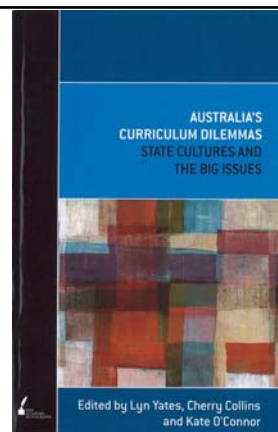


*Australia's Curriculum Dilemmas:  
state cultures and the big issues*

Lyn Yates  
University of Melbourne



Curriculum  
is a deceptively complicated topic



**Australian curriculum scene 1975-2005**

- frequent new curriculum policies
- 'changing times': look to future
- concerns about work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- concerns about values, citizenship, Australia and the global
- curriculum is governed and managed differently



**NSW** *the premier state*

*"one of the best things we ever did [...] was to introduce what we called distinction courses"*

*"we were aware what other states were doing – we thought they were wrong"*

**SA** *social justice, teacher professionalism*

*“curriculum [is really about] empowering teachers to do things, to do the work for the kids they are serving really”*

*“that was part of the brief we had: we have to make sure that this document actually reflects the constructivist view of knowledge in teaching”*

**Queensland** *rural and radical?*

*“most if not all of the senior syllabus have not been designed to be primarily preparation for university, although that is certainly one of their functions”*

*“what the system is trying to deal with now is to increase participation and retention by increasing the range of options of students”*

**WA** *geography, teachers, politics*

*“the Report was seen to be quite innovatory but then the culture of the schools stopped it from happening”*

*“high schools have in my experience always been if not impervious, then very strongly resistant to any changes that are about fundamentally altering how they operate”*

**Tasmania** *size, demography, values*

*“the first thing we had to do was a consultation with lots of different stakeholder groups about what do you think our values and purposes ought to be”*

*“we were trying to develop a curriculum that would lift the aspirations of all, not just some, and be common throughout the state”*

**Victoria** *socially inclusive, but socially competitive*

*“we had this kind of assessment to assist poorer families which was being ruthlessly exploited by the wealthy”*

*“what they learnt from other states and territories was to get a balance, between discipline based learning, personal development and social goals of schooling... what’s called the trans-disciplinary domain”*

**The states and Australia’s curriculum dilemmas:**

1. Knowledge (and the purposes of schools)
2. Difference, diversity, inequalities
3. New Public Management

