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CPL Podcast: Measuring What We Value in Education

Host: Kate Ambrose

With: Prof Jim Tognolini

INTRODUCTION:

The Centre for Professional Learning acknowledges and pays respect to traditional custodians and their ancestors across our broad country. We acknowledge the past, present and emerging Elders on whose land we have been privileged to live and work. This podcast was produced on Gadigal land. We recognise First Nations peoples continuing connection to lands, waters and culture around the world.

Kate Ambrose:

Welcome to the CPL podcast. This podcast episode is being hosted by me, Kate Ambrose. I'm the Director of the Centre for Professional Learning here at the New South Wales Teachers Federation and today I'm speaking with Professor Jim Tognolini, the Director of the Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment at the University of Sydney. Welcome Jim.

Jim Tognolini:

Thank you very much, Kate.

Kate Ambrose:

Jim, it's actually a welcome back to you. You've previously spoken with the CPL podcast about *Teachers Voice and Assessment* but today we've asked you to come and speak with us about measuring what we value in education. A big topic. I think.

Jim Tognolini:

A big topic.

Kate Ambrose:

We have discussed this before Jim offline, and we were discussing the production of this podcast and talking about The Alice Springs, the Mparntwe (I hope I've pronounced that correctly) Education Declaration to assign by all education ministers in December of 2019. What we were discussing is that declaration has two goals. Goal one being the Australian education system promotes excellence and equity, and goal two being all young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community. So, they're pretty big concepts. I think we can very safely say they're underpinned by an agreed set of values. I know from many discussions with you that you argue that everything can be measured, which is why it's really interesting to speak with you today. So, the big driving question for this discussion is, how do we measure what we value? So, I'll give you an example based on the Alice Springs Declaration, there are hundreds of indicators in the *Declaration* that outline what success towards those two goals looks like, but how do we measure how we are going? As an example, this isn't about the *Declaration*, but how do we measure how we're going in meeting those goals, those value-based goals.



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[CPL Podcast Collection](#)

CPL Podcast: Measuring What We Value in Education

Jim Tognolini:

I think there's two bits to that. One is, how do we measure how we're going relative to those goals at the moment, you know, in terms of the Australian National Report on Schooling, et cetera, and then what should we look like if we want something that gives a valid or a, you know, a real, measure of how we're going relative to the *Declaration*. Coming from an assessment background I've always believed that the way we assess, and report should be as valid as possible. We're telling people how we're going relative to what we're supposed to be doing in this case, at the moment if you look at it, you said there's hundreds of indicators. This is what we want our school systems to produce. Here they are, this is what these two goals, but these are the indicators, now how are we going as a school system then come over and we report.

And if you look at the Australian National Report, it's based on primarily standardised test scores. Now how much of that, those things that we are reporting on actually are covered in *the Declaration*, of course literacy and numeracy there, it's one of them but it's only a few of hundreds, is there what we call, is this a valid representation of what we're supposed to be doing or not? And to my way of thinking, it kind of enforces, reinforces what you said before about, should we be measuring what we value or should [we] be measuring what we value rather than valuing what we can measure? And because those reports, they drive things, "hey, we're going relatively poorly, we have to do better, stop doing this and start doing this". If you really want that change, what we're supposed to be doing in the *Declaration*.

So that's a really important issue if, and I've got a PhD student who's actually using Andy Hargrave's words because he was the one who said, when talking about assessment that's measure what we value rather than value what we measure and she's taking that and she's actually aligning saying, you know is this a valid reporting and measurement of our system given this is the starting point. It's like saying, here's the curriculum for physics, and we're going to report on how you went on nuclear physics. Why would you do that? I mean, that's not really valid. So, that's one thing and so ultimately if you really say, no we want to broaden, you know so we get a much closer approximation to reporting what we're supposed to be doing then you start to reconfigure and think about how do I do that?

And so, what I look at is if I want to get more, something more valid, it's like [what] we did many, many years ago in our systems when we used to just base everything on a three-hour exam, [however] we said, "but there's a whole pile of the curriculum we can't assess in a three hour exam", well let's build in some school based assessment there. Okay. That was done to make it our assessments and our measurements more valid for the curriculum. And this is exactly the same. So, let's look at the *Declaration* as a statement of the curriculum and let's say, well which of these really do we think we value in our school? And let's start the question of how do we measure that rather than say, oh it's too hard or et cetera and let's start seeing if we can measure what we value and therefore report on it, what we value.

And so that's why I'm saying there's two answers to that. First one is what happens now, the second one is where we should be moving to, from our perspective today I think this is a school decision at the moment and of course, it's some of it's built into the curriculum but some of the you know, the global



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[CPL Podcast Collection](#)

CPL Podcast: Measuring What We Value in Education

core competencies or they're built in, I wonder how many people are actually collecting evidence on them to show that they're, you know, we're impacting on them. I'm driven here by research actually, particularly Lee Cronbach who wrote, "if something exists, it exists in some amount, if it exists in some amount, we can measure it." Okay, that's the given and therefore, the converse of that is if it doesn't exist, why I don't want to measure it anyway? You know what I mean? It just seems a silly thing.

So yeah, so if we took empathy or I can give you other examples in China, I've been commissioned to work with them to develop measures of patriotism, humour. [In] Beijing [it] was patriotism and Shenzhen, in India it was honesty, because these things are built into the mandates for their community. We want our people to be this. So the question is, if we really want that, how do we know we're getting it? And if we aren't getting, you know, the levels of honesty we want, what do we do about it to try and improve it? It's a measurement question.

Kate Ambrose:

And how do we make that as objective as possible?

Jim Tognolini:

That's right. So if you take something like that and we say, yeah, it exists and it's really hard to measure. Well, it's the basics of measurement are quite simple you know, we just take them from the physical sciences. I don't have to be able to see everything to tell you whether or not, you know it's growing or getting more or less or whatever, for example "heat". I can't see heat, but I can see manifestations of it and it's the same here - we look for manifestations and so the starting point is it exists. Empathy exists, humour exists, student agency exists, whatever, and down this end of a line, if you think of it as a developmental continuum down this end is not much of it - up here is a fair bit. That's a measurement question. Okay, and so one of the ways you can actually do this is to just get groups of people like when I did this in India, just gave all the people or the executive, what organisers, whatever CEOs from all the different areas of government ministers just gave them a little dot and said, here's the line, come and tell me whether you think you're honest or not just put it up there all at once and I want to all look at it, et cetera and they, I'm very honest, not honest, et cetera and then I just put some lines on it. and I said, well, everybody opened up to everybody. Why would somebody, what would make you say, you're very honest? They had to rely on something it's because I do this, I don't do that and they throw up things and we put it up on the board and we looked at it and said, yeah, that's a pretty good description of someone who's very honest down this end not so honest what have they got there? And so we started to describe what growth looks like, so that that's in a very simplistic thing. Schools can do that now. And the interaction of talking about empathy, what does it really mean to you? What does having more empathy mean or less empathy mean? And let's write down the characteristics and let's start talking about it. By talking about it, I am thinking about including that in my teaching and learning, et cetera. And once you've got that and you have those descriptions, we have what I call a measurement rubric. And you see, and then you actually say like in the physical sciences, I can't see heat, but it's manifestations of heat I can see. What you then do as you're teaching, et cetera. you're looking for things which are characteristic of those different levels, and so you're making on balanced judgments all the time. You can even create



PODCAST



[CPL Podcast Collection](#)

CPL Podcast: Measuring What We Value in Education

tasks, right? Which when the students do the tasks, give you some evidence that you can put against that and that can be a speech, a whole pile of, little different exercises into all sorts of things, because you know what growth looks like now.

Kate Ambrose:

And you've come together to agree on what empathy is. So, you've got this agreed, you've got this agreement sort of through sort of democratic system, I guess, in a way, by people discussing what it is and again, you and I have spoken about sort of contextualised situations and so again, it might be a little bit contextualised, but also with a common understanding out there.

Jim Tognolini:

I think, you know, if I can, again, refer to you know, what one of our universities is doing, we're trying to measure the graduate quality. So we've talked to [the] community and we, and there's nine graduate qualities that people believe they want from our students and most universities got a set of graduate qualities, but we are saying we're going to measure, because you know, just saying, you've got them is fine, but that's just an opinion. We want some evidence that we're actually impacting on these graduate quality, so we set out to measure them and we did exactly that. We got groups of academics from across the University first to define what they were.

Kate Ambrose:

First define. So that's obviously the first step, right?

Jim Tognolini:

And from the definition, in the definition, there are what I call components. So, you know, critical thinking, people have to be able to; identify the problem, defend the problem so, you can see it in a definition, and I call those things that are in there that tell you about, the thing you're looking at, I call those "the components." So, you start with, here's the definition, here's the components and you take each of those components and you do what I'd said about in India. You get people, those class, a school to sit down and say, what does good identify identification problem? What characterises really strong identification of the problem? What are the characteristics? And so, you've built a rubric, a measurement rubric that really, we, you know, measurement because we kind of try and make those intervals equal. But it's, I think the process of doing that, the discourse that comes from, what do you think student agency looks like? What do you think wellbeing looks like? How does it characterised? And across the different subjects. We do across, you know, we have medicine in with the philosophy in with art and you come up with this definition and then you come up with the components and then you come up with the descriptive parts. And then, and this is how you do most international surveys, but they'd start off saying, we're going to have a common test. What we say is you understand this now, in your subject for your year group, what are the tasks that you will give to students, so that when they answer those tasks, they will provide evidence that you can put against the rubric. So, the teacher has to build it into their teaching and learning and thinking about these sorts of things and the evidence is there. So, you can talk to parents at words, the words disappear after a while, this is demonstrating this, can you see that? And



PODCAST



[CPL Podcast Collection](#)

CPL Podcast: Measuring What We Value in Education

this is improvement and it's a whole reconfiguration and that's what we're trying to do at the University of Sydney. And we are trying to go, you know, we are exploring whether we can go down below as a university. Are we improving on this to, we can tell students, we can provide reports to employers, which says we've got evidence over a four year program of what the student is, you know, how, what skills they've demonstrated in relation to this in a report?

Kate Ambrose:

And I'm guessing because it is values based if you're going to sort of assess and report on it, in different ways, whether it's through a sort of reference or something like that, you need buy-in from every well, for most people involved in the process to agree on what that rubric might look like and what, how we're going to define it. Well, how we're going to define it and then what the rubric looks like.

Jim Tognolini:

Look, I mean that's really important and excellent because ultimately, you've got to think, [if we] are we going to do this at a school, a class, a district, you know, or a department, what do we consider on? You know, I've challenged the Catholic system on a number of occasions. What is the most valuable thing? It's got to be faith. How do you know you're impacting on it? Have you measure? Where's your evidence? Yeah. Where's your evidence you are improving? Otherwise, you say we've got faith. I mean, so they're, they're the sorts of things, but then you've got to realise, I don't want to bring, I don't want to sell this to everyone as a school. I don't want the school up the road necessarily to agree with. This is what we value in our school, as a group and we report on this. If I try to get a common definition, not across the University, across every University, we would be tied up for years.

Whereas we want to say, this is it, push it through to our Senator. You know, our academic boards. They agree. These are our values captured in these rubrics, this is what we think. And then we measure and report in terms of that, we don't try and tell anybody anything else. And it's the same in the school level. You know, at the school level, if you're going to do it by a school, then you get all your teachers together and you work it, build it up together and then you report on it, et cetera. If you want to do it by district, you got to get different people in the room, over time and then you report on it. And as I said, the process is typical of measurement in the physical sciences. First, I've got to build the rubric. I'm not going to measure at that stage building. We get agreement. We build it up the way I talked about once I've done that, then I assess. So once I've built a ruler for measuring height, then I put somebody against it. I don't do it at the same time. And similarly here, this is now our rubric [is formed]. And then we are challenging our people to start to write their own tasks in the different disciplines, to be able to collect the evidence, to put against it. So that's what I believe. It's something so valuable for schools to take up and I think that that's coming through this recognition. We really do want to measure some of these things that we value in our school or our district or our cluster and we're going to do it this way and here's a basic model, we can help you do that so that, you know, it's not going be fine grain measurement. You're not going get 99 is different to 100, but it does show growth. And what you do is the growth is really described, not by the words after a while, but the evidence that the students have got, and people can see it. So



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CPL Podcast: Measuring What We Value in Education

making these things visible, visible learning, I guess John Hattie taught, making those things visible is really the name of the game.

Kate Ambrose:

We can see it. I think that, you know, tens of thousands of teachers across Australia are doing this. When they sit down with their classes from kindergarten to year 12 and say, we're going to talk about our class rules. And then as a class, they all talk about what the rules are. And so I think that's the beginning. And sometimes it's an automatic thing. I think that teachers often do at the beginning of the year, but it's really important, because you've got that community and, in that case, it'll be that class. Because I think what you've said is it's about communities and it's about what that community, whatever that community is at the time. So, if we look at [our] classroom as a community at the very beginning of each year, everybody's having the opportunity to talk about what we think the class rule should be, which is going to be in a great set of values once again. And then we might be giving feedback to the students based on that throughout the year also. And it's, and because they have been part of the process, they've got the buy-in and some ownership over it.

Jim Tognolini:

I think it's really critical that the students have a voice in this process, you know, whatever you're measuring. I mean, why wouldn't you have students in that discussion? It's part of them, people should get by. Parent, we talked about educational communities in the last, you know, last time I spoke with you, why wouldn't the community say, yeah, we really valued this and yeah, this is what it looks like and have that discussion. And the discourse, when you're talking about looking for what, what's characteristic of people, on this sort of developmental continuum with the components, that discourse is quite profound. I think it just changes the whole thing. We stop thinking about numbers, et cetera, and thinking about evidence against these descriptors. So I just think it's a really great way to really start to make an impression on what we're supposed to be doing in reporting against those goals, where we started this conversation rather than say, oh, these are the only measures I've got, here you are, this is how I'm going. And schools should start to think about that. Bring them in, everybody should know; this is what we value. We as a community value this, we will produce evidence. We will show you what growth looks like. Change is the whole game.

Kate Ambrose:

As you said earlier, the challenge is, you know, how do we promote measuring what we value you rather than valuing only what we can measure easily, I think is the trick. And I guess there's a couple of issues there, and I'll like to talk about workload in a moment, but before I do that, which will lead into it, you've mentioned a couple times in this conversation about teachers teaching program. So teachers might ask you, how do they build measuring values into their teacher program when they've got sort of everything else that they [do], you know, meeting outcomes of syllabuses and outcome and, you know, general curriculum and all those other sorts of, and welfare and all those things.



PODCAST



[CPL Podcast Collection](#)

CPL Podcast: Measuring What We Value in Education

Jim Tognolini:

The way I think about it, that rubric that I talk about is really across the school. So it's not curriculum dependent, et cetera, and same at the University, we did a generic rubric and then we went down to the disciplines, et cetera. But it actually, if it's, you know, it doesn't change, we can get better definitions because we get really good exemplars, which gives meaning to those words. But basically it becomes part of our way of thinking. I mean, we don't think, you know, when we are walking around and, assessing in class informative assessment mode, you know, students reading, I don't think, oh, this is a workload issue, it's just part of teaching and learning. This should be a part of teaching and learning. It's a thing I look for just like, this is what I look for, reading ability or whatever. I actually see it as part of the way we assess, and formative assessment data goes and if you want to set a real task for it, then you set a task. You don't have to do it a lot because that's just the way I think about the measurement again, assessment again, is to build up this image. So I'm watching these students. I might only have one, a dedicated task to that once a year or twice a year but can see and because I've collected notes of when I've seen things about students, then I have this, more structured task. They should line up if they're not that's okay, I work out why, but it's because we've talked about it, it's not hidden over there it's out here and a lot of it's embedded in curriculum anyway. So you can get that growth, hopefully on these sorts of things, within a curriculum some of the core competencies, but it's just something we do, and we look for like we do normally, and it's not an extra burden on what I think teacher...

Kate Ambrose:

I was going to say that. So, teachers, I think we could all agree, have very immense and intense day to day workloads. And I was going to ask you, what's the teacher's role in promoting measuring values? And I think sort of, you may have sort of answered that. And the very sort of first role is by being part of that process of the definition, et cetera, because then they've got an understanding of that agreed set of values and agreed definition. And so, then the day to day observations of that, or week to week or whatever it is of measuring those values just comes naturally in because they've been part of the process of making the definition and that's how they then can promote it. It's not something that's happening to the teacher. It's something that they've been involved in from the very beginning.

Jim Tognolini:

Exactly. As I said, it's not that I want to measure it each week or anything like that. It's because, I know what this looks like now. If you take the honesty thing, you know, you already do this in a way, if somebody pinches something, you know, here's a bit of evidence, they're not that honest, I'm doing it, you know, but everybody might have different ideas of what honesty looks like. If we can agree, this is what it is. It's like those school rules, you said, this is it. Then every bit of evidence goes into the image, and you can say, oh, this is not what I want. So, it happens all the time. You know, it doesn't need to be assessed constantly as another subject or anything like that. It's embedded, it's a value embedded in how they people, our students and our teachers and our community operate all the time.

And so, it's just making obvious what growth looks like, and then fitting bits of evidence in relation to that, as we work through and being able to demonstrate through the evidence that here you are, this



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CPL Podcast: Measuring What We Value in Education

person needs, this is where I think they are and here's the evidence for that and this is what we want to do going forward and there's something to talk about with the parents, et cetera. Whereas at the moment, it's, you know, we've all been asked to measure effort and we say, oh, you know, works hard, but there's no consistency here across the school. We're all talking the same language, showing how it fits. We fit it into our assessment play. It just makes explicit what we value and let's measure that.

Kate Ambrose:

I love that., so in like in the secondary setting, for example, you might, you're going to have, you know, lots of teachers in lots of different subject areas, but if you've all come together, you've defined the values, whatever they are together. And so, then I think sometimes part of assessment too is speaking with students, other teachers, particularly as I said, in the secondary school setting, but also in others and so if you're teaching a sort of humanities subject, one person's humanities, one person's science are very sort of different, but we've got a common understanding of our definition of particular values and then coming together and, seeing where they synchronise, I guess, across the subject areas too and you would assume that it would be similar for the student no matter what subject they are in.

Jim Tognolini:

My experience here, I guess, apart from what I've done internationally on this sort of space is at our university where we have the philosophers sitting down with the medicos or, and the scientists and the arts people coming up with their definition, coming up with a generic descriptive. This means they've got more et cetera and that's, and that's how they get agreement on that it took us a year, I think to get definition, but we had agreement on. And if you are looking on the website, this is what we agree. These are our values. This is what we can say we want on our students. And it isn't something we say, everybody's got to get to the top, right. We're just saying, you know, we think it's important this is, and we've got evidence that you are at this level that may be good for you or not. I mean, our international students might want to be really crash hot on communication in English and reporting on it that we don't want them to think you've failed because of that. This just describes in relation to what we value and the descriptors we've got here, where you are, and we can talk to you about it, you can talk about it to us. Everybody knows it. And I just think that notion of a generic rubric is important, but we also gave them the right to change. So, if what a discipline says, I find it hard to work with that we could, we said, well, you can write a discipline specific rubric, but you've got to have those images there have to be captured in this. They can change the, some of the words to make it look like your subject, but you can't change the meaning of the overall descriptor and we went down to task, et cetera. Now in the groups, we're working with the, because all the different disciplines are in there at start very few have even said, they want to go to a discipline. We can collect evidence in relation to this and report on that generic, it's the process of working together to make explicit what you value.

Kate Ambrose:

Going to the reporting thing, that will be really important. And how do we report if we're going to value this and we're going to value, measuring values and we might have, for example, an A to E reporting system and you get a C on empathy or honesty is that really valid when we are reporting?



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CPL Podcast: Measuring What We Value in Education

Jim Tognolini:

The A to E is just, is sort of makes it mush. Basically, we should be reporting against standards. So, in a standards reference reporting system, you actually describe what it is the student and those can do. So, we would take those descriptors of the evidence where we've got the evidence and write a reference. We're actually looking at this individual[s] level, but writing a reference, we've got evidence that this describes where the person is in relation to what we think about cultural competence or using a rubric. The marks. We don't have a marking system. I don't [have] a marking system, you can put marks if you want to up into the other area, but in reporting against this, it's got to be the descriptor. One of the problems we've got with the HSC is we have standards reference system, but then we had to give it a mark. You know, we were told fifty got to be a pass. So that's got to be aligned to the band one, two cutoff point. So, then we put a mark on it, and then we also put in a band. So pretty soon people want the shorthand notation. So, band six, and everybody has their own idea. And we've lost what band six really means. And if you knew that, then we wouldn't make the sorts of decisions we're making now. Because in a lot of cases, well, we never set out to make band six equivalent across all subjects for a start.

And if you looked at the descriptors, you'd see, they're not equivalent and they're not meant to be, it was what we as a community felt was, this is what we value in physics as our top students. So, you know, the more information you give out in more ways people get away from that descriptor. The more challenging it is to be able to keep, sort of a degree of integrity in the way we report so we have lots of problems in that sense. Whereas I think at a school level, we can do it quite well because we bring people with us. This is what we value our evidence shows that, parents can get involved. You can do it grade one to 12. You don't have to say, oh, there's C and there's C again, next year. I don't want you to look like that. I want you to say, this is what they could do last year, and this is the evidence we got and look, here's the evidence and can you see growth? That's what it is. It's not, you know, it's not a shorthand notation for taking away all the richness in what, in the evidence you've got.

Kate Ambrose:

That, that quick and easy way of reporting on measurements, I guess it just, well, it just becomes easy for people, but it doesn't give the full picture, I think is what you're saying. It doesn't give the picture at all sometimes.

Jim Tognolini:

No, no. And I think, you know, and you find in the notion of just summarising all this into a mark et cetera is not, they say, here you are, we've got a contract, show me the evidence. What could you do first? What can you do now? Let's look at that. Now let's set some new targets in what you can do and, and what, and it is a summarised grade. It's actually showing you what growth looks like. This is what you could do before. This is what you can do now. This is what you do now. This is what a year 12 Band Six looks like. If you want to, because we've got standards packages for that. That's where we've got to get to if that's what you want.



PODCAST



[CPL Podcast Collection](#)

CPL Podcast: Measuring What We Value in Education

Kate Ambrose:

And that makes it much more, I think, important and valued then by students and, and their parents, caregivers, families, et cetera. I think that the reporting system, that sort of reporting system would help them a lot.

Jim Tognolini:

It will, otherwise you get into a real problem with values because everybody thinks they've got to be at the top and you're a failure if you're not, whereas that isn't it. It's where we aspire to go to, you know, and as a community say, well, if you know, if it's an honesty scale and you are down here all the time, we've got to try and move along here somewhere, but it isn't, you failed on honesty.

Kate Ambrose:

We're just, we're just trying to give you some life skills here.

Jim Tognolini:

It makes sense again, in what we talked about, and you remember in that last session, I talked about images. This is totally image focused. I've got evidence you know; of the image I've got in my mind and I put that against the rubric and the rubric doesn't change from year to year and unless we want to redefine it, I'm not going to say I can't compare my rubric to that one or anybody else unless we set out to make a common rubric. So, you're always reporting in terms of what you as a school community value on these sorts of things and it doesn't mean find grade, A, B, C, D you can show it in terms of what they've given you as evidence, and you can prove that so at to people and it's much more meaningful than saying a C in honesty or a D in honesty.

Kate Ambrose:

So, Jim, when we're talking about measuring values, it is about what we believe really and in coming up with gone through the process, we've defined what we believe as a classrooms, a school community as a parent body, whatever it is as a country that you could say, or some might say that there's some risk that the data that is formed throughout that the evidence that is formed throughout that being misappropriated, in different ways, it could be, could be local sense, or it could be sort of the government, a government, might then misappropriate the information that they've gained through that process. And what are the risks there as you see it?

Jim Tognolini:

I think again, you, if you think of PISA, they they're measuring, these sorts of skills now, et cetera. When they set out to do that across the world, or people who want to buy into it, when they set out to that, they have to get all those people to come together and do what we just talked about, get agreement on the scale, right, and say, we all value this, but when they do it, they're limited in, I've got to make a standardised measure because I'm going to compare all you countries and it's got to be standardised and done under these sorts of conditions. Okay, and so the definition they come up with that interaction



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with, I've got to do this, et cetera, is I think what you are talking about, you know, the ministers were going to measure cultural competence across the country and by the way, you're going to use this test and this, that's a different approach than when I'm talking about. As an example, at Sydney, if I said, you know, we are going to have this happens when we said these are the nine graduate qualities we value, and we're going to measure those and put it out. I was approached by every testing company in the world. Have we got a critical thinking test for you to put across the University? Have we got a cultural competence test for you, but it's not the way I thought about it? The way I thought about it is if I tried to say, you know, through our University degrees they go through the programs et cetera and at the end, we say, now were going to give a critical thinking test across like the academics would never bar of it because it wouldn't match that we'd get all those discipline arguments, you know, that test doesn't fit anything so, it was never designed like that. It was designed to say, do we all agree with this? What's the best way for us to collect evidence in our program of where the student is on two occasions through the four year degree program. So, it's very much contextualised, you know, if the requirement was different, right, then we would have to do more of the PISA thing, get everybody to agree. The minister would probably get a group in to define what it is. And we are going to measure this and report on that. You can do that. It's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about, well, it's not what I'm talking about in the sense that that's a standardised process, whereas here, I'm saying this is part of teaching and learning and as a community saying, this is what we value, and this is how we're going to give you evidence against it and here's the evidence. Does that make sense? I think it, it's a really, it's really important that that's made. We, we've never set out to say I'm going to slap a fit, you know, a critical thinking test across the University and at the end we'll tell you how you are in critical thinking, because it just wouldn't be acceptable and across and around the world and that's one of the things about things like PISA. They're really just made for comparisons, between countries on what we've agreed to, as something that we all value. We might not really value that that much.

Kate Ambrose:

Compromise.

Jim Tognolini:

Yeah. Compromise, everybody does. If you've got 70 countries, you're going to be [doing] some compromising and it's the same, you know, NAPLAN here when you do this across Australia, when we did it within New South Wales, we only said, this is what we value, this is what our purpose, this is what we are going to use it for. When you do it across the whole country, you've got to get everybody to agree and it's a minefield. I developed all those earlier ones with people, you know, there's a significant part of this, so it's just different. So, it's the way I think about now, if you want to, if somebody said, would you come and design this for us as a, you know, as a country, then I'd start with a different thing. It'd have to be, let's get everybody [to] agree on those dots. Okay. Now, which of these, when we said what it looks like, for example, on each of these components, what really good looks like, what not so good looks like, et cetera. When you do that, then I'd be having to think, well, I can't do that because I can't build that into my test. So, it's, I end up with a different result and it's the same at the school level. If you want to do this across ten schools, there'll be some compromises as you do it. But ultimately, you know,



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the answer has got to be, I don't want to give a test because I trust each of the schools that they can actually produce the evidence that we can look at against this. And because we're all measuring against the same tool, you might have different subjects, different things, but here's the evidence, here it is and if anybody looks at it, we all agree that evidence is that. So, you can do some moderation comparability and again, what great professional development to look at work of what represents something like empathy. And as a group of schools, we look at and get a clear understanding and that helps us build it better into our curriculum and think of better ways to assess it. So, it's a different dynamic.

Kate Ambrose:

See, I think that going back to that, that buy-in at the very beginning of people being a part of the process is so important for that. So if they do come back, because they actually, I don't agree with this on, on an individual basis. I know that we as a community come [up with] this, but I don't believe in it. And so then it's about, well, it's good that you understand that you don't believe in it and now you have choices based on that and whether that's to, you know, go elsewhere or whatever it is. But if you've got people's buy-in, then that's the first step I think, towards minimising the risk because if something's just impose[d], if you've got [an] impose[d] set of values it doesn't work because people haven't been part of that process and have no ownership over it and haven't had an opportunity to say, I agree or I disagree, or I'm willing to compromise on this and not willing to compromise on that.

Jim Tognolini:

The fact that you have, you know, lecturers or teachers across the school, agreeing to this, that being put to the next group, the parents involved, et cetera there is ownership. Now people want to misappropriate that and use it for it for unintended purposes you know, it wasn't intended for this, but we're going to do it for this. Then you've got a whole pile of people who are going to be pretty well upset with that and all the evidence you've collected, et cetera. So again, it's what we talked about the last time you know, we really do have to think about how we communicate and bring people along and get them to understand. And one of the biggest challenges is going to be for people to understand you don't all have to get to the top, but at the same time, we've got to give people who are at the top at, you know, if I talk about cultural competence, somehow we're going to have to find out people who are culturally competent, very early on they could be at the top, you know, they could be ultra-culturally competent. We never know because we don't give them a chance to give us that evidence but if we set ourselves up to do that, find who those people are then we can actually be used in our teaching program, all sorts of things to help us move people along. But until we've got that evidence, if we're not looking for it at the top, from when people come in, then we're never going to be able to bring other people along with [us], we can't use them, these people feel stultified. And there's some people who think, you know, if you have a four descriptor, four level rubric, then you know, first year the kids are here second year there, third year there, fourth year there, some of our kids come and [are] fantastic, critical thinkers, right at the start. We never give them a chance to demonstrate that until we think about it differently and think about it. I want to find where the students are in relation to this rubric, take value and work out how I'm going to keep those ones there rather than drag them back. It's a different way of thinking, because we are focused on the individual and



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CPL Podcast: Measuring What We Value in Education

their learning rather than focused on summarising the mark on where the average is and all that sort of stuff, hopefully, but again, it's, we've got to bring people along and give them a voice.

Kate Ambrose:

Well, I think that's a really great theme, Jim, that's, a really, really interesting topic and I think I'd like to do a, you know, a huge series of podcasts on it. So, but I do want to thank you so much for coming and speaking with us again. I hope you come back. I very much enjoy and value these conversations with you, Jim. So, thank you for your time.

Jim Tognolini:

It's a pleasure and it's a great pleasure to be here with you and hopefully the people who listen to this will think it's okay. Thank you.

Kate Ambrose:

Absolutely. You've been listening to the CPL podcasts for, to listen to more podcasts or to access our journal of professional learning and to apply for CPL courses, please visit cpl.asn.au.

CONCLUSION

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Professor Jim Tognolini is the Director of the Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment, has developed a suite of professional learning online modules for teachers on *Assessment and Data Literacy*. All modules can contribute to maintenance of accreditation at Proficient Teacher, or as Elective professional development (PD) for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher. The modules are mapped to the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. Collectively, they provide a basic introduction to what you need to know and do to assess effectively and use data wisely, in order to maximise student learning.