

PUBLIC LECTURE

Thursday 29 October 2015
Western Sydney University
Kingswood Campus
17:00-18:30 K.L04

REARTICULATING AND CONTESTING EQUITY IN EDUCATION POLICY

Presented by Professor Robert Lingard, University of Queensland

Facilitated by Professor Michele Simons, Western Sydney University

This paper will document the conceptual, political and practice rearticulations of equity in contemporary education policy in Australia. Conceptually, the focus will be on the ways that policy as numbers globally, nationally and in state systems has reconstituted social justice as equity and in turn reconstituted equity through comparative and numerical expressions based on test data that untether such concerns from conceptual definitions (Lingard et al., 2014). The paper then looks at the way the political process denies and neglects both growing inequality (Picketty, 2014) and growing inequalities of educational opportunity as documented in Volume 2 of the OECD's analysis of PISA data in terms of equity. The previous Newman Queensland government's *Great Teachers = Great Results* policy is also analysed to demonstrate this policy denial of the significance of socio-economic context to schooling. Next and related, the current policy fetish with a decontextualised focus on quality teaching is documented and analysed in terms of national and Queensland policy. Against these three elements of the regressive rearticulation of equity in education policy, the paper will attempt to offer a positive thesis that focuses on: a progressive conceptual rearticulation of social justice in education, appropriate policy and funding models, consideration of an accountability approach geared to achieving equity and the enhanced learning of all, and the place of teachers and pedagogy in this holistic policy ensemble. The assumption here is that the achievement of a more socially just schooling demands a multifaceted approach and one that takes cognisance of broader structural inequalities.

References

Lingard, B. Sellar, S. and Savage, G. (2014) Re-articulating social justice as equity in schooling policy: the effects of testing and data infrastructures. *British Journal of sociology of Education*, 35, 7: 710-730.
Picketty, T. (2014) *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. The Belkap Press of Harvard University Press: Boston, USA.