

Introduction to Issue 10 Special Edition

Sylvia Ashton-Warner is arguably New Zealand's most famous teacher. Until relatively recently she was largely unheralded in New Zealand, Ashton-Warner has increasingly come to the attention of New Zealanders who recognise her importance not only as a writer but also as an educationalist.

New Zealand was a harsh environment for this teacher who developed new ideas at a time when slavish allegiance to 'official' ideas was important. It was a destructive environment for a woman working to challenge what she called the 'permanent solid block of male educational hostility'. It was an unforgiving environment for a person who brought an idiosyncratic approach to relationships while those around her met traditional and conventional expectations.

That she should find a warmer reception as a writer and teacher in other countries added to the degree to which she was not accorded the sort of attention we are quick to give to lesser lights in this country. Perhaps she was a 'tall poppy' long before we started to use the expression!

This edition of ACE Papers brings together a set of papers and information about one of the most distinguished graduates of the Auckland College of Education, Sylvia Ashton Warner. Stuart Middleton provides an introduction to the key ideas that Sylvia Ashton-Warner had about the growth of language in children, and teaching, and learning. *Releasing the Native Imagery* draws heavily on her works to summarise her key vocabulary, her ideas about writing, and her thoughts about young learners. He follows this with an account of the naming of the library at the Auckland College of Education as the Sylvia Ashton-Warner Library. *What's in a Name?* – The Naming of the Sylvia Ashton-Warner Library at the Auckland College of Education tells the story of how the library was re-named and is appropriately published in the year which saw the library refurbishment completed, the opening of the *Dennis McGrath Wing*, and the opening of a permanent display on Sylvia Ashton-Warner. The naming of the library after 'our' teacher was strongly supported by Dennis McGrath in his role as Principal of the college.

Between these papers is a poem, *The Artist*, Sylvia Ashton-Warner wrote in 1928 as a first year student at the college and after the second paper is *Dancing Song*, a poem from her

second year which won second prize in the *Serious Verse Category* of Manuka, the literary magazine of the Auckland Teachers College.

Peter Hughes, College Librarian, has compiled a bibliography of the Works of Sylvia Ashton-Warner which brings together for the first time a complete record of her writing and its various published forms.

Finally, we re-publish here an article written by Ian Mitchell, pioneering teacher at Hillary College, who as a leading thinker about education and about the education of children in a multicultural setting was among the very first to try to bring the attention of teachers to the importance and relevance of Sylvia Ashton-Warner's work. *Sylvia Ashton-Warner in the Secondary School* is a seminal paper which encouraged others to read her again and to think seriously about her challenges. By making it available once again it is hoped that a new generation of teachers are similarly encouraged.

At the Auckland Teachers College, Sylvia Ashton-Warner met Keith Henderson and a student friendship developed into a life-long marriage. It is to the three children of Sylvia and Keith, their partners and children, their grandchildren and great grandchildren, that this volume is dedicated with aroha and grateful thanks for their interest and support. We cherish the opportunity that Elliot, Jasmine, and Ashton have given to the college to join with them in honouring their mother in this way.

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