

level of language com-
pounds from non-English
grounds."

has documented the
non-English speaking
living in Australia each
notes. Little is known
who seek to enter the
those who wish to pursue
trade courses begun in
country. No statistics are
participation by age of
adult "on-arrival" and
ish courses. How many
no arrived in Australia
ore and took part in the
ment's school-to-work
also unknown and no
examined the education
needs of recently arrived
ants, compared with
been in Australia for

leaving by ethnic back-
appears not to have been
education authorities,



igrant miner keeps
unlikely to receive
tion in English.

research on immig-
as overlooked the
igrants, particularly
r-olds in transition
and work, and pro-
base for prog-
and implementation,

is a dearth of statis-
on many aspects of
what data has been
nts up the disadvan-
fer. In school, for
ive shown that chil-
language other than
re less likely to be
ially, tend to fall
e more likely to be
isolate themselves
as able to cooperate
Significant propor-
e assessed by their
remedial help with
er work.

erwise born mig-
disproportionate
employed, account-

high training, skills or experience. The
unemployment rate among new arrivals
to Australia is currently running at
about three times the figure for the
Australian-born, and the rate for mig-
rant women is much higher again.

Lack of English also makes it even
harder for new migrants to find their
way through Canberra's bureaucratic
maze of financial allowances, benefits
and assistance available to those want-
ing to learn the language. Four Com-
monwealth departments administer up
to 10 different assistance schemes,
from double orphan pensions to junior
secondary bursaries from living allo-
wances for students in full-time
courses, to the unemployment benefit.

But inconsistencies in the adminis-
tration of the schemes abound. Unem-
ployment benefits, for example, are
withdrawn if a migrant undertakes
full-time intensive training in a lan-
guage centre in a school system. Al-
though a living allowance equivalent
to the dole is paid to students
participating in the adult migrant
education programme no similar
assistance is available to younger stu-
dents at language centres.

Between 1978 and 1981, more than
38,000 young Vietnamese from 10 to
19 years settled in Australia. Many
were supposed to be under the guar-
dianship of a relative or friend but this
relationship often proved tenuous and
broke down shortly after arrival, leav-
ing hundreds of adolescents to fend for
themselves.

Another 9,000 Vietnamese aged 20
to 24 years arrived during the same
period and many were single people
with tertiary entry or partly completed
tertiary studies. They were prepared to
attend school or other secondary
courses in order to qualify for tertiary
entrance in Australia. Income support
was essential but, according to the
report, many were not eligible for any
study assistance or the dole.

The federal report makes clear that
immigrants - young ones especially -
have had and will continue to have a
valuable impact on Australian society,
not least as an important component in
population management for changing
the age profile. Immigration of young
people and children has effectively
retarded the aging of the Australian
population, the report states. Im-
migration contributed 60 per cent of
Australia's postwar population growth
and tended to do so in younger age
groupings.

The contribution young migrants
can make to the Australian economy is
likely to be greater if they can com-
plete secondary education, develop
their skills and realize their education-
al and career potential, the writers of
the report argue. Any investment in
them in terms of their participation in
adequate education and English lan-
guage programmes should be offset
against savings made on the cost to the
Australian government of their educa-
tion prior to immigration.

The report calls for: the collection of
much more information; the coordina-
tion of English language programmes;
more support for migrants whose En-
glish is poor and more financial help to
15 to 24-year-olds who wish to com-
plete secondary schooling.

Increased opportunities for intensi-
ve, English tuition for all non-En-
glish speaking immigrants and refugee
youth; greater use of bilingual pro-
grammes in schools, transition courses,
technical and further education
courses; greater recruitment of multi-
lingual staff as teachers and teacher-
aides to work with newly arrived
immigrant and refugee young people;

Education authorities to encourage
teachers to pursue second and other
language studies through course work
and travel by providing study leave and
leave without pay and giving credits to
teachers who do so.

Like the 1978 Galbally report which
reviewed post-arrival programmes and
services for migrants, this latest report
is full of good ideas and strong argu-
ments. Publication of the Galbally
report persuaded the federal govern-
ment to pump A\$10m extra into
migrant education programmes be-
tween 1979 and 1981. The latest Can-
berra report does not put a figure on
how much more is now needed. But it
does give an indication of just how
much remains to be done.

Boyer

Time for a new attitude on assessing aptitude

Recently, on a visit to Japan, I became
more aware of the "Cram Schools"
that have grown up to prepare sec-
ondary school graduates for university
entrance examination. This is serious
business not only for the people who
run the companies but equally so for
students. In Japan, perhaps even more
than in other industrialized nations,
gaining access to a ranking public
university is a ticket to a secure and
prestigious future while failing to do so
means restricted options.

In the United States, too, there is a
flourishing test preparation industry.
It is built around helping secondary
students get ready for the Scholastic
Aptitude Test (SAT) - our most
widely used school-college transition
examination. How much good the
preparation actually does is open to
question. Even so, many of our more
affluent students are eager to gain
competitive advantage.

Several weeks ago education secre-
tary Terrel H. Bell released the average
SAT scores for the various states,
suggesting that this was a measure of
the overall quality of the schools within
the states. What was overlooked was
the dramatic difference in the number
of students taking the tests from one
state to another. In New York, for
example, 61 per cent of students take
the SAT, while in Iowa it is 3 per cent.
And even the best testing experts
differ on the meaning of scores to
measure something as slippery as apti-
tude of large groups of students from
differing social and economic cir-
cumstances.

But all of this raises a far more
important issue: how should we evalu-
ate the students and how can we better
help all students as they move from
school to work and further education?

During our own study of secondary
education in America, we found that
the SAT was the most important and
traumatic experience of many stu-
dents. They seemed to feel (not as
intensely as students in Japan perhaps)
that their future depended on that
single test, which often is not the case.
Today, the majority of American high-
er learning institutions are not highly
selective, and there are few that use
the SAT as the primary criterion for
choosing students.

The irony is that the SAT was not
created to measure the quality of the
schools. Rather, when the Scholastic
Aptitude Test was constructed about
60 years ago, the aim was to measure
students' underlying aptitude for high-
er education, not what students had
learned during high school in specific
subject matter areas. Today, while it is
generally acknowledged that the SAT
scores relate in some fashion to what is
taught in schools, as well as to the
student's background, the precise con-
nexion remains unclear.

The SAT was developed at a time
when many believed an instrument
could be prepared to measure aptitude
- a relatively constant set of intellec-
tual characteristics and abilities not
seriously affected by previous educa-
tion. But the evidence suggests that
this early faith was misplaced. It is
generally acknowledged now that the
SAT does not measure the basic ability
of students, nor is it directly linked to
the curriculum in the schools. Still, the
nation has mistakenly come to view the
SAT as a reliable report card on its
schools. Now, regrettably, the federal
government seems to have thrown its
weight behind a flawed notion.

The SAT was shaped at a time when
the quality of high schools was ex-
tremely uneven, and ethnic and racial
intolerance was a fact of life in admis-
sion procedures. The SAT sought to
make the process of student selection
more accurate and equitable, and
scores on the exam were given con-
siderable weight. But it is limited in its

ability to predict how well a student
will do in college. When used alone,
the scholastic aptitude test is better
than random selection in predicting
academic success. When the SAT
score and high school grades are
combined, the accuracy of predicting
success in college moderately in-
creases.

The highlighting of SAT results as
an important indicator of school qual-
ity does offer a new opportunity to
focus the public's attention on the issue
of examinations and on how the stu-
dent transition process can be im-
proved. There is an urgent need in the
United States, currently unmet by the
SAT, for a more effective assessment
and guidance programme that will give
colleges and universities a more realis-
tic portrait of what students have
learned during the high school years -
not screen them out but to help
students find colleges that fit them
best.

A more valuable measurement of
education quality in United States
schools is another test given in early
grades as well as to 17-year-olds - the
national assessment of education pro-
gress. The national assessment has the
virtue of periodically testing students
in the subject areas in which they have
been taught, such as mathematics,
science, social science studies and
reading. Then, too, there are state-
based tests, such as those carried out in
Iowa, California and Michigan, which
focus on specific subjects - on what
students actually have been taught.

Yet the larger problem remains:
how can we through evaluation best
serve the needs of all students? It is
ironic that under the current system
those who need the most help get the
least. Frequently non college students
get only snippets of information about
job possibilities from family or friends
or other students or counsellors at
school. It is unacceptable to focus our
elaborate testing and assessment sys-
tem only on those moving on to higher
education while ignoring half the
young people who even more urgently
need guidance.

That is why the Carnegie Founda-
tion, in its recent report called *High
School*, recommended that a new
student and advice test be developed
to serve the needs of all students as
they complete secondary education.
The goal of the new assessment pro-
gramme would be to evaluate the
achievement of the student - linking it
to the core curriculum that the student
studies. The goals also would be to
provide advice, to help students make
decisions more intelligently about
their futures - again, not to screen out
options, but so that they may move on
with confidence to further education
and to jobs.

The College Board, which adminis-
ters the SAT, now offers achievement
tests in specific subject areas. With
some modification, these could form
the basis for at least the achievement
part of the new evaluation program-
me. Further, the College Board re-
cently released its own thoughtful
report on what a college-bound high
school student should know. This
provides at least a beginning for the
linking of education and evaluation.
When such a link has been created,
then it will be possible to have a report
card on the nation's schools that is
rooted in reality.

The current debate about the quality
of education in the United States
reminds us once again that what is
taught is what is learned, and that
educators must be far more thoughtful
and creative about evaluating the
achievement of their students.

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