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The making of an Asia literate teaching workforce

“The tyranny of distance is being replaced by the prospects of proximity”¹

As the Asian Century unfolds, a key driver of Australia’s successful engagement with the region will be the creation of an education workforce that can cultivate Asia literacy with all young Australians.

This is a major finding in a recently-completed report, *Asia Literacy and the Australian Teaching Workforce*, launched at the Asia Education Foundation National Conference 2013 at Melbourne’s Etihad Stadium, 12-14 August.

Anthony Mackay, Chair of the report’s commissioning body, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), says, “As the report correctly asserts, success in the Asian Century requires a whole-of-Australia effort in which the role of educators will be crucial. If our young Australians are to become more Asia literate, then our educators themselves must be Asia literate. In this respect, the research indicates that we have a sound though modest base from which to work, with a very considerable task in front of us.”

Asia literacy has been described as being teaching and learning that provides students with a knowledge of Asian societies, cultures, beliefs and environments, and the connections between the peoples of Asia, Australia and the rest of the world, along with the skills to communicate and engage with the peoples of Asia so they can effectively live, work and learn in the region.

The report’s Asia literacy survey self-assessments, completed by 2,000 Australian educators, indicate that around one-third of surveyed teachers regarded themselves as being in the “beginning” phase, while about 38% feel “proficient”, 18% feel “highly accomplished” and only around 11% see themselves in the “lead” phase.

The research has identified the key features of the Asia literate teacher and principal, as well as the ten “enablers” for teachers and principals to deliver enhanced levels of Asia literacy in their schools.

The report was commissioned by AITSL, funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and managed by the Asia Education Foundation (AEF). It was conducted by researchers from Deakin University, led by Professor Christine Halse from the Centre for Research in Education Futures and Innovation (CREFI).

View the Report at: www.aitsl.edu.au/ite

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¹*Asia Literacy and the Australian Teaching Workforce: Summary Report*, p 1.

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