

EDITORIAL

Whatever you teach, one thing that's certain is that the stuff you teach, and the curriculum that informs what and how you teach, is fixed and immutable – or not. Paleontologists, for instance, now believe that *Triceratops* 'never really existed.' It was just the juvenile form of a less well-known dinosaur called *Torosaurus*. Early years teachers rest assured, though: *Torosaurus* will be reclassified as the better-known *Triceratops*, so all the three-horned playdough models still out on display are safe. After all, *Triceratops*, is one of the big three rock stars of the dinosaur world, alongside *Tyrannosaurus rex* and *Brontosaurus*. Mind you, if you're still referring to *Brontosaurus* instead of *Apatosaurus*, it might be time to do a little revision. Remember it was once thought that, with its small head, *Brontosaurus* – okay, *Apatosaurus* – couldn't chew enough food to fuel its huge body? That's where we got the idea that it supported its massive weight by hanging out in swamps. Turns out, this small-headed dinosaur didn't chew its food. It had a gizzard, like birds. Paleontologists have even found grinding stones in fossil remains. The whole *Brontosaurus* or *Apatosaurus* thing goes back to 1877, when Othniel Charles Marsh of Yale University discovered a specimen that he named *Apatosaurus* and then a larger one that he thought was an entirely new species and named *Brontosaurus*. Elmer Riggs of the Field Museum in Chicago in 1903 argued that *Apatosaurus* was a juvenile *Brontosaurus* – and the *Brontosaurus* name was abandoned because *Apatosaurus* was named first. Things change, but the more things change, the more they stay the same – which brings us back to the new national curriculum. Stand by for plenty of argument and discussion about this. **T**

FAST FACTS

- Average age for primary teachers in 2007: 43 years.
- Average age for secondary teachers: 44 years.
- Proportion of female and male primary teachers: 79 and 21 per cent respectively.
- Proportion of female and male secondary teachers: 56 and 44 per cent respectively.
- Proportion of females and males in leadership positions in primary schools: 57 and 43 per cent respectively.
- Proportion of females and males in leadership positions in secondary schools: 41 and 59 per cent respectively.
- Proportion of primary teachers and school leaders of Indigenous origin: one to two per cent – given some missing data.
- Proportion of secondary teachers and school leaders of Indigenous origin: less than one per cent.
- Proportion of the Australian population of Indigenous origin: three per cent.

Source: McKenzie, P., Kos, J., Walker, M. & Hong, J. (2008). *Staff in Australia's Schools 2007*. Canberra: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Answers: 1. yes, according to the National Assessment Program – ICT Literacy Years 6 & 10 Report 2008; 2. what can I do, what can't I do, how does my work compare with that of others, and how can I do better? 3. false, according to pre-Prep teacher Susan Harrison; 4. both are goal-directed and competitive activities conducted within a framework of agreed rules; 5. HyperText Markup Language; 6. according to the research, apparently not; 7. ahem, false; 8. a Commonwealth government guarantee that no school will have its funding frozen; 9. 29 October; 10. Diane Ravitch in her blog at <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/Bridging-Differences>

QUICK QUIZ

1. Does parent occupation make a difference when it comes to the percentage of students reaching the Year 6 and 10 proficient standard identified by experts as an indication of what students should be able to do using infotech?
2. Steve Dinham says students need and want answers to four questions. What are they?
3. A motion graph activity is far too complex to implement with primary classes. True or false?
4. What do school sport and digital games have in common?
5. What does HTML stand for?
6. Is too much television bad for you?
7. If there's a crisis for your school, the first crisis-management step is to duck for cover. True or false?
8. What does Tim Hawkes suggest would maintain the current 'cease-fire' on school funding?
9. When is World Teachers' Day?
10. Who said 'high-stakes accountability does not produce better education'?

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