

# **INVESTING IN INTELLIGENCE**

**AN INQUIRY INTO EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM CHANGE**

**by**

**Andrew Seaton**

BEd *CCA*E, MEd (Tech Ed) *QUT*

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

February 2005

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of my supervisors, Dr Richard Johnson and Professor Jill Blackmore, and the encouragement and unwavering support of my wife, Pamela Seaton.

### **Note regarding language**

Every effort has been made in this thesis to use language respectful of gender equity. However, direct quotations of other authors remain faithful to the language used in the source.

*The greatest idolatry is the worship of the letter.*

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

*As the UN as we know it – and thus the forces of internationalisation, of world governance – collapsed, what the world began debating so imperfectly were the greatest, deepest and most confronting questions of all... No one has “the truth” any more. We all know it, in our hearts, though so many of us pretend not to, for fear of what that means, and the consequences that might follow for our careers if we dropped our pretence... Left and right. Black and white. Good and evil. All or nothing. These binaries are methods of escape from the need to examine who we are and where our society is failing us, with clear, honest eyes.*

Margo Kingston

*Respect meaning, but do not imagine it can be taught.*

Herman Hesse

*We must become the change we wish to see in the world.*

Mohandas Gandhi

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## Summary of Thesis

In this philosophical and practical-critical inquiry, I address two significant and closely related problems – whether and how those involved in the enterprise of education conceptualise a need for educational change, and the observed resistance of school cultures to change efforts. I address the apparent lack of a clear, coherent and viable theory of learning, agency and change, capable of making explicit the need, substantive nature and means of educational change.

Based on a meta-analysis of numerous theories and perspectives on human knowing, learning, intelligence, agency and change, I synthesise a ‘Dynamic Paradigm of Learning and Change’, characterised by fifteen Constructs. I argue that this more viable Paradigm is capable of informing both design and critique of systemic curriculum and assessment policies, school organisation and planning models, professional learning and pedagogical practice, and student learning and action.

The Dynamic Paradigm of Learning and Change contrasts with the assumptions reflected in the prevailing culture of institutionalised education, and I argue that dominant views of knowledge and human agency are both theoretically and practically non-viable and unsustainable. I argue that the prevailing culture and experience of schooling contributes to the formation of assumptions, identities, dispositions and orientations to the world characterised by alienation.

The Dynamic Paradigm of Learning and Change also contrasts with the assumptions reflected in some educational reform efforts recently promoted at system level in Queensland, Australia. I use the Dynamic Paradigm as the reference point for a formal critique of two influential reform programs, Authentic Pedagogy and the New Basics Project, identifying significant limitations in both the conceptualisation of educational ends and means, and the implementation of these reform agendas.

Within the Dynamic Paradigm of Learning and Change, knowledge and learning serve the individual's need for more adaptive or viable functioning in the world. I argue that students' attainment of knowledge of major ways in which others in our culture organise experience (interpret the world) is a legitimate goal of schooling. However, it is more viable to think of the primary function of schooling as providing for the young inspiration, opportunities and support for purposeful doing, and for assisting them in understanding the processes of 'action scheme' change to make such doing more viable. Through the practical-critical components of the inquiry, undertaken in the context of the ferment of pedagogical and curricular discussion and exploration in Queensland between 1999 and 2003, I develop the Key Abilities Model and associated guidelines and resources relating to forms of pedagogy, curriculum organisation and assessment consistent with the Dynamic Paradigm of Learning and Change.

I argue the importance of showing teachers *why* and *how* their existing visions and conceptions of learning and teaching may be inadequate, and of emphasising teachers' *conceptions* of learning, knowing, agency and teaching, and their *identities*, dispositions and orientations to the world, as things that might need to change, in order to realise the intent of educational change focused on transformational student outcomes serving both the individual and collective good.

A recommendation is made for implementation and research of a school-based trial of the Key Abilities Model, informed by and reflecting the Dynamic Paradigm of Learning and Change, as an important investment in the development and expression of 'authentic' human intelligence.