the function of the presidential address abundantly clear, and have made an outstandingly generous contribution to the intellectual history and future practice of AARE, and to educational research far beyond our association. They have read and considered the whole archive of presidential addresses, and from these have selected several that they see as representing particular aspects, reading them with and against the archive as a whole, and telling a particular story about the nature of educational research over this time. They have made these available as a collection that can be read in several ways.
This collection is much more than a ‘greatest hits’ compilation, or a nostalgic recherché du temps perdu. Each individual text has been selected for a purpose, like exhibition pieces. They individually and collectively have something to say, and something to teach us about the history and nature of the politics and problematics of educational research. Like the pieces in any collection, we can view them as independent individual texts: as historical artefacts, in juxtaposition with each other, chronologically or thematically. We can read them to gain knowledge and understanding of the Australian research in different contexts, to trace ideas over time, and we can read them against the grain, as researchers who are now positioned differently, with different concerns from those that motivated our past presidents – in part because of them and their colleagues.

More than this, though, the collection produces something new in its composition, and in its effect, with these addresses brought together in a carefully staged relationship and connection as a volume. This is what Lingard and Gale have made of them, and it is what they explain and demonstrate in their introductory essay. With this framing work as context we can read them again now as something else entirely – as intellectual work that has been reprised and revisited in the service of expanding our current thinking and capacity to understand education research more generally. This is the contribution of the editors here: their careful and insightful analysis produces a new, rich and productive frame for the reading of the selected texts and in so doing provides a useful historical overview of the nature, concerns and politics of educational research in Australia, and the changes that have taken place in AARE in parallel with these.

Their introductory essay highlights the work of the presidential address as pedagogy, moving across the archive and establishing the rationale for the inclusion of the eleven addresses selected for this volume. It charts the ways in which our understandings of who educational researchers are have changed over time, and the changes in the ways in which educational research has itself been defined – both through expansion in disciplinary and theoretical frameworks and methodologies, and in the changing relationships between research, policy and practice that shape the working lives of educational researchers. Throughout this framing essay, Lingard and Gale focus on the changing positioning and self-understanding of Australian educational research from its local and parochial genesis in theoretical and epistemological traditions imported from the northern hemisphere, though to what they see as the emergence of a global education research field, with a less parochial and more confident southern theory (after Connell) challenging the dominance of received traditions. They mark these shifts and moves through the texts of presidential addresses that appear to have done strong pedagogical work in making these movements normative and visible within AARE. And they raise sometimes uncomfortable questions that we need to think about and act on in our current situation as a diverse and complex association of educational researchers.

It is important for an association such as AARE to be able to understand and account for ourselves to future generations of Australian education researchers, and to our colleagues overseas. In conceiving and bringing together this volume, Trevor Gale and Bob Lingard have continued their leadership in this association.
well past their own presidential addresses. With a fine historical sensibility, and a palpable commitment to and care for our association, this volume as a whole challenges us to remain aware of what we have learnt, and continue to learn, from each other.

Jo-Anne Reid,
President,
Australian Association for Research in Education,
2009–2010
CONTENTS

Preface.................................................................................................................................xi

Acknowledgements......................................................................................................... xiii

Contributors..................................................................................................................... xv

List of Acronyms ........................................................................................................... xxvii

Presidential Address as Pedagogy: Representing and Constituting the Field of Educational Research.................................................................................................1

  Bob Lingard and Trevor Gale

1. It’s too Esoteric for me...............................................................................................23

  William C. Radford


  Barry McGaw

3. Challenges Facing Educational Researchers in the 1980s.......................................47

  Millicent E. Poole

4. New and Old Testaments of Alliance in Educational Research..............................59

  Leo Bartlett


  Helen Hocking

6. The Future of AARE..................................................................................................99

  Richard Smith

7. Beyond the East–West Divide: Education and the Dynamics of Australia–Asia Relations .............................................................................................................111

  Fazal Rizvi

8. Uncertainty, Ambiguity and Fluidity: The Pre-millennial Challenges for Education.......................................................................................................................123

  Judith Sachs

9. Of Deficits and Other Dangerous Things...............................................................135

  Lyn Yates
CONTENTS

10. Learning and Community .................................................................147
    *Peter Renshaw*

11. Reframing Quality and Impact: The Place of Theory in Education
    Research ..................................................................................................159
    *Jan Wright*

Appendix 1: AARE Presidential Addresses 1971–2008 .................................173

Appendix 2: AARE Membership....................................................................177

Index ..............................................................................................................179
PREFACE

This book is the seventh in the Australian Association for Research in Education’s (AARE’s) Review of Australian Research in Education (RARE) series. It differs from previous RAREs in its archival function and its selective bringing together of presidential addresses that have been published in the *Australian Educational Researcher* (*AER*) since 1974. This practice of publishing the presidential address in *AER* began in that year, four years after the inception of the association. Prior to 2001, copyright of articles published in the *Australian Educational Researcher* remained with authors. Presidential addresses published in *AER* prior to this date are reproduced in this collection with the express permission of their authors. The exception is William Radford’s lecture, which is reproduced with the permission of his son Tony Radford. From 2001, copyright of articles published in the *AER* was invested in the journal. Permission to reproduce articles from the journal has been granted by the AARE Executive and the current Editor, Annette Patterson.

We see this collection of presidential addresses, along with our introductory chapter, as providing one account of the development of educational research in Australia. Bob Bessant and Allyson Holbrook’s *Reflections on educational research in Australia: A history of the Australian Association for Research in Education* (1995) implicitly provides another account, as well as a history of the association from inception to 1995. This history has been enormously helpful to us in our production of *Educational research by association*.

There are two issues that have been raised for us in working on this project. We believe the time is opportune for the production of a companion volume to this collection of presidential addresses, which would pull together a collection of Radford Lectures. The Radford Lectures began in 1978 in honour of the contribution to educational research of William (Bill) Radford (see here his biography in the notes on contributors). Indeed, the first essay in our collection is Radford’s 1974 presidential address, which perhaps could be seen as the first Radford Lecture. The first invited Radford Lecture in 1978, ‘Australian education – heritage and future’, was delivered by Kim Beazley Snr, father of recent Labor leader Kim Beazley Jnr, and Minister for Education in the reformist Whitlam Labor government of 1972 to 1975. Some presidents, such as Barry McGaw, Millicent Poole and Fazal Rizvi, have also delivered the Radford Lecture. It is our view that the publication of a selection of Radford Lectures would provide an excellent complementary insight to this collection in its potential account of the changing nature of educational research, its changing topics, theories, methodologies and global recontextualisation.

In our reflection on the need for a collection of Radford Lectures, we believe that it is also time for a new history of the association. We believe a new history is necessary because of the huge changes on both global and national scales, which we might see as the rescaling of educational research, that we have experienced since 1995 and that have had real effects on educational institutions as well as on educational research and educational researchers. We are thinking here in
PREFACE

particular of the emerging and ever-strengthening field of global educational research evidenced most clearly in the formation in 2007 with AARE’s involvement of the World Education Research Association. This development goes beyond universalistic knowledge claims about particular forms of positivist educational research; it is a move that seeks to constitute a more inclusive field of theory, methodology and specific research studies that operate in an open and inclusive way across the global north – global south divide. The emergence of formalised research accountability policies also means that this is an opportune time for a history of the AARE to complement the earlier Bessant and Holbrook volume.

We raise our view of the need for a collection of Radford Lectures and a contemporary AARE history as matters to be considered by the membership and the Executive of the association.

Trevor Gale and Bob Lingard
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In producing *Educational research by association* we have found Bob Bessant’s and Allyson Holbrook’s *Reflections on educational research in Australia* (1995), the history of AARE, an invaluable resource. We acknowledge its contribution to this collection and reiterate our suggestion in the preface that it is time for the association to think seriously about commissioning another more contemporary history covering the fifteen years since Bob and Allyson’s book. As Cicero has warned us, the neglect of history means that we always remain children.

We would also like to thank the Executive of AARE and Professor Jan Wright, the president at the time, who approved our proposal to produce an edited collection of presidential addresses. We also thank the Executive and other AARE members who have supported this publication in various ways. We make special mention of Peter Jeffery, Ruth Jeffery and Deborah Cunningham who were very supportive of our project and assisted with the provision of data included in the appendices and provided information we needed for our introductory essay. We also thank Jo-Anne Reid, the current president, for writing the foreword to this collection.

There are a number of other people that we would like to thank in relation to the publication of this book. We especially acknowledge Kate Leeson from the Hawke Research Institute at the University of South Australia who helped with the editing of the manuscript in its entirety. Kate also did some wonderful detective work in locating past presidents. She pursued the presidents and/or their families in relation to matters of copyright and biographies. Kate went beyond the remit of the task and indeed without her dedicated support this book would not be what it is. We offer our sincere thanks to her. We also thank Stephen Parker, also at the University of South Australia, for his valuable assistance in producing the list of acronyms for this book. We are also grateful for the work of Emma White at Monash University, who undertook the onerous task of locating all of the presidents’ essays, not just those reproduced in this collection. We also thank Tony Radford for providing additional information for the biography of his father, William Radford, and for his enthusiasm for our project. We also thank Raewyn Connell for attempting to locate her father’s presidential address for us.

We would like to thank all of the presidents whose addresses are included in this collection and for their cooperation in the production of the book. And we thank those presidents whose addresses are not included. They too have made a real contribution to education research in Australia and the work of AARE and its enhanced professionalism as an academic association. There is a real sense in which their work provided a springboard for subsequent addresses and the work of the association. Reading all of the presidential essays has informed our introductory chapter and our selection of addresses to be included.

Bob would like to thank Carolynn for all of her continuing support, which enables him to produce his academic work. Bob would also like to acknowledge the support of the University of Edinburgh and his colleagues there and the
University of Queensland and his colleagues for providing an intellectual environment and culture conducive to academic work and pertinent to considerations of the nature of education research and its advancement. Bob would particularly like to thank Peter Renshaw and Martin Mills in this respect.

Trevor would like to thank Pam for being such a generous and supportive friend, and whose considerable insight continues to provide perspective to his academic work and life more generally. He would also like to acknowledge the support of his colleagues at Monash University and the University of South Australia, the institutions in which he was located during the preparation of this volume. Academic work is rarely undertaken in isolation, even when it feels like it. To have the support of colleagues, personally and professionally, is a precious thing indeed.

Finally, we thank Sense for its support in being willing to publish this specialised collection. They were able to understand that AARE presidential addresses offer an insight into the nature and changing definition of educational research in Australia and also globally, as both have been affected by and been an expression of rapid social changes experienced over the last four decades. Indeed, the collection provides a case study of how these changes have been experienced by educational research associations in nation-states. We thus suggest that this book should be of interest to all education researchers in Australia and elsewhere. The responsibility for this collection, the selection of addresses for inclusion, and our stance in relation to educational research and AARE are of course our views and an expression of our values rather than necessarily being those of other educational researchers.

*Trevor Gale and Bob Lingard, May 2009*
CONTRIBUTORS

LEO BARTLETT
AARE PRESIDENT 1988

Emeritus Professor Leo Bartlett was quite passionately involved with AARE for almost a decade prior to 1988. He had moved the motion that changed the rather rigid and arguably elitist process of accessing membership to the association; co-organised a national conference; internationalised the research training agenda; set up state research training coordinators; kick-started a very humble looking newsletter; regularly seduced Michael Scriven to win his arguments for him (which he always did); and finally run for the presidency US-style on a ‘ticket’ for the 1987 elections (again something that was not ‘the done thing’ up until then and maybe since). These were some of the changes in which he revelled. Much of what really happened during that period was never recorded because, later, the historians of AARE never bothered to ask.

Leo thought that being president would make change easier; it didn’t. After completion of his term of office while still at UQ, he fell away from AARE or rather it drifted away from him. He went on to accumulate the dubious titles of Deputy Dean (UQ), Professor of Education (1991), Foundation Dean of Education, Planning Dean and First Dean of Education and Creative Arts (1997), Professor of the University (all at CQU), and Emeritus Professor – the latter twice, reflecting perhaps the administrative and structural inefficiencies of universities. The Faculty of Education at CQU during the 1990s was one of the few in Australia to expand significantly and prosper academically; this all happened with the quality leadership of excellent staff and later a few misguided academics.

In the last four years of full-time university life Leo was Assistant Vice Chancellor (1998–2002). He wanted to reinvent the university as a social enterprise (adopting business principles to achieve a social purpose but with an emphasis on the latter) and create strong links with community. He chaired peak economic and community development boards, implemented a $20m ‘smart city’ project and engaged in social business. In that time, he gradually came to the conclusion that schooling in its current institutionalised form has little to offer to change disadvantage and poverty, which he observed close up in communities.

On leaving the university he completed a few predictable consultancies. After three years he established the Australian Institute for Social Entrepreneurship (AISE), a small network of social entrepreneurs engaged in enquiry and learning. A large-scale national research project on leadership in the social economy was completed in 2007. Since 2004 Leo has been the Australian representative on the Council for the University Network for Social Entrepreneurship (Oxford University).

Leo’s greatest joy however has been working pro bono with homeless kids and supporting the development of social enterprises at OASIS in Surry Hills, Sydney.
He is near completing a book on the program and beginning another project on scaling out the program to other centres.

TREVOR GALE
AARE PRESIDENT 2005

Trevor Gale is Professor of Education and founding director of the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, hosted by the University of South Australia. He is also founding editor of the journal Critical Studies in Education and on the editorial boards of the International Journal of Inclusive Education and the International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning. From 2002 to 2006 he was co-editor of the journal Melbourne Studies in Education. He is author of three books, one of which has been translated into Spanish, and of about 50 book chapters and journal articles. His latest single-authored book is Rough justice: Young people in the shadows (Peter Lang, 2005). He also has an in-press co-authored book with Carmen Mills, titled Schooling in disadvantaged communities: Playing the game from the back of the field (Springer, 2009). Trevor was president of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) in 2005, at the peak period of its membership, and a member of the association’s executive for seven years, from 2000 to 2006. During his presidency he led the discipline’s early response when Australia’s Research Quality Framework (RQF) was first mooted. In 2004 he convened AARE’s annual conference, which remains the largest in the association’s history (approximately 1300 participants) and with the highest representation of overseas scholars (20%) to date. Trevor is a policy sociologist whose research has tended to focus on issues of social justice, particularly in schooling and higher education. After C.W. Mills, he has sought through his research to imagine the relations between the ‘personal troubles’ and ‘public issues’ of the social world. In pursuing this agenda, he has led small-scale local projects within individual sites and communities as well as large-scale national projects funded by government. These have included projects on teachers as policy makers, teachers’ professional learning, student aspirations for higher education, university entry policy, students at educational risk, student engagement (through pedagogy), street kids and youth homelessness, and schooling in disadvantaged communities.

HELEN HOCKING (DUNN)
AARE PRESIDENT 1989

In 1989, Helen Hocking was the Principal Research Officer in the Research Branch of the Education Department of Tasmania, and only the second government employee to become an AARE president. Internal restructuring resulted in her transfer to head the Curriculum Evaluation Unit but, after two further restructures and closing of career opportunities, she took leave for two years in 1993. In 1995, she resigned from the Education Department and took up new directions in research and evaluation in the field of natural area management.
Dr Hocking was able to make this sideways turn by initiating a major project to develop a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of management of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The result of this early work has been continued within the managing authority, with Tasmania now a world leader in incorporating evaluation strategies as a tool for the improvement of natural area management. Concurrently with the consulting work, she undertook a (second) PhD in the field of her first love – aquatic ecology. This research on assessing nature conservation values of river systems opened up further opportunities as a consultant in natural area management, with a particular focus on aquatic ecosystems.

Two strands, assessment and evaluation, have woven through her last fifteen years of employment in a range of fields of natural area management. She has been engaged by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service and Environment Agency, Environment Australia, Australian Heritage Commission, Forestry Tasmania, local community groups and local authorities to undertake a range of projects including community surveys, evaluation of environmental programs, documentation of significant natural heritage sites, management plans and review of environmental practices. Some of these projects involved extensive and delightful fieldwork across Tasmania.

In recent years, her focus has shifted to government initiatives in aquatic conservation assessment and management. As a member of a small expert team she was involved in the development, over several years, of an entirely novel yet systematic strategy to identify high conservation value aquatic ecosystems across Tasmania. She continues to work as a consultant to the Commonwealth government as attempts are made to develop such a strategy at national level. She is also working with other practitioners on devising conceptual models for aquatic systems in order to better define and monitor change in ecosystem integrity. Her interests in world heritage continue as a longstanding member of the World Heritage Area Advisory Committee, as a specialist in aquatic ecosystems and in evaluation of natural area management.

BOB LINGARD
AARE PRESIDENT 1999–2000

Professor Bob Lingard is Professorial Research Fellow in the School of Education at the University of Queensland. He has also been Professor at the University of Edinburgh and the University of Sheffield. He is editor of the journal Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education and editor of two book series: Studies in Education (Allen & Unwin, Australia) and Key Ideas and Education with Greg Dimitriadis (Routledge, New York). He is also on the editorial boards of six international journals. He is the author/editor of 15 books and about 100 journal articles. His most recent book is Educating boys: Beyond structural reform (Palgrave, 2009), co-authored with Wayne Martino and Martin Mills. He has an in-press book co-authored with Fazal Rizvi, Globalizing education policy (Routledge, 2009). Bob was the first two-year president of AARE, 1999 and 2000, and has also been an Executive member. He was also the inaugural Chair of the Queensland
Studies Authority, appointed by the Minister for Education. He also co-directed the large Queensland government commissioned research project, the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS), which developed the influential concept of productive pedagogies. He co-directed the research study ‘Addressing the educational needs of boys’ (2002) for the federal government. He has been external examiner for Masters degrees in education at both the Institute of Education, University of London and Queens University, Belfast. He has been invited to deliver a number of significant keynote addresses, including BERA (2006) and ECER (1999). He has won a number of ARC and ESRC competitive research grants and is an Academician of the British Academy of Social Sciences and was nominated to the academy by the British Educational Research Association.

BARRY McGAW
AARE PRESIDENT 1976

When Barry McGaw was elected president of AARE in 1975 he was Head of the Research and Curriculum Branch in the Queensland Department of Education. It was intended that he follow a series of presidents who had come from universities, a college of advanced education and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). In January 1976 he became Professor of Education at Murdoch University and so was in that position in the year of his presidency. In 1985 he moved to Melbourne to become Executive Director of the ACER. In September 1998 he moved to Paris to head the work on education at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), initially as Deputy Director for Education in the Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs and subsequently as Director for Education when a separate Directorate for Education was established in September 2002. He returned to Australia at the end of 2005 and took up a half-time appointment as Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute at the University of Melbourne and also worked as an independent consultant. In January 2008, the new Australian government appointed him as Chair of the new National Curriculum Board.

He continued to be an active member of the AARE but was also involved in other professional associations. He served as president of the International Association for Educational Assessment (1989–1992), the Australian Psychological Society (1990–1991) and the Australian College of Educators (1995–1998). He was elected as a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators (1976), the Australian Psychological Society (1984), the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (1984) and the International Academy of Education (2007). He has been awarded the Australian College of Education Medal (1994), the Distinguished Alumnus Award of the University of Illinois College of Education (2001), an Australian Centenary Medal (2003) and the University of Illinois International Alumni Award for Exceptional Achievement (2006). He was appointed an Officer in the Order of Australia in 2004 for ‘service to educational research and policy in Australia and internationally’. In 2007, he was appointed Emeritus Professor in Arts at Murdoch University.
Emeritus Professor Millicent Poole has achieved an international career in scholarship, leadership and management. She was Vice-Chancellor of Edith Cowan University (1997–2005), and prior to that Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the Australian National University, Canberra (1994–1997) and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Advancement) at the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane (1991–1993).

Emeritus Professor Poole has researched at Berkeley, Harvard, Oregon and Max Planck Institute, Berlin. She has taught in Australia at Monash, Macquarie, La Trobe and New England universities in the fields of developmental, cognitive and social psychology and its application to education. She specialised in adolescence and early adulthood and the transition from school to work. Her perspective has been largely ‘life span’, combining her interest in language, cognition and development with multi-cultural and cross-cultural factors. She developed a contextualist approach to life-span theory.

Emeritus Professor Poole has contributed to numerous conferences, written eighteen books and over one hundred refereed articles across the range of her research interests and professional experiences. She was president of the AARE in 1979 while she was employed at Macquarie University. She is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, of the International Academy of Education, and she was a member of the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) Board of Directors, a member of the Council of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, Chair of the Technology Committee of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP) and an IAUP Regional Chair (South Pacific). She was also on the Board of Directors of IDP Education Australia, International English Language Testing System and the Australian Business and Higher Education Round Table (BHERT). She is currently Chair of the National English Language Teaching Accreditation Scheme.

Awards and major achievements include a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, presentation of the 1991 Radford Memorial Lecture and the 2006 Buntine Oration (Australian College of Education), Fellowship of the Australian College of Education, a Mackenzie Travelling Lectureship, and the New Zealand Council for Education Research Distinguished Scholar Award. Emeritus Professor Poole’s interests are theatre, films, arts, music, bush walking, beach walking and swimming.

William C. Radford had a Victorian state school education which included all his secondary schooling at Horsham High School. His father, a primary teacher of long standing, was the headmaster of the local state school. Radford attended Melbourne Teachers’ College and the University of Melbourne (BA, 1935; DipEd, 1936; MA, 1937; MEd, 1939). After teaching at a high school in 1936–37, Radford was
seconded to the Australian Council for Educational Research. He co-edited *Review of education in Australia, 1938* (1939). He also published *The educational needs of a rural community* (1939), in which he argued that schools should become ‘cultural centres for their districts’. In 1940 he worked in the curriculum and research branch of the Victorian Education Department.

Radford joined the Australian Imperial Force in 1940 and fought in the Middle East and later New Guinea. For his war service in Alamein he was awarded the MBE (Milit.), which was conferred by King George VI at Buckingham Palace in 1943. He later was posted to the UK, joining the Australian Army Staff. After the Armistice he stayed in London, carrying out education research, until early 1946 when he returned to Australia. He enrolled at the University of London (PhD, 1954) and wrote a thesis on the effects of a scheme to consolidate schools in a rural area of Australia.

In 1946 Radford was appointed assistant director of the ACER, and subsequently became its director in 1955. He was to hold this position for two decades. He co-edited or oversaw the publication of several of the ACER’s reviews of education in Australia. He also analysed educational research in Australia in his publications *The non-government schools of Australia* (1953) and *A field for many tillings* (1964). Radford was instrumental in the formation of the AARE in 1970 and served as its president in 1974.

In the 1960s and 70s Radford was one of the best known and most widely consulted educationists in Australia. He lectured part time in the University of Melbourne’s Faculty of Education. He was in 1959 a founding fellow of the Australian College of Education, and he was president of the college in 1969–71. He was a member of the Interim Council of La Trobe University in 1965. In the 1960s he was a member of two Victorian government commissioned inquiries into education. In 1969 the Queensland government appointed him to chair a committee whose report, *Public examinations for Queensland secondary school students* (1970), led to the abolition of external examinations in that state. He also served on P.H. Karmel’s committee of inquiry into education in South Australia. In 1972 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by Monash University for services to education. In 1976 he was appointed AO. He was president (1960–61) of Melbourne Legacy, a part-time member (1961–72) of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board and chair of the Australian UNESCO Committee for Education.

The reduction in the Commonwealth government’s financial support for the ACER in the mid 1970s distressed him and he suffered bouts of depression. He committed suicide on 25 November 1976. He left a widow (who died in 1993), a son and two daughters.

**Sources**

Professor Peter Renshaw has research degrees in education from the University of Sydney (BA Honours) and the University of Illinois (PhD) – a familiar pairing amongst Australian education academics. The connection between Sydney and Illinois was forged by Professor Bill Connell in the early 1950s, when he famously stopped off at Urbana-Champaign after completing his doctorate in the UK, in order to study Dewey and the progressive education movement in the USA. Successive generations of graduates from Australian universities have found their way to Illinois to study diverse aspects of educational theory and practice and strengthen bonds of scholarship and friendship. During his doctoral studies at Illinois in the late 1970s, Professor Renshaw was named along with Professor Peter Freebody as the inaugural Bill Connell scholars – a scholarship named to honour the work of Professor Connell in forging the link between Australia and Illinois. These experiences were formative in the career of Professor Renshaw, providing a depth and breadth of interdisciplinary knowledge about education and skills in a range of research methodologies.

Professor Renshaw was president of AARE in 2001 and secretary for a decade (1991–2000). The membership of the association grew considerably in size and diversity in this period, and AARE increased its international profile through joint conferences (with Singapore and New Zealand), as well as attracting a large contingent of international delegates to its annual conferences. The various awards offered by the association were expanded during this period to include the Betty Watts Indigenous Researcher Award, which encourages research by Indigenous researchers, and supports their active involvement in the association.

Currently Professor Peter Renshaw is Head of the School of Education at the University of Queensland; he is also Secretary-Treasurer of the Australian Council of Deans of Education and is on the International Advisory Board of CICERO Learning, an interdisciplinary research centre at the University of Helsinki, Finland. He has active collaborations with European researchers in the Netherlands and Sweden, studying how teachers deal with student diversity and how they provide inclusive contexts for learning in multicultural classrooms.

Professor Renshaw’s research has focused on learning and teaching processes both at school and tertiary level. With a team of colleagues in the School of Education at UQ, he is currently investigating the quality of teaching and assessment practices in schools across Queensland. In two current ARC projects he is investigating how teachers group and label students, and the effects of these practices on learning outcomes. These projects are framed by a socio-cultural theory of education that foregrounds the social and cultural construction of
knowledge and identity, and the responsibility of educators to create challenging, inclusive and supportive learning contexts for diverse groups of students.

FAZAL RIZVI
AARE PRESIDENT 1996

Fazal Rizvi is a Professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, having previously held academic and administrative appointments at a number of universities in Australia, including as Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and as the founding Director of the Monash Centre for Research in International Education. From 1993 to 2000, Dr Rizvi edited Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, and in 1996 he was the president of the Australian Association for Research in Education. His recent books include Youth moves: Identities and education in global perspective (Routledge, 2007); Globalization, the OECD and education policy making (Pergamon, 2001); and Education policy and the politics of change (Routledge, 1997). His new book Globalizing education policy (Routledge) will appear in 2009. He has written widely on theories of globalisation, educational and cultural policy, and the internationalisation of higher education. He is currently researching higher education in India, especially with respect to the ways in which Indian universities are engaging with issues of globalisation and the knowledge economy. Dr Rizvi has worked on a number of government bodies and is currently an international panel member on UK’s Research Assessment Exercise (RAE, 2008). At Illinois, he directs an online program for teachers around the world in Global Studies in Education. See gse.ed.uiuc.edu.

JUDYTH SACHS
AARE PRESIDENT 1997

Professor Judyth Sachs moved to Macquarie University in December 2006, where she holds the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost. Prior to taking up this position she held various positions at the University of Sydney, Griffith University and the University of Queensland. She was president of the Australian Association of Research in Education in 1997, while she was employed at the University of Sydney. From June 2003 to December 2006 she was Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), Chair of the Academic Board (2001–June 2003) and Professor of Education (1996–2006). Prior to commencing her academic career in 1983 she taught in Queensland schools and worked for the Curriculum Branch of the Department of Education. She holds a BA and a PhD from the University of Queensland and an MA from Western Michigan University.

Her research interests are in the areas of teacher professionalism, teacher professional development, women and leadership, academic governance and higher education policy. Her most recent books include The activist teaching profession (Open University Press, 2003), The international handbook on teacher continuing professional development with Chris Day (Open University Press, 2004), Performing
RICHARD SMITH
AARE PRESIDENT 1992

Professor (Emeritus) Richard Smith BEd, BA (Hons), PhD, MACE retired from the position of Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education at Central Queensland University in July 2008. After working as a primary teacher in Papua New Guinea in the 1960s, he completed a PhD in anthropology and taught anthropology and sociology in education faculties and undertook senior academic and management roles at the now University of Canberra, the University of Queensland, James Cook University, Griffith University and Central Queensland University. In 1992, while he was president of the AARE, Professor Smith was Dean of the Faculty of Education and Creative Arts at Griffith University Gold Coast. Richard’s academic sustenance came from institutions and people in Australia, England, Sweden, North America, Singapore and, more lately, China. His service to the education profession includes terms as editor of the Australian Journal of Education and president of the Australian Association for Research in Education. He contributed to education policy as a member of state and national Deans of Education groups, the Queensland School Curriculum Council and as a two-term chair of the Queensland Ministerial Advisory Council for Educational Renewal, the minister’s ‘think tank’. More recently, he actively pursued new forms of teacher education (Bachelor of Learning Management) and the development of alternative doctoral programs (Professional Doctorate Transdisciplinary Studies) with a futures orientation. His latest books are the co-authored The rise of the learning manager and Learning management.

JAN WRIGHT
AARE PRESIDENT 2007

Dr Jan Wright is Director of the Child and Youth Interdisciplinary Research Centre and Co-director of the University of Wollongong Social Innovation Network. She
CONTRIBUTORS

has designed and taught subjects that examine sport, physical activity and physical and health education from a critical/socio-cultural perspective. Her courses also cover issues such as the relationship between language and ideology, media representations of sport and sporting ‘bodies’ and the health of young people.

She is co-author of *Becoming a physical education teacher* and (with Michael Gard) *The obesity epidemic: Science, morality and ideology*. She is co-editor of *Critical inquiry and problem solving in physical education; Body knowledge and control* and *Biopolitics of the ‘obesity epidemic’: Governing the body* (Routledge, 2009). She has also published in a number of other areas including curriculum history (as genealogy), media representations of sporting bodies, the social construction of gendered bodies in physical education and youth studies.

Recent work includes a longitudinal project (2001–06) with Doune Macdonald from the University of Queensland, funded by an ARC Discovery Grant, which investigates the place and meaning of health physical activity in young people’s lives. Of particular importance to the project are the ways in which young people construct their identities in relation to the cultural messages about bodies and institutionalised and non-institutionalised forms of physical activity currently circulating in society. This has led to collaborations with Prof Genevieve Rail on a Canadian SSHRC project, ‘Adolescents’ constructions of health and fitness’, and an ARC Social Science Linkage project with Prof John Evans, Dr Emma Rich (UK), Dr Lisette Burrows (NZ) and Dr Valerie Harwood on bio-pedagogies – the relationship between bio-power, obesity discourses and schooling.

LYN YATES
AARE PRESIDENT 1998

Lyn Yates was educated at MacArthur St State School, Ballarat High School, and at Melbourne, Bristol and La Trobe universities. Her focus as a researcher has been on education as a field, and on its changing forms and effects in relation to knowledge, inequalities, identities and social change. Her MA thesis was on the sixteenth-century history of ideas; her MEd thesis was a sociological study of teachers’ induction year and the knowledge base of teaching; and her PhD thesis studied curriculum theories, feminist theories and changing forms of policy and practice in relation to ‘non-sexist’ education. At the time of her presidential address, Lyn was working at La Trobe University, where she had worked for most of her career in a wide range of teaching and administrative roles, including as Director of Women’s Studies. Subsequently Lyn took up positions as Professor of Teacher Education and Associate Dean Research at the University of Technology Sydney, and more recently has returned to the University of Melbourne as Foundation Professor of Curriculum, where she is also Pro Vice-Chancellor Research.

Lyn Yates’ contributions to education have included her teaching, particularly with doctoral students; her research projects; and also an ongoing conversation with and reflection on the field in the form of essays, reviews, addresses and the like. Her research projects have included projects on core curriculum and values education; on gender and Australian education policy and practice; on databases
and student pathways; on computers and school learning; and on pedagogies of the new vocationalism. Much of her writing between 1993 and 2006 was concerned with analysing and reflecting on a qualitative longitudinal study of young people and secondary schooling she undertook with Julie McLeod, which produced the book *Making modern lives: Schooling, subjectivity and social change* (2006). Her other books include *Theory–practice dilemmas: Knowledge, gender and education* (1990); *The education of girls: Policy, research and the question of gender* (1993); *Student pathways* (1996); *Reconstructing the lifelong learner* (2003, with Chappell et al.); and *What does good education look like?* (2004). She is currently working on two projects: ‘A multidisciplinary study of young people, illness, identity and education using visual and narrative methods’; and a study of Australian curriculum conceptions and policies between 1975 and 2005, ‘School knowledge, working knowledge and the knowing subject’. She continues to be actively concerned with the positioning of education researchers within new forms of higher education policy, funding and research assessment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AARE</td>
<td>Australian Association for Research in Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>Australian College of Education/Educators</td>
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<td>ACER</td>
<td>Australian Council for Educational Research</td>
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<td>ACSA</td>
<td>Australian Curriculum Studies Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTU</td>
<td>Australian Council of Trade Unions</td>
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<td>AER</td>
<td>Australian Educational Researcher</td>
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<td>AERA</td>
<td>American Educational Research Association</td>
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<td>AJE</td>
<td>Australian Journal of Education</td>
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<td>ANU</td>
<td>Australian National University</td>
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<td>APERA</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Educational Research Association</td>
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<td>ARC</td>
<td>Australian Research Committee/Council</td>
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<td>ARGC</td>
<td>Australian Research Grants Committee</td>
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<td>AUQA</td>
<td>Australian Universities Quality Agency</td>
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<td>AVCC</td>
<td>Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee</td>
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<td>BERA</td>
<td>British Educational Research Association</td>
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<td>BHERT</td>
<td>Business and Higher Education Round Table</td>
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<td>BPU</td>
<td>Basic publication units</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAE</td>
<td>College of Advanced Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>CATS</td>
<td>Common assessment tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>CERI</td>
<td>Centre for Educational Research and Innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHASS</td>
<td>Council of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSSE</td>
<td>Canadian Society for the Study of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEET</td>
<td>Department of Employment, Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>DG</td>
<td>Director-general</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECER</td>
<td>European Conference on Educational Research</td>
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<td>ERA</td>
<td>Excellence in Research Assessment</td>
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<td>ERAS</td>
<td>Educational Research Association of Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERDC</td>
<td>Education Research and Development Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERIC</td>
<td>Educational Resources Information Center (US)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESFU</td>
<td>Employment and Skills Formation Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESRC</td>
<td>Economic and Social Research Council (UK)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FASSO</td>
<td>Federation of Australian Social Science Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>HERDSA</td>
<td>Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAUP</td>
<td>International Association of University Presidents</td>
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<tr>
<td>IB</td>
<td>International Baccalaureate</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITIP</td>
<td>Instructional Theory into Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>LISREL</td>
<td>Linear structural relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAPLAN</td>
<td>National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>NESB</td>
<td>Non-English-speaking background</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFE</td>
<td>National Federation of Education</td>
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NFF</td>
<td>National Farmers’ Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSN</td>
<td>National Schools Network</td>
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<td>NZARE</td>
<td>New Zealand Association for Research in Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OFSTED</td>
<td>Office for Standards in Education (UK)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td>Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD)</td>
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<td>RAE</td>
<td>Research Assessment Exercise</td>
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<td>RARE</td>
<td>Review of Australian Research in Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>RQF</td>
<td>Research Quality Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Socio-economic status</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSHRC</td>
<td>Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>TER</td>
<td>Tertiary entrance rank</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URG</td>
<td>University research grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>VCE</td>
<td>Victorian Certificate of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>VTAC</td>
<td>Victorian Tertiary Admissions Committee/Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WERA</td>
<td>World Education Research Association</td>
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The purpose of this anthology, as a Review of Australian Research in Education (RARE), is much larger than serving an archival function for the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE). It is an archive in that we have brought together all available presidential addresses, specifically those from 1974, when the practice of publishing the addresses in the association’s journal, the Australian Educational Researcher (AER), was begun. It is also an archive of an archive in that it is a selection of these presidential addresses. In the second section of this chapter we discuss the criteria for this archiving, which in effect constitutes our narrative of the development of education research in Australia and which we adumbrate throughout this essay. The archive names the narrative and our narrative constructs the archive; each is implied in the other.

The larger purpose of this anthology is to plot, evaluate and contribute to definitions of education research and its functions and purposes in a changing world, and to consider its impact, broadly defined, in both actual and desirable or normative terms. We use our research on the addresses to capture issues in education research, which have been traversed in differing ways, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, by these addresses. These include defining education research as a field, including AARE’s location within that field and the positionings of the presidents therein. They also include questions about the purposes of education research, which implies as well the issue of the readership or audiences for such research. The latter then touches on matters of dissemination, publication and diffusion and impact more broadly. This raises matters of publication and the various and competing outlets for publication of education research, nationally and increasingly on an international scale. Issues of quality, including associated politics, also come into play. The Howard government’s Research Quality Framework (RQF) and the Rudd government’s Excellence in Research Assessment (ERA) are specific Australian policy manifestations of this focus on research quality and research accountability. The Research Assessment Exercise in the UK (the RAE) is perhaps the best known and longest running of these research accountability exercises and has influenced the development of similar exercises throughout the world (Coryn, 2008). Questions of the relationship of education research to education policy and practice are also important in its very definition and have become more significant in state policies framed by new public management that call for evidence-based policy (Watson, 2008; Gale & Wright, 2008; Lingard, 2008).
We traverse this range of matters later in this essay. Before doing so we reflect upon how we might define education research. One way of considering this is to distinguish between intellectual resources and topic. We might say that the intellectual resources of education research are those of contemporary social science, in both theoretical and methodological senses. This would include the plethora of theoretical developments, as well as methodological ones cutting across the obsolete binary of qualitative–quantitative methodologies. Both theory and methodologies in the social sciences have also been challenged by the post-national realities of a globalised world, a matter to which we return later in this chapter. The distinctive feature of education research among the social sciences then might be seen to be its focus: that is, education research involves the use of the intellectual resources of the social sciences and applies them to the institutions and practices of education. However, the changes associated with what Bernstein (2001) has called the ‘totally pedagogised society’ and what Thomson (2006) has called ‘pedagogisation of everyday life’ mean that we need to extend the institutional and practice focus of education research. We might see this as demanding the deparochialisation of the institutional and practice foci of education research.

In our view education research also encompasses practitioner research, which involves methodologies and theories from the social sciences and their application to issues of practice in education and its improvement. However, we do not mean or want to limit practitioner research to action research (see Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2009). Nor do we seek to denigrate action research, but to suggest that practitioners (teachers and policy makers in all education sectors) can and ought to participate in other types of education research. Indeed, our position would be that education practitioners should have what we might call a ‘researcherly disposition’. The other side of this is that education researchers located in universities and research institutes should also have an educative or ‘pedagogical disposition’ (Lingard & Renshaw, 2009). Certainly at least one past president, Leo Bartlett, held such a position:

If we accept that research is educational to the extent that it engages the practice of education educatively, then the focus of debate among our membership must surely be the actual state of education in Australia. (Bartlett, this volume, p. 70)

Bartlett made this observation in an attempt to challenge what he referred to as a ‘third person science’, a conception of knowledge producers separated from and located in a hierarchical relationship with educational practitioners. Implicit here is a translation model of educational research and a depiction of active researchers and passive practitioners. This is a model that was reinstated in US developments in educational research during the G.W. Bush presidency. We eschew such a hierarchical binary, while also demanding a calculus of quality to be applied to all types of educational research (Furlong & Oancea, 2006) and recognising that research of all types needs to be disseminated in different ways to different readerships for different purposes. We need to recognise then that education is both a field of research and a field of policy and pedagogical practices.
We acknowledge that in writing about such matters we speak from positions of power in these relationships, indeed within the field of educational research, at least within its Australian sub-field. Our challenging of traditional accounts of what constitutes educational research and education researchers is possible in part because of where we are located in the field. The positionality of practitioners means that they are not always able to speak to this. But for us, we are both past presidents of the association, both sociologists of education, both male and so on, which necessarily means that we ‘see’ particular things rather than others. This selectivity, of course, includes the choice of addresses included in this collection, the criteria for which we return to later. Selectivity is also involved in the exclusion of some presidential addresses from the collection, but we note that in deciding on the collection we read all of them and all have informed this introductory essay.

It is important for us to recognise these matters and not just leave them to our readers to discern, for as critical sociologists they require us to reflect on our own subjectivities and positions in the field, to objectify them as Bourdieu would say. It is because of this reflexivity that we believe we are better able to recognise the value of the positions of others, as well as the flaws in our own. Indeed, this reflexivity and recognition of our positionality (i.e. the rejection of epistemological innocence in Bourdieu’s terms), we hope, has enabled a generosity in our readings of the presidential addresses and in relation to the varieties of educational research. This does not mean that there cannot be or should not be disagreements among and between educational researchers, but we acknowledge that such productive disagreements contribute to the development of education research, to the conversations of education practitioners and indeed to the broader conversations of humanity.

We add one final caveat in this chapter. In our view, globalisation has thrown out some serious challenges to research methodologies and epistemologies. However, we need to be careful not to reify globalisation as the conceptual ‘explain all’ of new phenomena in education (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). At the same time, we also need to be wary of the constraints of methodological and theoretical nationalism and the assumption in our educational research that society is homologous with nation. In Appadurai’s terms (2001), we need to ‘globalize the research imagination’ and work with a strong version of globalisation and internationalisation of higher education. This would enable us to move beyond the apparent reality of theory being produced within the academies of the global north, and researchers in the global south simply taking their nationally bound research sites as places for the empirical application of these theories developed elsewhere. Connell in Southern theory (2007) similarly comments on the dangers of implicitly assuming that northern theory is synonymous with the universal. Linda Tuihawai Smith (1999) makes the complementary point about the association between research and colonialism for many postcolonial peoples.

In another more recent essay in which he reflects again on the need today to globalise the research imagination, Appadurai (2006) has argued (almost à la Stenhouse) for an ecumenical and broad definition of research as simply the capacity to do systematic inquiry and to make that inquiry public. Indeed, Appadurai sustains an argument that a researcherly disposition should be conceptualised as a
basic human right and that this is central to active citizenship in an age of
globalisation, when citizenship needs to be imagined beyond the nation. We agree
with Appadurai and concur with his position that a researcherly disposition ought
to be central to practitioner habitus in education.

We turn next to an articulation of the criteria for selecting presidential addresses
for inclusion in this archive. This is followed by an outline of the themes that we
see as cohering the field of educational research in Australia as manifested in our
reading of AARE’s published presidential addresses since 1974. In the conclusion,
we move to a consideration of the significance of the emergence of the post-
national for social theory, epistemologies and methodologies and their implications
for educational research. We locate these considerations against the potentially
narrowing and disciplining effects of emergent research accountabilities (Blackmore,
2008). We conclude with a succinct reading of developments and possibilities in
educational research as mediated by AARE and rapidly changing social, political,
temporal and spatial contexts.

THE SELECTION FOR THE COLLECTION

Clearly, because of space constraints, it was not possible to include all presidential
addresses in this collection. Eleven were selected to form this archive: addresses
by Bill Radford (1974), Barry McGaw (1976), Millicent Poole (1979), Leo Bartlett
Jan Wright (2007). They were chosen according to the extent to which they could
be seen to be:

– indicative of particular issues within the association and within educational
  research, and the relations between these, and also indicative of social, political
  and economic issues more broadly;
– significant in their own right, as firsts: first published, first by a woman, first to
  be overtly political, first delivered offshore and concerned with Asia–Australia
  relations in educational research, and first focused on theory;
– representative of the four decades of the association’s existence; and
– scholarly works in their own right and indicative of the genre of presidential
  addresses.

For this selection, addresses needed to meet at least three of these criteria and
preferably all four. Informing our thinking first and foremost were matters to do
with the historical and emerging character of the association and related changes in
the definitions of educational research and researchers.

In terms of historical representations and the complex melange of residual,
dominant, emergent and contested themes in educational research, we can see in
the three papers from the 1970s (Radford, McGaw and Poole) the first small steps
away from the dominance of educational psychology, as clearly indicated by Poole
in her expressed concern that the hegemony of educational psychology might
be replaced by a hegemony of the sociology of education. This concern should be
seen in the context of Radford’s role and the significance of ACER in the
formation of the association, specifically its educational psychological orientation.
McGaw also suggested that, given the complexity of educational research and practices, educational psychology was necessary but not sufficient for defining the field of educational research.

The two papers from the late 1980s (Bartlett, Hocking) are significant for a number of reasons. First, Bartlett calls for the politicisation of the association and a broader political impact for educational research, along with a rejection of the putative neutrality of educational research. Hocking’s address is significant in that she contextualises her argument against the AERA and BERA presidential addresses of the previous year. Her address also provides an empirically based and theorised account of the actual and desired relationships between educational research and policy production. It is also significant to note that Hocking is the last non-academic president of the association and one of only three in the association’s forty-year history. For example, Radford was director of ACER, Barry McGaw when president was a university professor, but was the director of a state department of education research branch when he initially took on the role, while Helen Hocking was also employed in a state department of education research branch.

Richard Smith’s address of 1992 is political in Bartlett’s sense, in that Smith’s major concerns were the move from elite to mass higher education spawned by the Dawkins reforms and their potential impact on educational research and the work of the association. This issue of the role and place of research in schools of education in the Dawkins universities, where most teachers are educated, remains a pressing concern for educational research in Australia and for the association. Similar matters abound in the UK, where large numbers of teachers are educated in schools of education that receive no government research funding. The addresses by Rizvi (1996), Sachs (1997) and Yates (1998) from the late 1990s are also overtly political in various ways. Implicitly postcolonial in orientation, Rizvi’s address challenges the silent ethnocentrism and nationally bound character of Australian educational research. This stretches the concept of the political in educational research from national concerns, first emerging in Bartlett’s address, to more postcolonial and global concerns. Yates (1998), as with Hocking (1989), situates her address against contemporaneous critiques of educational research at that time by Hargreaves and Tooley in the United Kingdom. Judith Sachs’ 1997 address is in one sense a theorised rearticulation of some of the concerns expressed in earlier presidential addresses by Radford and McGaw. Sachs distinguishes between research on and for education and theorises practitioner research, while rejecting a conception of research–practitioner relationships, as outlined by Radford, as simply one-way and instrumental in character. Indeed, Sachs wants to see researchers and practitioners as collaborative partners, rejecting the conception of practitioners as merely the objects of research.

Finally, we have included two papers from the noughties, on the basis of the significance of the issues they raise: the first by Peter Renshaw (2001), the second by Jan Wright (2007). Renshaw follows in the long tradition of educational psychology and its significance within the field of educational research and within the work of the association. However, his address is framed by what we might see as the new educational psychology, which is grounded in socio-cultural and
constructivist theory, and which has since formed the basis for an influential special interest group within the association. In his address, Renshaw wants to scaffold the association as a community of learners, while being aware of the potentially excluding character of community and indeed of the first person plural (we) to refer to the association. Wright’s address recognises the significance of theory to adequate social explanation in empirically based research in education and indeed in the broader social sciences. To some it might appear a paradox that a researcher in the field of health and physical education argued such a case for theory in a presidential address. However, given the status and international standing of Australian theory and research in this field, and Wright’s place within it, her focus is hardly surprising.

Among presidential firsts, we have included William Radford’s address because it was the first to be published in the AER; a precedent followed through to the present time. In a sense, it is also the first Radford Lecture: the series of lectures delivered each year at the association’s annual conference and named in Radford’s honour. Millicent Poole’s address was the first by a woman president, reflecting the impact of second wave feminism in Australia from the early 1970s onwards. We have included her address on these grounds and because she canvassed the emerging tensions between educational psychologists and sociologists within the educational research community. We have also included Leo Bartlett’s address, written at the time of the Hawke Labor government, because it appears to demonstrate another turning point in the perceived role of the association, namely the politicisation of educational research and the politicisation of AARE. Bartlett sees very broad political purposes for educational research, extending to researchers’ roles as public intellectuals helping to define civil society and inform broader public and democratic debates about education and its purposes. Bartlett saw a public pedagogy role for educational researchers, which could be seen as reflecting an understanding that both cultural production and reproduction are pedagogical in character. Bartlett was also the first president to politicise the presidency to the extent that he prepared a campaign ticket for the election, which among other things argued for a broadening of the membership and implicitly at least demanded a broadened definition of the category ‘educational researchers’.

Fazal Rizvi’s 1996 address is included because it was the first to be delivered offshore in Asia (outside Australia and New Zealand) and the first to canvass the ethnocentricism of Australian educational research. He saw this as related to the failure to locate Australia within the Asia-Pacific; rather, educational research was most often positioned as an outpost of North American and European intellectual traditions and framed by ‘northern theory’. Jan Wright’s 2007 address was the first explicitly to address the necessity of theory in good educational research. Wright has a reputation as an important theorist in physical and health education, a discipline with a history as one of the strongest special interest groups in the association. Her address should also be contextualised against what she perceived as the potential narrowing of the field as a result of new research accountabilities in Australia.

This broadening definition can be contrasted with the membership addressed in Radford’s 1974 presidential address, which primarily comprised ‘professional
educational researchers’ located in educational research institutes, state department research branches or university schools of education. We note, however, that Don Anderson, the eminent ANU sociologist, was also president of the association in 1985. His involvement indicates some of the debates about the definition of educational research, that is, is it defined simply by its topic or by an idiosyncratic theory and methodology; as does Helen Hocking’s presidential address in that it is concerned with the important relationship between educational research and policy making and in fact drew on her then recently completed PhD thesis at the University of Tasmania. This concern about the relationship of educational research not only to educational policy production, but also to leadership and teacher practices in schools, has been ongoing for the association since its inception. As we have already noted, Bartlett picks up on this in his descriptor ‘educational’ rather than ‘education’ research. We also note that Bartlett’s address was one of the first to be framed by broader social theory, rather than derived from psychology. Bartlett drew heavily on the modernist Frankfurt School critical theorist Jürgen Habermas; a theoretical focus also underpinning the work at the time of Richard Smith.

The presidential addresses could be seen as a particular genre, but one that has developed over time. Its purpose would appear both to reflect and direct the field of education research and the work of the association, or at least some part of these. Often this reflection/direction is contextualised in relation to developments in the field and to broader political developments. In the early years of the association these reflections were bounded by national considerations, later challenged by global developments both within and outside the field and the association. As with all genres, presidential addresses have certain organisational and lexical features. They are in some ways similar to academic papers, but framed by a more authoritative authorial voice; indeed, the addresses could be seen to be positioned within a magisterial discourse (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Some addresses also reflect and direct the field through meta-accounts of the president’s own research and positioning within the field. The position of president also appears to provide a justification for the authoritative voice of addresses, while they always attempt to speak to the ‘we’ of the association and of educational researchers, thus discursively constituting a community in this articulation.

This magisterial discourse also works to mask the subjective interests of presidents, their individual research interests and their institutional locations. To paraphrase Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 194), identifying them as AARE presidents speaking to the association is not devoid of implications, but forces us to consider the relations between the two that are speaking through the president’s mouth. Presidents both come to the position with authority in the field and gain authority in the field from being president. The presidency provides opportunity, for example, to conduct symposia at AERA and BERA, to publish an address in the association’s journal, to be involved in the formation of post-national associations of educational research, and to have input into government policy formation in respect of research and research accountabilities. The presidential address is always delivered by individuals who may or may not embody the broad collective interests of the association, or be representative of its membership, as a
whole or in part. The presidential address assumes a ‘hidden’ community of educational researchers as their implicit listeners and readers, while at the same time also helping to constitute the boundaries of this community and its defining logics of practice. We would also note how influential some presidents became in subsequent career moves.

Finally, without being critical of presidents, we note the deafening silence about concerns about Indigenous education across the forty years of the association’s existence. Working against the silence has been the inauguration by the association of the Betty Watts Indigenous Researcher Award, and recent consideration by some researchers of ethical issues and power relations in conducting research with Indigenous people.

ISSUES IN EDUCATION RESEARCH DEFINED BY PRESIDENTS’ ADDRESSES

There are a number of issues that appear to have been the foci of presidential addresses from 1970 at the association’s foundation to the present. While recognising that these issues are constructed by the professional association of education researchers and its presidents, we also believe that they are issues central to the definition and politics of education research more broadly. We see the issues as being constructed around two broad domains. The first is consumed with considerations of definition, for example, ‘how do we’ and ‘how ought we’ define education research. The second set of issues congeals around considerations of the role of AARE as the professional association representing the interests of educational researchers. The construction of the role of AARE also reaches out to matters of membership. We deal with these two broad domains in turn.

We have already noted the significance of the different nomenclature of education and educational research. The former appears simply to define the topic of research described as education research, while the latter suggests a more educative and pedagogical function of research on the topic of education, although education research can have an educative effect for those who read and take account of its findings. Educational research suggests that research so defined has a function in relation to the improvement of education policy and practices. This is reflected in what we see as a necessary pedagogical disposition for educational research and researchers, that is, a commitment to broader dissemination of research findings beyond publication in high status, international, refereed journals. We note as well, however, how contemporary policy around research accountabilities and internal university policies regarding appointment, tenure and promotion now valorise these kind of publications, rather than those written explicitly for practitioners and policy makers. We have already suggested that ‘the other’ to this pedagogical disposition ought to be a researcherly disposition in those working as policy makers in education, educational leaders and practitioners. What we mean by this descriptor is an openness of all of these practitioners to ‘findings’, understanding and enlightenment to be derived from a critical reading of educational research. These matters go to the heart of research on/for education. Normatively, we believe educational research should work across and eschew this binary.
In the first presidential address published in the *AER*, Bill Radford defined educational research as an activity carried out by researchers located either in universities, research institutes or the research branches of large state education bureaucracies. This definition denied a conception of practitioners or policy makers as either potential or actual education researchers. Radford constructed the relation between education researchers/education research and practitioners/policy makers as unidirectional, requiring translation of research findings for both of these groups and their fields. This definition, of course, reflected the membership – approximately 150 foundation members – who were either professional researchers in research institutes, state departments or located in universities. We note that more than 90 per cent of the foundation membership was male. There has been considerable feminisation of the membership since that time. Implicit in Radford’s definitional work was the acceptance that educational research was synonymous with educational psychology and educational psychology defined in a particular way.

All of these matters raised in the Radford presidential address have been challenged by subsequent presidents. Interestingly, we would see this professional and narrow definition of educational research as standing in contrast with the ambience of rapid social change and progressive policy making associated with the Whitlam government (1972–1975) and related progressive changes in North America and Europe; almost at the dawn of the dismantling of progressive Keynesianism and the emergent hegemony of neo-liberalism ushered in by Thatcher (1979), Reagan (1981) and Deng Xiaoping (1979).

Another issue across the presidential addresses are the questions ‘who are educational researchers?’ and ‘who should they be?’ This definition is extended over the history of the association to include an increasingly wider variety of researchers, practitioner researchers and policy-making researchers. Across the presidential addresses there is a construction of educational research as contributing to understanding and enlightenment, as well as the contribution to improvement in practices. Trowler (2003) makes an important distinction here between enlightenment and engineering relationships between research and practice. There are tensions between these two purposes in the presidents’ broadening definition of education research and researchers. Barry McGaw, for example, suggests that educational research must be distinguished from educational psychology research and that educational phenomena are too complex to be understood through the lens of educational psychological research alone.

To this point we have noted the multiple audiences for educational research as including the field of educational researchers, educational practitioners and policy makers in education. Bartlett in his 1988 presidential address challenges this perspective, which he saw to be limited in its political reach. Drawing on the work of German critical theorist Jürgen Habermas, Bartlett argued that educational research and educational researchers should also contribute to the democratic conversations of the broader polity, civil society and humanity. His view was that educational research and researchers could make a positive contribution to these conversations and to progressive education policy making. Ten years later, Yates in her 1998 presidential address endorsed this broader function for educational
As we have noted several times, Bartlett prefers the descriptor ‘educational’ rather than ‘education’ research because of his stance that educational research should engage the practices and policies of education ‘educatively’. In some ways, this is a re-articulation of the improvement agenda associated with some earlier definitions of education research. In his argument about the contribution that education researchers ought to make to the democratic polity, Bartlett suggests that educational researchers should take on a public pedagogue role. Thus Bartlett’s definition of educational research and its political involvements demands that educational researchers have what we might call a ‘pedagogical disposition’. This disposition demands that there be multiple modes of dissemination of educational research relevant to its various potential audiences. Such dissemination stretches from high status, internationally recognised, peer-reviewed journals through to magazines of teacher associations and opinion pieces in newspapers. Bartlett’s presidential address also implied the need for a more overtly political role for AARE in public and policy debates, as we have mentioned, and a more outward-looking disposition, including a call for an expanded AARE membership and alliances with other cognate academic and research-oriented groups. This approach can be seen in relation to the neo-corporatist policy processes that were utilised by the Hawke/Keating government in the 1980s, which managed policy processes through dealing with peak representative bodies. This approach articulated by Bartlett can perhaps be contrasted with Radford’s more professional definition of educational research and more inward-looking functions for AARE and narrower conception of its membership.

Bartlett called for more politically committed education research and within that commitment recognised the need for theory. It is interesting, however, that the explicit place of theory in education research was not a major theme of a presidential address until that of Jan Wright in 2007, even though several addresses, Jill Blackmore’s (2003) for example, were deeply theoretical in orientation. On the point of theory and politically committed research, we also note the significance of Australian feminist research in education and its global recognition and impact (Yates, 2008), the framework that imbued both Lyn Yates’ and Jill Blackmore’s (2003) presidential addresses. Wright’s call for more theory and indeed the need for theory in education research was set in the context of governments increasingly attempting to set research agendas and research priorities with implications for valorised methodologies and theories, either implicit or explicit within these political agendas. For example, as Jean Anyon (2009) has recently pointed out, the Bush government in the USA attempted to construct ‘empirically randomized control trials’ as the gold standard for assessing educational research and for evaluating all research applications and failed to recognise the significance of theory to social explanation in educational research. The situation in the UK has been similar (see Ozga, Seddon & Popkewitz, 2006). As Anyon argues, this has resulted in the devaluing of qualitative studies and the use of systematic theory in the field of educational research. Wright and Anyon both argue, and we strongly agree with their stance here, that theory is necessary to understanding and explanation within educational research. This is a usage of theory that goes well beyond ‘a mantric reaffirmation of belief’ (Ball, 2006, p. 64). Bourdieu’s (1994)
expression of theory as ‘thinking tools’ and the practices of research as ‘field work in philosophy’ beautifully encapsulate the intimacies and imbrications of theory and data, as does Jean Anyon’s (2009) insightful introduction to her book, *Theory and educational research: Toward critical social explanation*. Thus, Wright’s presidential address stresses the contribution of education research to understanding and enlightenment, rather than its instrumental relation to practitioner and policy-maker practices and their improvement. And, as we know from Carol Weiss’s (1979) classic study of the impact of social sciences research on policy, the most pervasive effect works through enlightenment or percolation, which has an extended time frame, and, given this, policy practitioners often do not recognise the research base of their assumptive worlds.

Regarding AARE and its functions, and as indicated already, the membership of AARE has broadened since its inception. As also demonstrated, the definition of educational research has similarly broadened to include practitioner research, research by policy makers and research from differing theoretical, disciplinary and methodological perspectives. As noted earlier, Poole as president spoke about the transition from the hegemony of educational psychology to the potential emergence of a sociology of education hegemony. Educational research in today’s AARE is represented by a broad field indeed and one of us (Lingard, 2001) as president argued that the association needed to define and defend this broad definition of educational research, with the most significant factor being the varying definitions of quality associated with different research approaches, rather than commitment to specific theoretical or methodological orientations (Lingard, 2001). BERA presidents Geoff Whitty (2006) and Pamela Munn (2008) in 2006 and 2007 respectively argued a similar case for educational research as a broad field where quality ought to be the most salient factor (also see Furlong & Oancea, 2006). Lyn Yates (2004) has provided an intelligent and instructive account of measures of quality in education research, traversing a number of possible criteria including contribution to learning, usefulness to teachers and adherence to scientific rigour, while pointing out the shortcomings of each. The field today is eclectic in theoretical orientation, disciplinary bases, methodologies, epistemologies, ontologies and foci, both institutional and practice. Perhaps such eclecticism reflects ‘the effervescence of the social world’ today (see Bourdieu, 2008).

Since its inception, AARE’s work has involved defining, disseminating and defending educational research. This representational role has evolved in the context of a broadening definition, broadening membership and changing contextual circumstances. As we have mentioned, it was Bartlett as president who brought to the presidential election a specific manifesto, which argued the necessity for a broader political role for the association. Other presidential addresses included in this collection (such as Richard Smith’s, 1992) also considered the role of AARE and its political involvements in the context of the time, such as the Dawkins reforms of higher education and post-Dawkins developments. This broader political representational role of AARE has endured since the time of these addresses and subsequent government policy developments in respect of research generally, research quality specifically and the role and purposes of educational research as well. One of us (Gale, 2006), as president, sought to theorise AARE’s potential
engagement in contexts of policy influence, at a time when education researchers and their research were not just marginalised in policy-making processes, but also maligned under parliamentary privilege and in the popular press. In this collection, Wright’s call for the centrality of theory in good educational research was also situated in the context of potential governmental reduction of the scope, theories and methodologies of educational research and the potential impact of quality assessment exercises in the definition of educational research.5

AARE’s role has also changed reasonably dramatically in relation to what today the social sciences would call globalisation and its associated flows, networks and diasporas of global ideas and people (Appadurai, 1996). Helen Hocking spoke in her presidential address to both AERA and BERA presidential addresses. While Bartlett called for a more outward political role for AARE, he situated this role in relation to Australia as the site of political activism. Hocking’s address was the first inkling of a more global reach, although we note the close relationships between AARE and NZARE from the outset and that an Australian perspective on educational research was heavily influenced by traditions and developments in the United Kingdom and North America. Fazal Rizvi’s presidential address was delivered in Singapore at the 1996 annual conference, which was held in conjunction with the Educational Research Association of Singapore (ERAS). Rizvi’s address was located against and within the attempts by the Keating Labor federal government for Australia to become more Asia literate and to re-orient towards Asia both economically and culturally in the context of globalisation. As an aside, current Prime Minister Rudd, the senior public servant involved in the conceptualisation and delivery of the Keating government’s National Asian Languages and Culture Strategy, has also reiterated the need for Australia in both cultural and economic terms to be the most Asia-literate society on the globe. This carries significance for contemporary educational research.

Rizvi’s address exemplified the observation (à la Foucault) by postcolonial critic Edward Said (1993; 2003), that even the most arcane knowledges and theories are imbricated in relations of power and that processes of orientalism are decidedly political. Rizvi voiced the silent parochial ethnocentrism of much Australian educational research. Bartlett also recognised the implicit politics of all educational research, while at the same time calling for a more overtly exogenous political role for AARE, but one limited by national boundaries.

This enhanced global reach of AARE was also manifested in closer relationships between AARE and the American Educational Research Association (AERA), with a formal AARE symposium allocated at AERA annual conferences from the mid 1990s. From around that time, similar relationships were developed with the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE), and with BERA and ECER (the latter two formalised in 2005). In 2001, AARE also held a joint conference in Fremantle along with the Education Association of South Africa, although formal relations have not continued and need revitalising. Early in the twenty-first century, AARE was also involved in the creation of the Asia-Pacific Educational Research Association (APERA), a manifestation of the new regionalisms associated with globalisation, and became a formal executive member of APERA from 2005. This more global outlook was also evident in Lyn Yates’ 1998
presidential address, when she located educational research in Australia in the context of a number of stinging critiques of the quality of educational research then being published in the UK and which were later used to ‘discipline’ educational researchers in that location. Indeed, Ozga et al. (2006) have shown how educational research in the UK has become the focus of government policy. More recently, AARE along with AERA, BERA and a large number of other national and regional research associations have participated in the establishment of a world educational research association as an omnibus or loose federation of such associations globally. The emergence of this World Education Research Association (WERA) is a recognition today of the intimate global interconnectedness of research problems and research issues in education. We also argue that it is a recognition of the need to ‘de-parochialise’ (Appadurai, 2001; Lingard, 2006) education research and to globalise the research imagination (Appadurai, 2001), so as to move beyond an implicit ‘methodological nationalism’ (Beck, 2000). Sensitivities regarding a potential reading of this new WERA as neo-colonial in orientation or enhancing the reach of northern theory were to the fore in discussions about its formation. This emergence also reflects, in a Bourdieuan sense, the construction of a global educational policy field and a global field of educational research (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009).

We have to this point elaborated issues raised in the presidential addresses concerning the definitions of educational research and the role and functions of AARE. These two themes and changes to their articulation have of course been located in changing historical contexts, which have become a melange of the national, regional and global, as globalisation has reconstituted the work of the nation and of the nation-state and witnessed the emergence of some post-national tendencies (Appadurai, 1996; 2006). Words and concepts circulate without their fields of production and context and thus for understanding need ‘worlding’, as Edward Said (1983) argued. Jean Anyon (2009, p. 2) expresses this need for contextualisation in another way when, following Saskia Sassen, she argues the need for an ‘analytics of exogeny’ within educational research, because to understand x we cannot merely describe x. We also need to look exogenously at non-x. This analytic, she would argue, is also necessary for adequate social explanation derived from empirical research. We concur with her observation.

The worlds of AARE have changed over time, as each successive ‘world’ has recognised the failure of previous worlds to recognise its broader contextual location and interconnectivity. As we have noted, AARE began as and from within the world of educational psychology researchers located within the academy and specialist research institutions. It expanded to include practitioners and policy makers as researchers and multiple and variegated theories and methodological approaches. Successive presidents reframed AARE’s world, initially limited to Australia, then extended to include the UK and USA, Europe, Asia and then the world. This worldliness has both reflected and expressed globalisation and its flows and enhanced interconnectivity, as we have become increasingly aware that it is a small world after all. As the educated and privileged of the globe have become phenomenologically aware of the globe as one space, a more cosmopolitan post-national disposition has emerged. This has been expressed through the
emergence of AARE’s connections with a range of other research associations and more lately in the creation of a global education research association. Also reflecting this new global world has been the increased participation of international visitors in AARE’s annual conference. For example, almost 20 per cent of participants at the Melbourne 2004 conference were from overseas, particularly from China; yet another reflection of the changing geopolitics associated with globalisation. We suggest that this changing world order and the rise of Chinese geopolitical power have implications for the development globally of educational research and its associated epistemologies.

What seems evident is that, every time presidents re-imagine what educational research is, it reflects a changed membership and broadening theoretical and methodological frameworks among educational researchers. The increasingly diverse membership of AARE and its enhanced political role together have created some representational difficulties for AARE. That is, as AARE becomes broader, more inclusive and more complex, it becomes more difficult (for presidents and AARE’s Executive) to represent the association and its members’ interests. It is difficult to speak in the first person plural – to use ‘we’ – given the diversification and incommensurate epistemologies of the grouping of educational researchers.

IN CONCLUSION: THE CHANGING PLACE AND CHARACTER OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Table 1 represents the narrative constructed in this introductory essay about developments in educational research in Australia and related developments in the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), as read through the archive of presidential addresses we have brought together in this anthology. We stress here our support for a principled eclecticism in educational research and argue that there is a need for the construction of a calculus of quality to be applied across the multiple theoretical and methodological approaches and topics within contemporary educational research. Table 1 represents such complexity and the diversification of the field of educational research in Australia today and implies the difficulties this creates for the representational and political work of the association in relation to governments, policy makers, the Australian Research Council (ARC), federated peak research bodies (e.g. the Council of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences), and so on. This representational role for AARE is obligatory today, rather than optional as it might have been in the association’s earlier days. This is not to deny the influential role of early presidents in terms of government policy and educational research in Australia and the positions from which some spoke (e.g. Radford as director of ACER, McGaw as director of the Research Branch of the Queensland Department of Education). The contemporary representational obligation of AARE relates to research becoming the focus of government policy, specifically new research accountabilities such as ERA, and to the rise of so-called evidence-based policy in the public sector, framed by efficiency and effectiveness concerns of public sector management (Head, 2008). Following Head, we see research as only one factor that contributes to the creation of educational policy and thus prefer the descriptor ‘evidence-informed’ policy and
indeed use the descriptor ‘evidence-informed’ practice in relation to teachers, while seeing teachers themselves as potential educational researchers. Values, professional knowledge, along with research findings, understandings and insights inform policy and teacher practice.

Table 1 also shows the diversification of both AARE membership and the field of educational research, which it helps constitute and at the same time represents. This diversification of research and researchers also has theoretical, disciplinary, methodological and epistemological aspects, stretching for example from a particular definition of educational psychology sitting within a positivist applied science model through to more arcane post-structuralist and postcolonial educational research, which challenges the epistemological assumptions of traditional educational psychology and is itself at epistemological odds with it. Yet, as we have noted, there are ways in which some policy developments today, including research accountabilities, might work to delimit these broader definitions of educational research.

An additional significant potential impact in educational research as documented in Table 1 relates to the contemporary creation of the contours of a global educational research field. This emergent field is one on which tensions are played out between epistemological challenges to northern theory read as the universal and the global application and reach of such theory. Following Appadurai (2001), we see the pressing need to globalise the research imagination in education and thus to deparochialise educational research. There are serious epistemological, theoretical and methodological challenges in relation to such matters.

We argue that we need to deparochialise educational research in another way. Earlier we mentioned Bernstein’s reference to an inchoate totally pedagogised society and Thomson’s allusion to the emerging pedagogisation of everyday and everyday life (that is, in all its facets). We see workplaces, cultural centres such as museums and art galleries, and multifarious aspects of public policy (e.g. training requirements attached to certain welfare benefits) becoming educational and pedagogical in focus. Hence, there is also a need, we aver, to deparochialise the institutional and practice foci of educational research. Again, there are significant challenges and opportunities here.

We see processes and practices of cultural production and reproduction as pedagogical in character. In relation to this, we are aware of how some contemporary social theory has taken a pedagogical turn. For example, postcolonial critics such as Gayatri Spivak (1993) see a postcolonial politics as being pedagogical in approach. We have also spoken about educational researchers taking on a public pedagogue role in relation to the broader dissemination of research. In relation to these matters, in the past educational research has been a subset of social sciences research, drawing on theories and methodologies from parent disciplines. It would seem to be the case today, in the totally pedagogised society, that educational theory and research are well placed to play a role at the forefront of contemporary social science theorising (Lingard, Nixon & Ranson, 2008).
Table 1. AARE: Beginning (historical) and current (emergent) elements in Australian educational research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions of educational researchers</th>
<th>Disciplinary/theoretical location</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Relationship between research, policy and practice</th>
<th>Research and politics</th>
<th>The association and politics</th>
<th>Spatial/locational focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning elements</td>
<td>Exclusive definition: professional education researchers (ACER, state ed. department research branches, academics); excludes policy makers and practitioners</td>
<td>Education research defined largely as psychological research. Singular</td>
<td>Positivist quantitative; evidence conceived as quantifiable; correlations; cause and effect relations</td>
<td>Engineering relationships; research to inform and solve policy and practice problems; unidirectional, from research to policy and practice (see Trowler, 2003, p. 170)</td>
<td>Research as neutral</td>
<td>Endogenous politics. Creating the association. In the service of the state/ greater good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>Inclusive definition: includes policy makers, practitioners, academic and student researchers, and research institutes, state/federal departments of education</td>
<td>Theoretical and disciplinary eclecticism. Plural</td>
<td>Methodological eclecticism across quantitative–qualitative divides within a post-positivist frame; evidence is more broadly defined; multiple representations of data; recognition of the need for theory in social explanation of research data</td>
<td>Enlightenment (indirect relationship to policy and practice; reconstituting the problems of practice) and engineering; relationship is bi-directional, research informing policy and practice, policy and practice informing research (see Trowler, 2003, p. 177)</td>
<td>Increasing recognition of research as political</td>
<td>Exogenous politics; representing the association in other peak associations; national, regional and global debates and fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current elements</td>
<td>Inclusive definition: includes policy makers, practitioners, academic and student researchers, and research institutes, state/federal departments of education</td>
<td>Theoretical and disciplinary eclecticism. Plural</td>
<td>Methodological eclecticism across quantitative–qualitative divides within a post-positivist frame; evidence is more broadly defined; multiple representations of data; recognition of the need for theory in social explanation of research data</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>Inclusive definition: includes policy makers, practitioners, academic and student researchers, and research institutes, state/federal departments of education</td>
<td>Theoretical and disciplinary eclecticism. Plural</td>
<td>Methodological eclecticism across quantitative–qualitative divides within a post-positivist frame; evidence is more broadly defined; multiple representations of data; recognition of the need for theory in social explanation of research data</td>
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<td>Exogenous politics; representing the association in other peak associations; national, regional and global debates and fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissensus</td>
<td>Inclusive definition: includes policy makers, practitioners, academic and student researchers, and research institutes, state/federal departments of education</td>
<td>Theoretical and disciplinary eclecticism. Plural</td>
<td>Methodological eclecticism across quantitative–qualitative divides within a post-positivist frame; evidence is more broadly defined; multiple representations of data; recognition of the need for theory in social explanation of research data</td>
<td>Enlightenment (indirect relationship to policy and practice; reconstituting the problems of practice) and engineering; relationship is bi-directional, research informing policy and practice, policy and practice informing research (see Trowler, 2003, p. 177)</td>
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Creation of an Australian field of education research framed by northern theory, epistemologies and methodologies; ‘parochial’ national focus
Set against this observation and our argument concerning the two ways in which educational research needs to be deporochialised are policy developments in relation to new forms of research accountabilities, which sit in contradistinction to these challenges and the broadening purview of educational research. We have also alluded to the impact of the evidence-based policy movement in contemporary public management and its potentially disciplining effect on educational research. As Luke and Hogan (2006) argue, calls for evidence-based policy in education are in effect attempts instigated through a policy lens to redefine what counts as educational research. Both new research accountabilities and evidence-based policy seem to be about disciplining and containing: a politics of sameness rather than difference in respect of educational research. These tensions have been encapsulated by Blackmore (2003, p. 1) when she asks the question: ‘what is the role of the educational researcher today?’: ‘policy service, policy critique, technical expert or public intellectual?’

The new research accountability framework in Australia (i.e. ERA) being developed by the ARC for the Rudd government will also have an impact on educational research, some of it positive and some of it negative. ERA appears to valorise single-authored journal articles in high status peer-reviewed journals. This valorisation and framing of high status research dissemination have also encouraged a plethora of bibliometric developments and usage to do with citations, journal impact scores and so on. We see these as global developments and as intimately linked to the emerging commensurate global field of educational research. ERA’s stance here might be a good thing; what ERA does is provide measures of research status, standing and quality. There is an obvious attraction here to policy makers interested in research accountability, as the development of such bibliometrics appears to offer an easy approach to the measurement of research quality and impact. However, in a field such as education (similar in this way to the fields of law, architecture, nursing, social work and medicine), which is a field of research (whose parameters are being challenged as noted above) and a field of policy and practice, additional measures of impact are required. Failure to evoke these measures will reduce the real policy and practice relevance of educational research. Furthermore, the classical academic measures of impact such as citations and journal impact scores appear to grant high status within the field to non-Australian journals with potential impact on knowledge production in Australian educational research.

In education, impact as measured in academic terms through citation indices and journal impact scores is a very different measure from impact related to effects of educational research on policy and practice. It seems to us, then, that impact is a complex concept and that we – that is, educational researchers and AARE – need to do some serious thinking about it, contributing towards the development of a workable and defensible definition of educational research. We also suggest that impact in educational research in relation to policy and practice demands dissemination in places other than high status journals (for example, articles in practitioner journals). We note that the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in the UK takes account of end-users on peer review panels for research
grant applications. Louise Watson (2008) offers a similar argument to this, suggesting that impact must be considered in a policy sense as well as academically, so as both to reflect and protect the actual character of educational research. While Watson focuses on the impact of educational research on policy, the research of Figgis et al. (2000) and McMeniman et al. (2000) has contributed to enhancing our understanding of the complexity of the impact of educational research on teacher practitioners. To reiterate, given the character of the field of education, we stress the necessity for both an academic measure of impact, but also a definition linked to impact on policy and practice. Failure to work with both arms of this binary would further widen the gap between educational researchers and educational practitioners and potentially reduce the positive impact and usefulness of such research. As an aside, we are, however, not suggesting that only educational research of a particular kind has impact on policy and practice. Rather, we suggest that the most arcane educational theory and research might have impact on practice in the long term, without having specifically constructed impact of this kind as an overt purpose of the research.

Across the time of the association’s existence, educational research has been positioned in differing ways in state departments of education and in the federal bureaucracy. With the rise of new public management framed by a neo-liberal social imaginary in the context of globalisation, state departments of education have tended either to abolish their research branches or reduce their scale, as they moved to outsource and commission research from educational researchers in universities and other research institutions. Such commissioned research sets the research problem and often implicitly demands a particular theoretical and methodological approach. Many significant and influential research reports, however, have been produced out of such research. In terms of impact, such reports, while having much impact on policy and practice, do not count in traditional research impact measures. Furthermore, these research monies are usually not granted the same standing as those won from competitive peer-reviewed ARC Discovery grants.

Over the last decade or so, state systems and the federal government have introduced a range of high stakes testing for a range of accountability and auditing purposes in education, so much so that they now appear to be awash with accountability and student performance data. These developments reflect what has been called an ‘audit culture’ in public sector management today (Power, 1997). Additionally, international performance data (for example, that provided by the OECD’s PISA) have also become more influential in policy production and in relation to systemic accountability. This situation has seen more researchers and statisticians employed again in education bureaucracies. These changes and fluctuations in the position of educational research and educational researchers inside and in relation to state and federal bureaucracies carry significance for educational research and measures of research productivity, quality and impact.

The Rudd government, in its commitment to more transparency and information for parents in relation to schools, has also endorsed enhanced usage of student performance data such as that made available by NAPLAN (National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy) and is encouraging ‘like school’ comparisons of
school performance. It is interesting that, while the Rudd government has been exceedingly critical of neo-liberal economic policies in the context of the global financial crisis, it still appears to work within a neo-liberal social policy framework, including within education and particularly with regard to schooling. It seems to us that the critique of neo-liberal globalisation offered by the Prime Minister (Rudd, 2009) in his essay in The Monthly is a most pertinent and telling one with which we largely agree. Rudd sees the neo-liberal experiment of the last thirty years as having failed, and in so doing, he argues, it has revealed itself ‘as little more than personal greed dressed up as an economic philosophy’ (Rudd, 2009, p. 23). Despite Rudd’s stinging critique of neo-liberal economic policy and his support for a more socially democratic framed and interventionist state and the related acceptance that the pursuit of social justice is founded on a belief in the value of equality linked to broader democratic goals, Labor’s education policy appears to be justified more narrowly in human capital productivity terms. In our view, we need a new social imaginary for education in contemporary Australia, one that goes beyond the taken-for-granted of neo-liberalism and one that would accompany this new social democratic vision (see Rizvi & Lingard, 2009, Ch. 9). We see here a significant role for educational research and educational theorising to contribute to this new post-neo-liberal social imaginary.

At issue here, of course, is how such a project relates to the role of AARE president and the association’s representational and political work on behalf of educational research and researchers, particularly given their multiple and diverse perspectives and approaches to educational research in terms of both topic and intellectual resources. Given the complexity and diversity of educational research today and many of the issues traversed in this conclusion, along with the intensification of academic work, we ask the question: Is it possible or indeed desirable for the president (supported by the Executive) to pursue such matters on behalf of the association? This is the difficult ‘we’ of AARE.

On the other hand, there are many issues in respect of educational research about which there would be consensus amongst educational researchers. These would include the need to move the amount of funding for such research towards 1 per cent of all educational expenditure in Australia. Currently, it is less than half this. By comparison, funding for medical research represents about 1.5 per cent of total health expenditure. Past AARE presidents have also argued for the establishment of a nationally competitive grant scheme specifically to support educational research. Similarly, the 1992 ARC report, Educational research in Australia, argued for the creation of a specifically focused national council for educational research funded by its major stakeholders (Australian Research Council, 1992). It might be a propitious time to re-ventilate that idea. Further, and to reiterate, we argue that the association needs to work on matters of defending and defining educational research and research impact and to work towards quality measures for a defensible and an eclectic construction – theoretically, methodologically and in terms of topics – of the field. Our broader point is that the representational nature of presidential work now needs to focus on the benefits of and for educational research and researchers broadly conceived.
NOTES

1 We were not able to locate presidential addresses from the first three years of the association’s existence, 1970 to 1973.
2 We are using ‘field’ here in a quasi-Bourdieuian way to refer to an arena that has particular logics of practice with particular hierarchical relations of power, the distribution of different capitals and different agent habitus involved in contestation over the stakes in the field. See Rawolle and Lingard (2008) on Bourdieu and education policy.
3 In some ways this psychological framework can be seen to sit across psychological and sociological concerns, perhaps to some extent overcoming the potential disciplinary conflicts between educational psychology and sociology of education that Millicent Poole spoke about in her presidential address.
4 Another president, Jill Blackmore (2003), in her presidential address, which is not included in this anthology, asked whether or not there was a future for ‘feminist public intellectuals’ in globalised, ‘privatised’, performative universities.
5 See the special issue of ACCESS, 27(1&2), 2008, which considers research accountabilities globally and their potential effects on the scope and focus of educational research and its dissemination.

REFERENCES


1. IT'S TOO ESOTERIC FOR ME

Presidential Address to AARE, Melbourne, 15 November 1974

So runs a comment pencilled on a form included in the March number of the *Australian Journal of Education*, and returned by a member of the Australian College of Education, which indicated that he or she did not intend to renew a subscription to that journal after the present volume ended.

Members of that college all have the minimum professional qualifications acceptable for their specialist role in education, at least five years’ experience, and all have given evidence of qualities of leadership or made what are considered to be significant contributions to education in that period. The great majority are people engaged in the preparation of teachers in colleges and universities, in the administration of education departments and systems, or in the direction of or other forms of leadership in schools from pre-school through to tertiary institutions and beyond.

The journal itself was intended for just such an audience. Editorial policy over many years has assumed that such an audience has made studies in depth of one or more areas of specialisation in education, and studies of other areas in sufficient breadth to be able to pick up at least the thread of an article without too much difficulty. It has assumed when an article has been accepted that there is a substantial body of people amongst the subscribers interested in the topic, and able to read the presentation with relative ease and understanding, and that the substance will add to the professional stock-in-trade of those people.

I do not want to claim that that single comment represents the view of the round about 4000 members of the college. At least 90 per cent of them are presumably indifferent to the journal and don’t care whether they get it or not, since they did not return the form. Perhaps they haven’t yet got around to reading that number; perhaps the coloured form was overlooked. Whatever the position, the journal is obviously not front-line, emergency, eagerly awaited, seminal and vastly influential reading for the majority of its present readers. Over a few years, about a half to two thirds of its articles are reports on or reviews of research; most of the other articles would have a research backing. If this comment is a common view, and a professionally competent group of persons can claim that the *AJE* is only for the initiated, then the research reports are not communicating well.

In a recent advertisement inviting applications for Urban Affairs Fellowships, a significant phrase occurred amongst the listing of aims of the scheme: ‘to enable academics to gain experience in the conduct of research and presentation of

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T. Gale and B. Lingard (eds.), *Educational Research by Association*, 23–33. © 2010 Sense Publishers. All rights reserved.
findings in a way which is of practical use to government’. (The department concerned also wanted to be familiar with what it called the academic approach to problem solving, and the evidence available in the several disciplines to help solve urban problems.)

In the Senate exactly one month ago, when the estimates of the Australian Department of Education were being reviewed, Senator Guilfoyle asked, in relation to an item: ‘Last year, when you had an advisory committee on childcare research, did it produce any reports that are available?’ (Australia, Senate, 1974, p. 134). Mr Foskett in his reply said that what had been completed was not available publicly, but ‘had been made available in areas where it has been of use or of significance’ (ibid.).

These incidents are perhaps trivial in themselves. But they are not untypical of a widely held view. In an OECD/CERI document of 1972 the anonymous author writes:

One has to find a ‘language’ for the results of evaluation that is the natural language to which the decision maker is accustomed. Because of its origins, much of the language of classical evaluation is statistical. Though no doubt all decision makers should be effectively cognizant of this language, in fact few are. The expression of probabilities in a statistical form may often obscure essential facts: minorities may disappear numerically but remain very real as children. As a language it is not appropriate for the observation-description techniques, nor for the expression of selective judgment. One of the objectives should be to examine closely what should be the most appropriate method of presentation – again from the point of view, not of the purist, but of the user. (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 1972, para. 16)

The local incidents as well as the international comment raised in my mind a number of questions, none of which is new, but which seemed to me worth further consideration from the AARE point of view.

We are all by membership definition well qualified in research, and are making – or have made – substantial contributions to its theory or practice or results.

Do we report about our research? If so, how do we decide when to report?

Why do we report at all? How do we report it?

Why do we choose predominantly to write about it?

Who do we write for?

Are we trained to write to that audience, or just natively gifted?

Who reads what we write, and for what purposes?

Do we ever try to find this out?

Do we know what effect our writing has?

Do we specify, before we write, what it is we want to do, and with whom, and, having drawn up that specification, deliberately plan how best to do it?

What do we know about the needs, attitudes and potentials of our hypothetical audiences? Do we give thought to these when we write?

How much interplay is there between writer and potential audience before, during and after the writing?
Would some of the implicit or explicit purposes of writing be better served by other means of communication?

What do we know and practise in such communication about such matters as density of ideas, multiple variants in verbal or other presentation of the same idea, the nature of illustrative applications of our research findings, and so on, suited to particular audiences?

May I take up some of these questions and the issues that arise in considering them? First, why do we write? Because it is still, in most respects, a good way, if not always the best way, of doing a number of things. I present these ‘things’ in two groupings:

– The first is to order our own thoughts, whether about and incorporating data that is unique to ourselves and the product of our own research, or about some particular matter that is troubling us. We feel a need to clarify, to order, to probe implications, to interpret, to apply. Having done this, my guess is that we often then look at the result and judge that someone else may be interested in it.

– This leads to the second grouping. We set out, so that others who we know are working in that area may have access to it, the data that we have gathered, a theory or interpretation that we think worth sharing, a view or a set of views on a particular matter that has something unique about it – even if that uniqueness is that it came out of our own head. We do it because we are interested in the response of our colleagues, or because we think the findings may help our audience to make better decisions.

The first of these is a very personal matter – at least on the surface. I suspect that few of us begin it or proceed far in it without some other audience coming to mind than our own later eye and hopefully more ordered mind. That audience may be our colleagues within an institution, within a specialist society, within an ‘invisible college’ of very limited membership; it may be a much wider one. Although therefore we may initiate it for our own needs, to order and clarify something for ourselves, if it is on a matter of some importance it will almost certainly lead directly on to the second where we do have an audience in mind.

We write primarily therefore so that others may share our data, our thinking about that data, our views on this or that, our collations and our interpretations. We write generally about any given matter rarely more than once and then for a particular audience, even if we would be vague about what that audience really was, if pressed. There are exceptions but not very many of them: exceptions like the preparation from an accepted thesis of an article for a learned journal, or the condensation of a report of monograph size into the limited compass of an article of a similar nature. Am I right in my belief that the prime audience for writing as AARE members about our research is our own colleagues: those particularly who we expect to have a background in it like our own, and a continuing interest in that area of research, in its methodology and in its elucidation? (Not only our colleagues on the national scene, of course, but increasingly on the international scene?) Am I right also in believing that only secondarily do we look for any other audience likely to have a need to do something about the substance of our writing, something that may affect large numbers in the educational community – children,
teachers, undergraduate and graduate students, parents, administrators, other research people? Having asked that, I am conscious that this is often not true of one group of our members at least – those working within a system or institution, with a charter to help that system or institution. Their prime audience – although it may not be the first in time – their prime audience is those who can do something about the results and their interpretation; whether that something be to change or not to change.

At that point, of course, I must face the question: What do we research for? There is one overriding reason wherever we work and whatever our personal or institutional charter: to add to knowledge so that a question in our mind may be at least partly answered – hopefully that it may be definitively answered. Not all the questions have an immediate application in mind that is going to affect practice at some point in the life history of some learner. But I suspect that very few of our studies do not have as one aim that the hoped for addition to knowledge will also be an addition to the data used by someone making a decision or a whole range of decisions, decisions that will in the long or short run affect and improve the lot of the individual learner. I think this applies equally to studies that tackle a question for the first time in its current context, which set out to improve methodology, which re-examine earlier practices of data gathering, of analyses or of interpretation, which reinterpret earlier data either in the light of accretions to it, or in the light of new understandings derived from our own or someone else’s perceptions of previously unsuspected relationships within that data.

Yet having said that, I repeat what I said earlier, that I believe most of our writing is directed to our colleagues – our fellow scholars if you like, our research-minded friends, our graduate students (and I emphasise the word students) – and that most of our reporting on research does not have specifically in mind the kind of question that those making the decisions affecting learners are asking. If the latter statement were not true, I think much of our writing might be different, our analyses differently directed, our approach to the use of our findings and therefore to the ways we disseminate them not so limited to the book, the article, the address. We would be thinking more about the backgrounds of those who have to act after considering the options open to them, about the time such people have available to look at our data, study our interpretations, take stock of our recommendations, try out alternatives that we may or may not have presented.

By and large, it is true that any research that influences practice directly needs to be known to both fellow researchers in that field and to the practitioners; but the extent of the knowledge, the emphases within it, and the attitudes adopted towards it, will differ between audiences. The presentation of the research to those different audiences may therefore differ in major and minor ways. If this is true, questions arise immediately about the modes of presentations to different audiences, about the competence of the researchers to make such different presentations, about the diversification of research training, and about the whole question of what we should report, and when.
I had already written down those thoughts when I read with frankly some sense of shock the preface to volume 1 of Burton White’s and Jean Caren Watts’ *Experiences and Environment*. I must quote part of it in full for you to understand why.

This book is concerned with the psychological development of preschool-aged children. The research it describes was designed to produce dependable information on the question of how to raise children so that their basic abilities might develop as well as possible during their first years of life. Though our research has been underway for over five years, and though the equivalent of ten people have been working continuously on the project during this time, we are quite some distance from the completion of our studies. Nevertheless for several reasons, we feel the time has come for us to report to our colleagues and also to the public.

There are several important consequences of the fact that our work is not complete as we are writing this book. First of all, *none of the statements about the effects of various child-rearing practices and experiences of children have been put to experimental test*. We plan this testing as the next phase of our work; and, of course, *without experimental confirmation we cannot have ultimate confidence in our observations* on this central topic. However, our information on what one- to three-year-old children actually experience in their daily lives, our studies of natural behaviours during this age period, and our work in plotting the various dimensions of competence during that time all appear to be valid and of potential use. *Our assessment techniques are admittedly less than perfect; however, we believe that they are either as good as or better than any others available for the study of the one-to three-year-old child.*

Although our judgments about the effects of various child rearing practices have not been tested experimentally, they do emerge from a form of experimentation. While we have not yet seen mothers rear their children according to our recommendations, we have been conducting a ‘natural’ experiment. We have been observing how families manage to produce very competent three-year-olds.

Simultaneously we have been observing other families produce much less able three-year-olds. Though our comparative analyses can only yield correlational data which must be confirmed by experimental test, we believe this design allows us to place more stock in our hypotheses about the effects of various child rearing practices than we might on the basis of exclusively theoretical ideas or observations of a random sample of families. *We are preparing this document for several audiences: parents and others responsible for rearing children; undergraduate and graduate students; and research personnel.* To cope with this situation, we have kept to a minimum the amount of technical information presented in the body of the book. A full presentation of assessment techniques, manuals, reliability of test results and detailed data can be found in the appendix section. (1973, p. xiv, emphasis added)
RADFORD

May I draw attention to several statements:

’we are quite some distance from the completion of our studies’

’none of our statements about the effects of various child rearing practices and experiences of children has been put to experimental test’

’without experimental confirmation we cannot have ultimate confidence in our observations…’

’our assessment techniques are admittedly less than perfect’

’we are preparing this document for several audiences: parents and others responsible for rearing children; undergraduate and graduate students; and research personnel’.

The document, let me say, is a printed book of over 500 pages, of which half is in the appendix section. An exciting document, indeed, and an impressive one. But despite its apparent clarity about its audience, one must have doubts whether a document of this nature can serve such diverse interests. We take it for granted that undergraduate and graduate students and research personnel will not look askance at a book of that size and of that nature; if it goes on to their private shelves we can easily envisage its potential use for reference purposes, both the occasional and the continual. We have some experience ourselves in each of those capacities even if only our individual experience as students. But that group ‘parents and others responsible for rearing children’ I frankly can’t envisage as a unit. I can recognise many subgroups, for each one of which I would see a different approach needed, a different style of communication.

May I digress for a moment? I would – not quite categorically but almost so – say that only the very, very rare worker in research, even in child development, where the apparently most elementary and simple human behaviours are under study, knows what parents know, need to know, can understand and absorb, and how to present this information in such a way that it is understood, becomes a part of experience, and is available to the parent for action. But who does know how to do this? Are you briding within yourself and saying, ‘Of course I know. I’m meeting parents all the time and have learned to adapt my style to my company’? If this is so for oral communication is it so also for written and other visual means?

Parents are part of our potential audience for much research, of course, and will become increasingly more so. What we have to say to them, though, will be for the greater part mediated by others, particularly by teachers and less frequently by systems officers out in the field. I say for the greater part, because there is and always will be research – perhaps an increasing amount – that will be comprehensible and useful only to those with specialised training and perhaps even within that group only to those who have been working in the same area. There will be other research such as White’s, research into current resource allocation and alternatives, research into community structures, power structures, qualifications
for employment and educational levels, and doubtless many others, where particular facts and their implications ought to be a part of the setting within which a family unit or a commune or an otherwise defined group makes its decisions about what education it will have and how it will use it.

But revenons à nos moutons! Let us look for a few minutes at teachers. How common is it for a specific piece of research to be directed at a specific practical problem posed by a teacher, and to provide specific answers upon which a clear, planned program of action can be built? Rare? I believe so. It is even more rare, such research having been decided upon, for it to be undertaken and then reported on in such a way that those who presented the problem have followed and accepted every step along the way, appreciated the methodology used, studied the results and their interpretations, participated in a review of alternative implications where they exist, and played an active role in devising any planned program that is derived directly from the results of the research or integrates these results with other information to derive such a program. Occasionally one of us specialising in a particular area attempts to consolidate current knowledge and projects from the consolidation into current practice, drawing out implications and proposing either continuation or change in practice. More frequently we report the results of our studies, by article, or memo or monograph, and leave it to others to be concerned about the possible application of our results. There is, I think, nothing wrong with this, so long as we are satisfied that somewhere in the system in which we are working someone, some unit, some institution, has the responsibility for, or has voluntarily undertaken the task of, constantly monitoring the results of research and translating into practice the implications of those results – if they have any. I take it for granted that any of us working in an area keep up to date with research results in that area: the activity I am referring to goes beyond that. I am not assuming that every new result will have implications for some practice; what I am saying is that I believe if we work in a particular area of research in which the findings of some study are likely to have an effect on some practice, we should be very concerned to ensure that findings are looked at with such effects in mind, and that we should take any necessary steps to see that those responsible for practice are correctly and promptly informed about such findings. We therefore need to know a great deal about the practice diffusion network. We have not generally accepted such a responsibility. Our communications are still predominantly with our colleagues in research: it is in that community that we communicate most easily, where we do not need to undertake the arduous tasks of simplifying without falsifying, of explanation which requires us to provide essential background in common language, of demonstration without proselytising. The most significant of our rewards come from within that community at present – recognition, consultation, status, for example. For those in schools as distinct from tertiary institutions there are rarely obvious extrinsic rewards for the use of research findings in their practice – or rather there are no such rewards for going out and finding the relevant research and then using it. Only a small minority are trained to do this as a basic feature of their professional activity: for an even smaller minority are the facilities readily available to enable them to do it.
One answer has been that pre-service training should give them the taste at least for the use of research results, an awareness of where such results can best be found, a facility in reading and assessing them and, for some at least, a taste for undertaking research while teaching and as part of their regular practice. Another answer has been to involve teachers in their classrooms in research that is going to affect their practice, going right back to them for the problems that should be at the heart of the main body of whatever research is done. A third more recent answer has been to take them out of their classrooms periodically for longer or shorter periods and give them the opportunity through formal courses or in other ways to familiarise themselves with recent thinking and recent research work. It is expected that such work will both interest them and allow them to feel that they are at least thoroughly informed about desirable practice in operations important to them, even if the current conditions in which they work do not allow them to practise it fully.

There are a few points that need to be made about each of these answers. In the time available in pre-service training, not very much can be done. So far as I can discover, much of the process of introducing new teachers to research consists of providing them with distillations of it over a series of lectures, lecture discussions and/or seminars, with possibly a critical essay or so on a particular problem which may or may not be self-chosen. I can find no study done locally to find out what happens, when teachers begin work, to the high hopes that such an induction into the place of research in practice has provided, an ineradicable urge and a clearly defined skill which will keep them reading research, thinking research, and altering and improving practice on its basis. I suspect that we would find here, as our colleagues have in North America, that teachers would report that they find it difficult to get information, complain that it is often unsuitable in format, too lengthy, and not presented in a language that seems related to their practical situation. We would probably find, too, that they look first and foremost to their own immediate colleagues and to their professional meetings for knowledge about improved practice, about research that affects them, rather than to a body of literature. We would find that in order of importance after that come curriculum materials from school programs elsewhere, new textbooks, publishers’ materials, and articles in educational journals that come as a matter of course either to their school or as benefit of membership in a professional association or union. Articles in research journals come very low down in such a list, and it appears in USA that very few teachers indeed make any use of ERIC. We should not be surprised that colleagues come first: they do with most of us. For the teacher in a classroom information needs to be ‘concise, easily understood, relevant, [and] highly accessible’: and often, as we know, what better source for this is there than a colleague who has done the hard work of thinking about the problem!

On the second, that of involving teachers in research, I suggest we be a little more realistic than some current advocacy and try to set out what it is we are trying to do. There are limits to time, there is high mobility, the teacher has a day-to-day job to do, the range of possible involvement is enormous. Is the idea to maintain an attitude towards the task of teaching of constant questioning of purposes, processes and products? Is it to foster a steadily developing skill in research so that it will be
endemic to every situation in which teacher and learner combine? Is it to ensure that those for whom research is a career or a major component of their career or lifestyle will be constantly fed with advice about the unsolved problems as teachers see them? Many of you will know the views put forward on this at the AERA colloquium on communication that Dirk Dershimer was involved with before, during and after his visit to us in 1970 (see Dershimer, 1970). May I refresh your memories on some of them? Norman Storer, speaking from experience with the Social Science Research Council, espoused the view that educational researchers tend to abstract from the concrete educational situation those particular phenomena that are of interest to them and to report their findings to their colleagues rather than to those concerned with the practical problems of education. And Corwin and Seider reminded their colleagues at the colloquium that the problems that were safest and the most manageable from the practitioner’s point of view are not likely to be the challenging issues for social scientists, and conversely that the most challenging variables are very often the ones over which the practitioner has the least immediate control, and in which he is often not greatly interested. And as an illustration of their point they cited what they called the tremendous faith that applied researchers and practitioners seem to have that education can be reformed through curriculum development. In their view the strongest of the US educational laboratories at that time were concentrating on curriculum development rather than on new kinds of schools, on more effective ways of relating schools and communities, on more effective recruitment of teachers and alternative career patterns – all of which are more challenge to the social scientists.

And several of the participants pointed out that one of the obvious effects of involving research workers in the problems of practitioners will be to lead to criticism of the current practices of both, with the insecurity and lack of self-esteem that this might bring. Some went as far as to suggest that social scientists moving in severe criticism of much of current practice might set researcher against researcher, and teacher against teacher.

I think this kind of comment derives from a ‘researcher–practitioner’ association in which the former is either asked to appraise (evaluate: if you wish it!) an existing practice, or requests cooperation in making such an appraisal. The association often ends there instead of beginning. If it is an association with a problem-centred approach in which the practitioner says ‘this is what I want to achieve’, ‘what firm evidence etc. have you that we can use to plan how to achieve this?’ and there is cooperation and commitment at that level, then both are equally secure or insecure, each may be critical of self and other without jeopardy, each has a contribution that is put to the test. Theory and practice may both benefit: generalisation from other situations may be supported or cast into doubt. It is permissible, and not likely to be explosive in such an association, for either or both to query fundamental assumptions – and this is a two-way affair. The researcher is in a collaborative role, rather than a consultative; he must ask questions about the purposes as well as being concerned with means to achieve them; he must be certain that he is collaborating on the basis of values that have been jointly
discussed and jointly agreed. Relatively few of us, I suspect, have been involved at that depth very often as yet.

But collaboration is only one way in which a teacher comes into touch with research, and in which the researcher communicates his knowledge, his values and his convictions. I come back therefore to my first query – to whom, what and how, does the researcher communicate? I suggest again that the majority of our communications are written for colleagues of like mind and like interest, that when we write for others we run the risk of being hortatory without humility, pontifical without the necessary accreditation to a pulpit or a throne, prone to use because we move most easily in it a language far removed from the common discourse of those who might conceivably make use of our work. Monologue often takes the place of dialogue, obiter dicta the place of interpretation and discussion of alternatives, headlines the place of adequate description, ‘must’ and ‘ought’ the place of ‘may’ and ‘might’. We are often premature in our disclosures, and I do not know why. White hadn’t reached his proper end-point when he published *Experience and environment* and offered advice about upbringing of children.

May I quote from Fred Emery’s foreword to *Futures we’re in*, which is clearly directed to his colleagues and not to a ‘general audience’: ‘This study is but one further step in an effort to understand the kinds of social environments that men create, and the ways in which these evolve or regress’ (1974, p. 1). He refers to a decade and a half of work with Eric Trist and others, and he goes on: ‘the work … on “democratization of work” has now reached such a degree of fruition that one no longer needs to pussyfoot in print … This time I have been prepared to spell out what this could mean for the evolution of our societies’ (1974, p. 1).

I love that phrase ‘to pussyfoot in print’. A little more of such reticence could go a long way. But maybe our conditions of work, our reward structures, the pressures for action and above all the pleas for help don’t appear to allow it!

Assuming that we are certain that we have something of importance to communicate to a wider circle than our colleagues – to people who can use that something to determine, or to guide, or to modify action that they are taking – How do we go about it?

Can we expect every primary school teacher to read everything that comes out about reading, or abstracts of it? That is difficult enough even for the full-time researcher. Much of it is specialised – much of it presupposes a very solid background of previous reading and study. When we undertake a study in reading, it will touch on at most a few aspects of the situation in the classroom of a teacher trying to ‘teach’ reading. Is there then any point in trying to report to anyone else than one’s colleagues? Ought we to be saying more clearly: ‘We are building up through our research more knowledge of A, or B, or C, or A and B and C, but we cannot do both that and the equally specialised task of translating that knowledge into classroom or other practice?’ Ought we to be actively preparing change agents, agents who will be able to do such translation with and for teachers who will accept the role of such agents as an essential one with which they collaborate fully? I do not mean translation only into written documentation: the interpretation into homely language of our esoteric writing. I mean oral and written presentations,
materials development, the production of mechanical equipment, audio visual apparatus and software, programmed instruction, computer-managed learning and any other way by which learning can be improved as a result of our work. I include people who make a speciality of bringing information about the total effects of our education system – if we can specify these from research – directly to the notice of those who make political policies and those who make educational policies behind that framework.

We have a delicate but extremely complex task ahead of us still. In a climate where everyone in any way involved in education wants to know the answers to an almost infinite range of questions, the task is how to get more research done and its results applied when people are asking for help from what we are supposed to know, and when that application has to take place in a learning environment that may be different in quite significant ways from that upon which the research was based. Maybe it is true that we abstract from the change the elements we think durable and report on those, whereas those making decisions are most under pressure from the changing elements. Our writing will therefore often seem too esoteric, our concerns too rarefied. My conclusion would be: Let’s not be afraid of the statement. Let us be esoteric to the majority in most of our reports – let them be caviar to the general. Let us be clear, then, that they are addressed to a limited group of fellow specialists. But let us at the some time set out deliberately where we think it appropriate to translate our work or to have it translated by other specialists – developers, editors and demonstrators, for example – into forms that will be homely, practical, useable by parents, guardians, teachers and others – persons whose immediate responsibility it is to encourage and develop the skills of learning, or to provide the appropriate human and physical settings for such learning. I believe the end result will be greater satisfaction in those whose support in the long run keeps us going, and greater satisfaction to ourselves.

NOTES
1 Esoteric: meant only for the initiated; private, confidential.
3 Ibid, p. 103.

REFERENCES
2. PROSPECTS FOR THE EMPIRICAL TRADITION IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Presidential Address to AARE, Brisbane, 13 November 1976

The Australian Association for Research in Education, in the time since its founding conference in 1970, has become the principal organisation of educational researchers in Australia. The last few years, in particular, have seen its membership and attendances at its annual conference grow substantially. Yet it has remained an organisation somewhat dominated by those educational researchers whose roots are in the empirical research tradition. The majority of papers read at its conferences reflect this tradition. Five of its first six presidents would identify with this tradition.

This 1976 conference, through its thematic emphasis on the implications of research methods for practice, has provided an explicit invitation for all to display their methodological wares and to point to their substantive fruits. Although such invitations to reflection often produce protracted sessions of ‘navel contemplation’ in which a succession of speakers bewails the poverty of present research results, the inadequacy of present research methodology or the complexity of educational phenomena, the hope that many had for this conference was that it would provide the grounds for a constructive, and broadly based, review of potential contributions and developments. Whether the conference achieves this will obviously be for the participants to judge, but the detailed program at least gave promise of it.

In this address, I make no pretence of judging the contributions of traditions other than the one I know myself. What I have chosen to offer is an analysis of the prospects for the empirical tradition in educational research. I do this, not to reaffirm the dominance of this tradition within our organisation, but to facilitate a review of it by all members, whatever their own disciplinary or methodological affiliation might be. In fact, my objective is even more limited than this might suggest. The particular empirical research tradition on which I want to focus is that of educational psychology. My intention is to review some of the major shifts in emphasis in that tradition, and to offer an analysis of its future prospects.

THE ORIGINAL DREAMS

The original dreams of educational psychologists were grand enough! I can distinctly recall how, while studying chemistry and psychology as an undergraduate, I was...
impressed by the grandness of the theoretical vision reflected in Hilgard’s (1956) text on theories of learning. Hilgard documented the increasing complexity and completeness of the theoretical formulations in this area of psychology in a way that seemed to give promise of matching, in kind, the formulations that I was encountering in the physical sciences. As one having his first experience of the behavioural sciences, I was impressed by the prospect of elaborate theories with which to account for the phenomena of human behaviour and the prospect of applications in the field of educational practice to which I was already committed (both by inclination and by contractual obligation). The logical positivism of the physical sciences was being clearly expressed as a methodology of the behavioural sciences.

My hope, as a fresh young undergraduate in 1960, was certainly consistent with the vision of the early educational psychologists but, as I was later to discover, by 1960 it was already outdated. My subsequent more detailed experiences with research on learning from prose materials (McGaw & Grotelueschen, 1972) or ‘connected discourse’ as it is called by those who wish to make their activities seem more esoteric, and with research on cognitive processing (Anderson & McGaw, 1973), have made it clear how much more modest the vision of learning theorists is now than it was when Hull was erecting his model (Hilgard, 1956, pp. 121–184). The information processing model that Professor Gagne offered this morning did not seem to me to be based on a claim for comprehensiveness of the type that characterised these earlier models.

After the original investigations of William James (1890), and E.L. Thorndike and Woodworth’s subsequent series of investigations to determine the bases on which the effects of one learning activity might transfer beneficially to another, Thorndike (1906) summarised the results in a book entitled *Principles of teaching*. In 1913, he published his three-volume *Educational psychology* in which he argued that the function of educational psychology was to provide ‘knowledge of the original nature of man and of the laws of modifiability of learning, in the case of intellect, character and skill’ (1913, vol. 1, p. 1).

Much of the original *Handbook of research on teaching* (Gage, 1963) reflects a similar view of the manner in which empirical research could be expected to provide an understanding of educational processes and, ultimately, a basis for more systematic and effective educational practice.

There have, of course, been few who would claim that the grand vision had yet been fulfilled. Cronbach (1957), in his presidential address to the American Psychological Association, attributed the failure to fulfil the early theoretical promise, both in educational psychology and more generally in psychology as a whole, to inadequate methodology. In particular, he pointed to the artificial distinctions that had been established between the experimental and the correlational traditions within psychological research and showed how the separation of these two traditions had restricted the theoretical vision of those within each.

For the experimenters, he said, individual differences had become only a source of annoyance, to be controlled or, at least, minimised. For them, it was the environmental characteristics, the treatments, that must be manipulated so that they
could understand how the treatments operate, on the average. For the correlationists, individual differences had become the stuff of life. The treatment conditions had to be stabilised, or the effects of their consistencies statistically removed, so that they could understand the nature and the extent of individual differences. The experimentalist was offering to education the prospect of re-shaping the environment to fit best the average child. The correlationist was offering to education the prospect of better identification and selection of individuals for existing environmental conditions.

In proposing a synthesis of these traditions through a focus on aptitude–treatment interactions, Cronbach sought to integrate the experimenter’s attention to manipulations of treatment with the correlationist’s attention to the multivariability of responses. For education, the prospect of this broadened research would be an ability to determine, for each child, the best situation and, for each situation, the most appropriate children. Thus the concept of aptitude–treatment interactions entered the literature and became the focus of a good deal of attention.

Cronbach’s (1957) analysis was in no sense a retreat from the ultimate vision of theoretical formulations with which to understand human behaviour and on which to base educational practice. His paper was a significant attempt to identify more precisely the crucial theoretical questions to be addressed and to propose the methodology with which to answer them all within a logical-positivist view of reality. The answers to be obtained from investigations of aptitude–treatment interactions were still expected to provide laws, conceived in positivist terms, and conforming to the pattern of laws which have been developed in the natural sciences.

THE RETREAT TO SMALLER VISIONS

A substantial effort has been invested, since 1957, in response to Cronbach’s call for investigations of aptitude–treatment interactions. At the same time, however, there have been two other responses to the evidence that empirical research in educational psychology had failed to have any substantial impact on educational practice. Both developments appear to represent a retreat from the grand visions of pervasive theoretical formulations and theoretically based practice. One reflects a withdrawal from any short-term concerns about practice and a focus on limited theoretical formulations. The other reflects a withdrawal from concerns about theory and a focus on the task of directly improving practice. The first approach is not immediately practical; the second is atheoretical.

In some ways, the first approach represents little change from the situation that Cronbach criticised in 1957. It is characterised by research in which the scope is consciously limited, with a few conditions being controlled and the rest being ignored. It continues to be a search for main effects, for treatments that work for all individuals under certain restricted conditions.

The research on learning from prose materials, commenced by Rothkopf (1966) at Bell Laboratories, can serve as a useful illustrative example. Rothkopf’s attention was restricted to learning from prose and, more particularly, to the effects
on learning of questions inserted in the prose at intervals. Although he interpreted his results in terms of the general principles of operant conditioning, his purpose was not the construction of an elaborate theory of learning. His purpose was to understand the effects on learning of additions to routine prose materials that might control the attention of readers. A large number of studies has followed from Rothkopf’s original work, many of them done by him and his associates at Bell Laboratories. Each study has sought to elaborate a small aspect of the limited theory. There is no expectation of grand theoretical propositions flowing from these investigations. At best, they are hoped to provide a piece in the jigsaw. There is certainly no expectation of any short-term impact on educational practice. Lest what I say may seem to denigrate these researchers, let me acknowledge that I have myself contributed to this line of research (McGaw & Grotelueschen, 1972).

In a seminar with graduate students at the 1971 conference of the American Educational Research Association, Rothkopf provided an intriguing insight into his motivation in developing this line of research. He described a conversation with a physicist at Bell Laboratories in which, when Rothkopf complained about the complexity of the psychological phenomena with which he had to deal, the physicist claimed to be no better off. The physicist pointed to the impossibility of predicting which way a rain drop would splash when it hit a roadway but to the success with which physical behaviour in vacuum tubes can be predicted. The secret, he said, was to work with contrived and idealised situations. Rothkopf’s selection of prose material at his vacuum tube may have made this an unfortunate analogy!

Note the contrast between Cronbach’s exhortations and Rothkopf’s practice. Whereas Cronbach (1957) was arguing for the simultaneous consideration of multiple treatment conditions and multiple measures of individual differences to accommodate, within a single research design, as much of the complexity of the natural phenomena as possible, Rothkopf was seeking more contrived situations within which to simulate idealised conditions. But both anticipated the ultimate development of positivistic laws of human behaviour.

To put that another way, Cronbach was seeking more complex versions of the traditional empirical research paradigms, whereas Rothkopf and many others were seeking more controlled situations within which to apply these traditional paradigms. Each anticipated, however, from their research endeavours, the production of general laws of human behaviour.

Still others, however, reject the traditional paradigms as impotent or even inappropriate. Stake (1967), analysing the tasks involved in the evaluation of an educational activity, proposed the collection of a much broader range of data than is usually gathered in empirical studies, while at the same time acknowledging that his strategy could not be expected to yield enduring generalisations of the type that the empirical research methods were supposed to yield.
EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AS ATHEORETICAL PRAGMATISM

The reactions of Stake (1967) and others in the late sixties to the traditional empirical methods seemed to stem clearly from disenchantment with the products of the methods. On the one hand, the theory yielded by the rigorous but restricted research of those working within self-imposed constraints seemed to offer theoretical formulations, but only ones which were trivial in the face of the complexities of real educational activities. On the other hand, the more elaborate methodology and the broader focus of studies of aptitude–treatment interaction seemed to have been little more successful in establishing a theoretical base on which to deal with educational problems. What was proposed was a complete rejection of the view of behavioural research underlying both approaches. The range of legitimate data was to be potentially unlimited, but its interpretation was to depend, not upon some arbitrarily determined rules of statistical inference based upon a set of assumptions that could not be satisfied, but upon the insight and judgement of the evaluator.

This approach has won a substantial number of supporters. A new division of the American Educational Research Association has been formed to accommodate it. It breeds a kind of pragmatism that focuses directly upon educational practice and seeks a basis for the further development of that practice. It makes no pretence at hypothesis formulation and no claims for generalisability of the findings. Improvements to practice in one place may stimulate improvements in another but only to the extent that one person’s apparently good idea is accepted by another who chooses to capitalise on it by amending his own practice. There is no expectation of laws that describe enduring relationships emerging from these sorts of investigations.

All this is not to imply that evaluations produce little information. In fact, they produce much more information than do traditional applications of the empirical research strategies. A major problem is, of course, to establish bases for evaluating the information provided through the multiple perspectives used. The evaluator seeks a fullness of description that goes well beyond the data provided by the typical controlled experiment which seeks to determine whether some alternative treatments are consistently discriminable from one another in terms of some particular outcome measures. Evaluations seek to describe, or portray (Stake, 1975), the prior conditions of an educational program, the detailed processes that occur in its operation and its outcome, both intended and unintended (Scriven, 1973). Some approaches are more concerned than others with formal procedures for establishing relations among conditions within the particular program. Whereas Stufflebeam et al. (1971) sought to describe contextual and input conditions and processes and outcomes, Stake (1967) proposed a search for contingencies among such variables. All approaches draw upon many perceptions of the program. None places the evaluator in the role of the empirical researcher gathering his ‘facts’.

Those writers who demanded these much fuller descriptions, much more detailed observations and much more use of insight and judgement unfettered by statistical decision-rules have demanded more but, in some respects, offered less. Their claims are less pretentious if judged in terms of what they see to be the ultimate products of their enterprise. They have no vision of powerful, explanatory
theoretical models towards which to aim. The focus of their attention is in
developing a more pragmatic strategy for improving (or changing) current practices
or even just judging current practices. Their models are models of evaluation not
models of education. In fact, they are less even than that. They are really just
strategies for evaluation, offering general approaches to the evaluation task often
without much detailed direction for any would-be evaluator. The details of
particular evaluations are held to be situation specific in a way that allows of no
description of a generalisable and detailed methodology.

In contrast with the traditional commitment, in educational research, to the
development of theory, the evaluators have abandoned the theoretical vision not
because it seemed too difficult but because it seemed unhelpful in the face of
pressing problems of practice. It is not clear from much of their writing whether
this reflects an expedient view that theoretical models are too remote to be worth
pursuing at this stage, or a more theoretical stance in which such models are held to
be ultimately unattainable or inappropriate. Whichever is the case, there is a
general rejection by evaluators of strategies that claim to accumulate wisdom in the
form of generalisable formulations of theoretical relationships among educational
variables.

THE FUTURE PROSPECTS

In the last 10–15 years it seems to me that educational psychology has been
moving in the three fundamentally different directions that I have outlined. Some
researchers have employed the more powerful methodology to which Cronbach
pointed in the hope of building broad theories, others have concentrated on more
restricted aspects of theory in the expectation of subsequent integration with other
components, while a third group has abandoned any focus on theory in favour of a
more immediate atheoretical attack on the problems of practice.

We are now, in the mid-seventies, in a position to make some judgements about
the relative successes of these approaches.

With respect to the research on aptitude–treatment interactions a good deal of
evidence is now in and has been extensively reviewed (e.g. Bracht, 1970; Cronbach &
Snow, 1969). Cronbach (1975), in his address on receipt of the Distinguished
Scientific Contribution Award at the 1974 conference of the American Psychological
Association, reflected on the present state of the research activity he had stimulated
seventeen years earlier and reached some intriguing conclusions. In his earlier
analysis he had said that the results of the relatively independent traditions of
research on the effects of treatment differences, on the one hand, and the nature of
individual differences, on the other, were confused because they failed to take
account of the interactions between individuals and treatments. In his more recent
reflection, he pointed to some studies that show clear-cut interactions of the type
predicted.

For example, experimental comparisons of didactic teaching methods and
problem-solving methods, which had been inconsistent in the earlier research, had
now shown the problem-solving methods to be superior with a middle-class clientele but the didactic methods to be superior with lower-class children.

Cronbach (1975) also pointed to inconsistencies in the studies of such interaction, inconsistencies that he suggested are themselves due to higher order interactions. To illustrate this with a hypothetical example, suppose that the teaching method by social class interaction just described, that is, the differential effectiveness of teaching methods with different social classes, actually interacted with the content of the instruction. For example, the superiority of didactic methods with lower class children may appear with science instruction but not social science. Investigators unaware of this crucial content variable would be faced only with the inconsistency with which they have been interacting between teaching method and social class. The problems are how to anticipate the factors that will cause such higher-order interactions and how to collect enough data with which to study them.

The position that Cronbach took on this in 1975 is intriguing. Remember that, in 1957, when confronted with inconsistencies in the results of studies of overall treatment effects, he proposed a new set of questions about interactions and a more powerful methodology with which to deal with them. In 1975, with evidence that the important questions are even more complex, he proposed no further stepping up of the methodology. Instead, he proposed a scaling down of our expectations of educational research.

Because of the problems of anticipating potential sources of higher order interactions, Cronbach argued for a careful attention to the detailed conditions of each study and a complete description of them. Exceptions to any generalisation could then provide the clue to the sources of higher order interactions. But how are these exceptions to be fitted into any pattern? Once a potentially interacting factor has been identified, it is possible to design a study in which the higher order interactions can be investigated empirically but there are two problems. Firstly, there is no basis for estimating the likely significance of an interaction from an observed exceptional case and so no way of knowing how much value there may be in pursuing it. Secondly, the amount of data required to study the interaction may be prohibitive. What we need is a more effective way of synthesising the results that suggest the need for this type of further investigation.

One potentially powerful approach has recently been developed. In his presidential address at the American Educational Research Association earlier this year, Gene Glass (1976) outlined an empirical approach to what he called meta-analysis. Meta-analysis, in contrast with primary analysis of original data or secondary analysis of existing data, is an analysis of analyses. Typically, meta-analysis has been done by literature review. It often proceeds like literary criticism. It occasionally takes a more empirical form when the number of related studies with significant and insignificant results are counted to see which outcome is dominant. Such a voting procedure usually reveals some studies for and some against and produces a general feeling of despair about the whole enterprise of empirical research in education. Glass suggested that these approaches to synthesis are so inadequate that we end up ‘knowing less than we have proven’ (1976, p. 46)
because we fail to put it all together, so to speak. What Glass proposed is a more thoroughgoing empirical approach to synthesis. He described how related studies could be assigned numerical descriptors that indicate both design characteristics and the magnitude of the effects revealed in their data. Relatively complex analyses of variance could then reveal the strength of any overall conclusions as well as the presence of interactions of the type that Cronbach felt could not be studied directly. Glass’s (1976) procedure seems to me to hold promise of carrying us beyond an impasse that Cronbach (1975) revealed.

To illustrate his approach Glass took 1000 studies from the confused literature on the outcomes of psychotherapy and counselling (much of which literature suggests that ‘nothing’ is as good as ‘counselling’, that is that counselling is no better than nothing). His complete analysis, based on 375 studies, quantifies differences between types of counselling in ways that none of the individual studies attempted. It is an elegant empirical synthesis of the confusing results of a large number of empirical studies, which finally offers the therapists grounds for confidence in their activities denied them by the classical literature reviewers. It estimates the magnitude of the superiority of therapy overall and provides empirical comparisons of the efficacy of different approaches to therapy.

Now where does that leave us? Can we find in Glass’s empirical approach a procedure for confronting the questions that Cronbach thought were answerable? In part, I believe, we can. But Cronbach pointed up another problem that may, indeed, be more serious. He suggested that time itself may be an important factor with any of our data. Results obtained at one time may simply not recur at another time because of changed circumstances. Our conclusions may be less enduring than we have hoped for, our laws less stable. Indeed, it may be inappropriate to think of them as laws. Cronbach himself in 1975 lowered his sights to a short-term empiricism, a set of relationships among explanatory concepts that are generalisations only in the sense that they serve as working hypotheses at a particular time. He has rejected the model of the physical sciences, which, he believes, has ‘fixed our eyes on an inappropriate goal’ (1975, p. 126).

We would do well to be chastened by Cronbach’s experiences and to be more modest in our expectations. But we may be able to go further than he suggests. We may not break free from our time-bound generalisations but, with Glass’s (1976) meta-analysis, we may be able to broaden the basis of our generalisations within that frame.

That then appears to be where the research on aptitude–treatment interactions has taken us and where it might lead, but what of the research directed to more limited theories and the pragmatic attention to practice? The controlled studies of limited psychological phenomena may build cumulatively on one another in a way that research on more complex aspects of educational practice cannot. They may give rise to a better understanding of particular aspects of human behaviour but I have no expectation of a thoroughgoing science of human behaviour and I see no evidence of an empirically based educational theory constructed upon what psychology presently offers or will offer. To believe that educational phenomena can be understood in terms of psychological phenomena alone is to indulge in a
reductionism that does no justice to the educational phenomena. To understand learning or development, or even their interaction, for example, is not to understand teaching. It is with respect to the psychological phenomena themselves that Cronbach (1975) no longer hopes for more than short-run empiricism. With respect to educational phenomena, it is unrealistic to hope for more!

Kallos and Lundgren (1975) argue that education ought to be considered lawful only in the sense of being rule-governed. They suggest that we should seek to establish the contextual conditions in which participants opt for certain sets of rules rather than others. We ought not to presume that there are underlying laws, they saw, expressed in terms of hypothetical, psychological constructs, with which to account for teaching behaviour, but only that there are external system constraints that influence conscious decisions made by teachers. Without necessarily going as far as this in rejecting completely the potential value of positivistic laws, it does seem clear that we need to distinguish educational research from psychological research and that we need to recognise the limits within which our methodology can operate, indeed, the limits imposed by our methodology.

As for the atheoretical attention that has been given to practice, there seems to be no basis for teaching general conclusions about its value. Scriven (1969) and Stufflebeam (1975) have discussed, in some detail, a basis for meta-evaluation, but I know of no documentation that reports the effectiveness of various approaches to evaluation in influencing practice. The commitment to evaluation seems still to rest on a general hope that it will achieve what research has not. Whether revealing to participants in an educational activity the perceptions of other participants, and perhaps even their own, will lead to changes judged by any or all of them to be of value is to my mind completely unknown.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL AND THE IMMEDIATE TASKS

Presumably, there is unanimity about the ultimate goal of empirical research in education being the improvement of educational practice. But what are its prospects? It seems to me that fundamental psychological research should not be conducted in the name of educational research and that whether it yields enduring or, at least, useful generalisations about psychological phenomena ought to be the only criterion by which it should be judged. Those pursuing atomistic psychological research with this in view, however, should consider seriously the caution issued by Cronbach (1975) before, or as, they press relentlessly on in their pursuit of models fashioned on those of the natural sciences.

For those who are concerned with educational practice, I believe a legitimate case can be made for several courses of action. Some may choose only one; others may choose simultaneous advances along more than one for their own professional satisfaction. The remoteness of much of the more theoretical research from practice and the pressing nature of many practical problems justifies, in my view, serious attention to the empirical evaluation of practice, but I harbour a concern that it offers no ultimate promise of progress. Unless the wisdom from isolated experiences can be accumulated each new set of practical decisions will be made
from as much ignorance as the previous. Empirical investigations of the influence of contextual constraints on conscious choices take us a step further by helping those educators in a position to manipulate the context but, unless these educators know which choices are to be preferred, they in turn will be manipulating in ignorance. In that context, I mean choices that could be made on the basis of their utility in achieving goals, not normative choices that must be made among goals.

As much as this research on the effects of constraints on choices, we need research on the effects of choices. We do not need to achieve that our conclusions will be immutable over time to justify such research. What we need is sufficient fidelity to the complexity of the context for us to be able to isolate the conditions crucial to the effect. We need not demand that every research study control or systematically vary the universe of conditions but we should demand that each documents the conditions in which it was conducted. With this sort of detail, we can apply the insight and judgement of which Cronbach (1975) spoke as well as providing the basis for empirical syntheses of the type that Glass (1976) provided.

I believe that there are regularities in the phenomena we study. Too often we seem to see only the complexity and retreat either to contrived situations from which we hope to have removed the complexity or abandon altogether our faith in the regularity and pursue the specific as though they were nothing more. And if all that sounds like an attempt to legitimate what I have been doing for the last eight years, it probably is!

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