

# TESTING 3, 2, 1

## WHAT AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION CAN LEARN FROM FINLAND

by Michael Lawrence

When veteran Australian educator Michael Lawrence visited Finland to take a look at their world-leading education system, he came away in a state of shock:

Finnish teachers looked at me as if I was a child molester when I described the NAPLAN tests given to children as young as eight. When they suggested that the results of these tests would lead to increased funding and assistance for those students and schools that did not do well, it was difficult to explain that this was not the case!

My investigation into what made the Finnish system so successful was quickly becoming an inquiry into why my own system was so unsuccessful.

The next few years would see more time in schools in Finland, interacting with Finnish educators at all levels. I immersed myself in education books and dissertations on Finnish education, in addition to countless formal and informal interviews with Australian and Finnish teachers.

How had Australia found itself in this position?

*Testing 3, 2, 1* is the story of how Australian education fell behind the world's best and how Finland came to lead. It is also a guide to how some of Finland's ideas can be used by teachers and schools to begin to reverse the current malaise of Australia's education system.

*Part memoir, part investigative journalism, part call-to-action, this easy-to-read and highly compelling plea for an improved education system can't be ignored ... Lawrence reminds us that we can (and must) do better.*

— Jared Cooney Horvath PhD, Educational Neuroscientist,  
Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne

*Michael Lawrence applies a wealth of classroom experience and evidence from the contrasting Finnish system to throw a spotlight on what we do and why we do it ... This is a must read for all teachers who find themselves blindly having to follow compliance regulations and for those seeking clarity on what is going wrong in our classrooms. This book promises to be an important addition to the growing movement for educational change, the return to more classroom autonomy and reduction in high-stakes summative testing.*

— Robin Nagy, Educational Consultant at Effort Tracking

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A teacher's perspective  
MICHAEL LAWRENCE

### The Author

Michael Lawrence is a school teacher of more than 30 years experience teaching Music, English, History and more from Grade Prep to Year 12, in both government and non-government schools. Whilst his previous book titles have been the definitive music biographies on *Cold Chisel* and *Midnight Oil* his visits to Finland with its world leading education system led him to look closely into the Australian system he has been a part of and question just why it has been in decline.

Michael lives in Geelong where, in addition to trying to change the Australian education system, he enjoys the surf coast and catching his favourite bands as often as possible.