An ‘Outsider’s’ Perspective on Gifted Education in Australia

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Remembering Sir Harold Wyndham

- Director General of the New South Wales Education Department 1952-1968, but worked in the Department of Education from 1925-1968
- Was first public educationist in Australia to be knighted (1968)
- Was considered a ‘progressive’ educationist, advocating that teaching be considered a ‘science’, that schools provide medical, psychological, and counselling support to students, that school life for students should be child-centred in providing happy yet profitable learning experiences
Remembering Sir Harold Wyndham

- Was proponent of ability grouping of students and was a part of the rise of Opportunity Classes and Selective High Schools in New South Wales
- Helped to shape current system of comprehensive and HSC-oriented high schools in NSW (Wyndham Report of 1967)
- Much of what the tri-partite system of schools is today can be traced back to his philosophy and work.
- One of his legacies has perhaps strengthened the system, despite his vocal actions and arguments against it -- federal funding of religious-affiliated and independent schools in Australia
A Summary of This Outsider’s Experiences With Australian Schools

Before coming to GERRIC full-time in 2005, I made yearly 2+ week trips here:

- COGE training (1994 - 2005)
- Research seminars to School of Education faculty and postgraduate students at UNSW
- Parent seminars through GERRIC student programs
- ARC Linkage Curriculum Development project with two NSW high schools - lived at each school for a period of 3 months working with teachers in these schools on a daily basis. (“Artist in Residence” project in education perhaps?)
A Summary of This Outsider’s Experiences With Australian Schools

2005-2007

- Talking with parents (individually and in groups) - parents of gifted children, primarily
  - DEST regional & remote workshops (10) - 900
  - Seminars through GERRIC - 1,300
  - GERRIC workshops for parent groups - 450
  - Parents at conferences - 300
  - Email conversations within Australia - 75
  - Internet chat forum - 100
A Summary of This Outsider’s Experiences With Australian Schools

2005-2007

Talking with teachers

- In Gifted Education settings:
  - COGE - 800
  - School workshops - 930
- In Conferences - 1,290
- In Regular Education settings
  - In-services - 1,625
  - School observations (practicum supervisions) - 25
  - Classroom observations - 32
A Summary of This Outsider’s Experiences With Australian Schools

- 2005-2007
  - Speaking to and with K-12 students (gifted)
    - Ceremonies - 390
    - Research - 4,350 + 30 (in-depth)
    - Evaluations - 4
  - Relating to and with K-12 students (regular)
    - Research - 900