



Memorial Tribute for Professor Peter Fensham

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In 2013, the Queensland Parliament undertook an inquiry into assessment in senior mathematics, chemistry and physics. As an officer working for the Queensland Studies Authority in senior curriculum, I was heavily involved in this inquiry and sought the advice of experts in education. Professor Peter Fensham was the first expert I turned to. He generously shared with me his decades of experience in science education and his timely research about higher-order thinking in chemistry and the successes of the Queensland system in achieving this.

These experiences led me to begin my own research journey, at the heart of which are two insights from Professor Fensham's research. One was his model for considering the weight of societal demands on influencing the character of science education. And the second was the way he conceived of the links between science education research and practice, and what he termed "political naivete in science education". I would point anyone who wants to understand the complexity of science curriculum development, and the seemingly inevitable contestation that results, to Peter's work and these insights in particular. I have seen this play out during every large curriculum reform I have been involved in.

I feel very fortunate to have been able to spend some time with Peter and correspond with him thanks to the parliamentary inquiry. He was always very generous with his time and shared his deep thinking about and knowledge of the history of science education. He has had an indelible influence on me for which I am eternally grateful.

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