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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

**By Dr Joce Jesson**

Director of Research

### **Debate and Dispute.**

**ACE Papers** is a collection of working papers. An aim is to stimulate debate and dispute among teachers and those engaged in teacher education, and to provide a forum through which to receive feedback over one's developing academic ideas.

Teacher Education sits in an uncomfortable position in regard to debate. It is publicly perceived to be both the way and the place that teachers learn how to *get the stuff* needed for the rest of their career. Just what that *stuff* is however is a matter of reoccurring discussions. Behind often emotionally loaded words about what should happen in teacher education, are competing philosophical positions over education itself. Various publications raise issues over the role and function of compulsory schooling and teachers, over the role and function of the teacher education process and the content that teachers should have or believe. The process of becoming and staying a teacher is experienced however individually and reflects that teachers' understanding of their role and influences their perceived effectiveness. Debate goes to the heart of the sociology of teacher education, although it is seldom expressed. Disputes are usually avoided because they pose a threat to the smooth functioning of an organisation, as well as the creation of future teachers. Those who do dispute generally leave moving to the safety of the outside.

A recent article by the libertarian Deborah Coddington about "teacher training" portrayed teacher education as being shallow, play way and non-academic, promoting state-sanctioned social liberal causes within the bums on seats, EFTS model of funding (Coddington 2001). The article attempted to make sense of the process but Coddington added very little that was new to the discussion. In all the confusion she uncovered there is not any real understanding of the competing and contradictory roles that teacher education is called by the state to perform. Teacher Education is simultaneously the maintainer of various existing traditions and the provider of the possibilities for the future, in the now thousands of different and autonomous schools. It is restricted by funding while being politically leg roped. Is teacher education about training or a wider consideration of education? For a professional is a continual tension.

Debate about teacher education invariably involves the teacher education curriculum. Helen Dixon, Ruth Williams and Ivan Snook in "**Conflicting perceptions. Teachers: Technicians or Professionals?**" in this edition use the student evaluations of two Education courses to discuss the theoretical approaches that under pin the Auckland College of Education B. Ed (Tchg) degree. They contend that teaching is a learned profession rather than a technical training.

Another part of the debate is the current circling issue over who is best to teach Maori and Pacifica children. In "**They don't look at me and say you're a palagi**" Vicki Carpenter, Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington and Sue Sutherland, report some of the findings of their work seeking to identify the elements of what makes a competent

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teacher of low decile schools. They use Bourdieu's concept of **habitus** as their explanatory tool and reveal how effective teachers are very much a matter of perception.

Roy Nash also considers Bourdieu, and suggests that possibly Bourdieu may be undergoing some self-revision. In his quest for "**The Real Bourdieu**", Nash has some quite telling criticisms of the received wisdom of sociology of education for teachers. Teachers are actively engaged in social reproduction, and Bourdieu's recent ideas offer some possibility of finding a framework for understanding.

Kathryn Scantlebury, Elizabeth McKinley and Joce Jesson attempt to look critically at the social role that science education plays using concepts drawn from Edward Said's post-colonialism. They suggest that strategies promoted for an equitable science education for minority groups, may in effect be creating a new form of a colonised 'Other' by not making conscious the social structures of which science education is a part.

Jill Smith raises questions about Multi-culturalism and Bi-culturalism for Art Education especially over the role that Pakeha Art teachers have to consider in implementing a mandated curriculum supporting Maori Art.

Teacher Education does not however end at graduation. Teachers education occurs throughout their career as Professional Development. Courses are run to impart teacher knowledge. Glynn Lorrigan and Fran Baker raise some important questions over the site of where that professional development takes place. Should it be the school or a tertiary institution?

Teaching processes in Senior Biology was the subject of a research project that Mavis Haigh uses to illustrate her discussion of interpretive case study as a research method.

Brent Mawson completes this issue of ACE papers with two papers that examine "**Technological Literacy in Young Children**". The first looks at the issues over technology literacy for young children while the second paper reports on the young children's understandings.

Ideas need to be continually tested and challenged. Disagreement is a necessity of freedom. I commend the various papers in this issue of ACE papers to you and hope that you as reader will offer the various authors the challenge of a dispute over their opinions or findings.

Reference:

Coddington, D. (2001). Teach the Teachers Well? *North and South*. February. pp 22-34.

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## CONTRIBUTORS

**Ruth Williams** is Head of Centre for Professional Inquiry. Her research interests are assessment and junior classroom practice. Prior to teaching at Auckland College of Education Ruth was Principal of a primary school.

**Helen Dixon** is Head of Centre for Education, Auckland College of Education. Her research interests are in the areas of assessment and learning and policy development. Prior to her appointment as ACE Helen was an experienced primary school teacher holding several assistant and deputy principal positions.

**Ivan Snook** is Emeritus Professor of Education, Massey University. He is the author of several books and numerous other publications. Ivan has made a substantial contribution to philosophy and policy studies over the years.

**Vicki Carpenter** is a Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Education, she lectures in the undergraduate and postgraduate (Masters) programme. Vicki has a varied teaching background, having taught all ages from 4 years up. Most of her teaching has been in low decile schools, and her research interests centre around enhancing and improving the education these schools provide.

**Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington** is a Senior Lecturer in Education, Huarahi Maori and Research Methods. She is completing a Doctor of Education that explores the ideology underpinning the development of the Mathematics Curriculum for Maori. Colleen's research interests include Maori education, mathematics education and the cultural, social and political dimensions of education.

**Sue Sutherland** is currently completing a M.Ed. She has had 14 years art teaching and management experience in secondary schools. Her particular research interests are in sociology and politics of education and empowering pedagogy in low decile schools.

**Roy Nash** is a sociologist of education at Massey University College of Education. He is concerned with the central issues of the discipline and has published extensively in the field of education and equality. His most recent book is "School Learning: Conversations for the Sociology of Education" He is a regular contributor to the New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, New Zealand Sociology, and the British Journal of Sociology of Education.

**Kathryn Scantlebury** is Associate Professor in the Department of Chemistry, and is currently the Program Officer for Science Education in the National Science Foundation in Washington DC. Kate formally of Australia, went to the University of Delaware to head their secondary education programme in science education. While there she led a series of research projects in science education.

**Elizabeth McKinley** is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Waikato. She recently completed a Ph.D examining the constituted subjectivity of Maori women scientists in Aotearoa/ New Zealand using post-colonialist theory. Elizabeth's background is

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in teaching and administration in secondary schools and primary and secondary per-service teacher education.

**Joce Jesson** is the Director of Research Development at Auckland College of Education. Joce is a Principal Lecturer in science education, and lecturers on education policy and research methods in the undergraduate and postgraduate (Masters) programme.

**Jill Smith** is a Senior Lecturer in Art/Art History teacher education in the Centre for the Arts at Auckland College of Education. She is currently undertaking a Master of Education (specialising in art education) from the University of South Australia. She has a particular interest in biculturalism in secondary school art education in New Zealand.

**Fran Baker** is the Programme Co-ordinator for the Centre for Advanced Qualifications at Auckland College of Education. She worked for 3 years as an education consultant specialising in assessment/evaluation and has written a number of books on assessment. Fran has taught in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in New Zealand and overseas.

**Glynn Lorrigan** is the Associate Dean, Centre for Advanced Qualifications at Auckland College of Education. Glynn has taught in secondary schools in New Zealand and in Canada. She has lectured at Auckland College of Education, facilitated Science Teacher Development and Assessment programmes and has been the Director of Kohia Teachers' Centre.

**Mavis Haigh** is Head of Centre for Practicum at Auckland College of Education and has worked in the area of science education for many years. Mavis' science education research interests are linked to processes of scientific inquiry. Her doctoral thesis was entitled "Investigative Practical Work in Year 12 Biology Programmes".

**Brent Mawson** has been Head of Centre for Technology Education at Auckland College of Education since 1995. His current area of research is on the development of technological literacy in children during their first three years of schooling. He has delivered papers on Technology Education at NZARE (1997,98) AARE/NZARE (1999) TENZ (1999), and the First Biennial International Conference on Technology Education Research (2000) and has published in *set* (1998) and the ACE Papers (1998)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Editorial Committee wishes to thank the following peer reviewers for taking the time to review the papers in this issue.

*Jill Holt*

*Robert Hoerberigs*

*Phil Harrington*

*Dr Vicki Carpenter*

*Dr Elizabeth Rata*

*Dr Joce Jesson*

*Toni Harrington*

*Kerry Lee*

The Committee would also like to thank *Dr Joce Jesson* for final editorial adjustments and *Ursula Walters* for providing editorial assistance.

