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# Modernizing the Australian education workplace: a case of failure to deliver for teachers of young disadvantaged adolescents

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Pages 221-233 | Published online: 05 Oct 2010

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## Abstract

This article has at its centre the project, discourses and practices of modernization and what these mean practically and existentially for schools. The author argues that schools are, at their core, relational organizations, therefore they are primarily concerned with creating the set of relational resources and conditions that enable learning to take place, among students as well as teachers. When this does not happen, for whatever reasons, schools are very dysfunctional, deeply disturbed and unhappy places. An instance is described of an Australian government school that courageously, and in a politically prudent way, created the space within which to construct a viable relationally-affirming alternative. It is a story about how a school found ways of working against the damaging and prevailing managerialist ethos, and devised ways of uniquely

re-inventing and reforming itself against/in spite of the external dominant official reform agenda.

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## Acknowledgments

This paper was undertaken as part of a project funded through a Discovery Grant from the Australian Research Council on the topic “On Becoming a Middle School Teacher; Reclaiming the Wasteland of the Middle Years”. I am extremely grateful to Peter McInerney for his helpful contribution to my thinking that lies behind this paper. The scholarly work in this paper was explicitly attributable to the multiple institutional positions held by the author as follows, at the time of writing: Roy F. & Joann Cole Mitte Endowed Chair in School Improvement, Texas State University-San Marcos; Emeritus Professor, School of Education, Flinders University of South Australia; Research Professor, Institute for the Services Profession, Edith Cowan University; Professorial Fellow, University of Ballarat; Visiting Professor, Wilf Malcolm Institute for Educational Research, The University of Waikato; Adjunct Professor, Charles Darwin University; Visiting Professor, Department of Social and Policy Studies in Education, Massey University.

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