IS THIS A REVOLUTION?: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RUDD GOVERNMENT’S NATIONAL SCHOOLING AGENDA.

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Revolution:
- a fundamental change in the way of thinking about or visualising something: a change of paradigm
- OR
- a progressive motion of a body around an axis so that any line of the body parallel to the axis returns to its initial position …..’
The ‘Education Revolution’

- Processes of policy making for the education revolution;
- Purposes and aims of the education revolution;
- Funding and resources;
- Official curriculum;
- Accountability.
Processes of Policy Making

- Late 19th century to the 1960s: State-based
- 2003-2007: Coercive federalism for a national approach
- 2007 - ?: Collaborative federalism for a national approach – through COAG, MCEETYA and ACARA.
Kevin has worked hard over the past year to collaborate with his other classmates to achieve some good outcomes. He has resisted the desire to emulate some of the older students to get his way through bullying and verbal abuse and instead is developing the capacity to negotiate. As a result he has made excellent progress. However, he needs to prepare for the fact that some of his agreements may collapse as new class members arrive.

(Grade: A)
Educational Aims and Purposes

- **Dominant purpose:** Economic – education to develop human capital

- **Dominant theme:** Equity
Curriculum area - Purposes and aims

- Kevin has made a real effort this term to ensure that his work contributes to the collective good rather than just benefit himself. However, he seems fixated on work and should try to become a more rounded individual. I am sure that he would enjoy the arts, design and technology and physical activity, for example. He obviously cares about others and has made it clear that he wants to help them – although he will need to ensure that his methods do not do more harm than good

(Grade: C+).
Funding and resources

National Education Agreement, comprising National Partnerships (NPs)

- NP on teacher quality ($550 million)
- NP on literacy and numeracy ($540 million)
- NP on low SES communities ($1.1 billion)
National Education Agreement, comprising National Partnerships (NPs)
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Digital Education Revolution (DER) ($2.2 billion)

Building the Education Revolution (BER) ($14.7 billion)
Funding and resources (cont)

Building the Education Revolution (BER) ($14.7 billion)

- Primary schools for the 21st century ($12.4 billion)
- Science and Language Centres for 21st century secondary schools ($1 billion)
- Renewing Australia’s schools (National School Pride: $1.3 billion)
Funding and resources

- National Education Agreement, comprising National Partnerships (NPs)
- Digital Education Revolution (DER)
- Building Education Revolution (BER)
- Commonwealth recurrent funding to schools
Kevin has contributed a lot this year and has made very steady progress. Indeed, some of his work will have a really positive effect. However, he has been reluctant to change some of the funding practices which no longer work well and really only serve the interests of those who are getting the most out of school. He must work on this aspect next year, while not abandoning the good work that is already underway

(Grade B)
The National Curriculum: Development

- National Curriculum Board
- 2011: maths, science, english and history
- ‘Shape of the Australian Curriculum’; and learning area framing papers
- Australian Curriculum and Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
Some concerns:

- The limited rationale
- The lack of connection between goals and the curriculum itself; and the lack of coherence
- Design issues
Design issues include lack of

- understanding about how to connect with the curricula of the states and territories
- conceptual clarity about capabilities
- appreciation of cross-disciplinary teaching
Official Curriculum (cont)

Some concerns:

- The limited rationale
- The lack of connection between goals and the curriculum itself; and the lack of coherence
- Design issues
- Lack of understanding of equity issues and the curriculum
- Inadequate timelines for consultation and implementation
Kevin has rushed into this area without planning properly in accordance with an overall vision. He seems to be making things up as he goes and as a result there are far too many errors and gaps in his work. It is not too late for him to revise his work, but he will need to slow down and be clear about what he is doing and why.

(Grade: D).
Why ‘transparent accountability’?

- to help schools and education systems identify where there are problems in order to address these to help lift performance, or …….

- to provide parents with information to enable them to choose between schools
Concerns

- Research evidence suggests that the approach
  - Narrows the curriculum;
  - Stigmatises schools
  - Forces schools to mask problems and manipulate results;
  - Tells us what we already know
Comparing all schools in a local area (not just ‘like’ schools) is just a local version of league tables.

once test information is provided publicly it can be used by anyone to construct ‘simplistic’ league tables (e.g., media)
Accountability (continued)

- It confirms the idea of education as a market, leading to greater segregation and exacerbating achievement gaps in schools.

- Makes public education a safety net.
Unfortunately, Kevin has not performed well in this area. He has a tendency to use old fashioned methods which were designed for other purposes and other times. In particular he is making some of the other students very nervous and they seem less inclined to share and work collaboratively on their problems as a result of his approach and attitude. Kevin is also leaning too heavily on an older student Joel Klein who has become a bad influence. It would be better if Kevin followed the example of students who are more successful.

(Grade: E)
The ‘Education Revolution’

- Processes of policy making for the education revolution (A);
- Purposes and aims of the education revolution (C+);
- Funding and resources (B);
- Official curriculum (D);
- Accountability (E).
Kevin has done some promising work this year but he has been very inconsistent. If he can maintain his concern for others who are less fortunate than he is, but change some of the ways in which he is trying to help them, the quality of his work will improve.

(Overall Grade: C).