

Editorial: "Of Making Many Books..."

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There is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh" (Ecclesiastes 12:12). So said the writer of this enigmatic book in the Old Testament, and thousands of students down the years can no doubt say a heartfelt Amen to that!

In 1996, New Zealand university students produced in total no fewer than 1,964 post-graduate theses, averaging more than 130 pages each, with PhD students characteristically writing over 300 pages. This is a truly incredible volume of scholarly endeavour for a small country. How many hours of toil it represents is incalculable. The number of theses presented in 1997 is likely to be similar, more rather than less. When these totals are multiplied by the number of universities and other degree-granting tertiary institutions in the world, the volume of research information generated becomes simply astronomical. Even with the technological wizardry of the Internet and the World Wide Web, the processes of locating, gaining access to, digesting and reflecting on such a vast resource at the cutting-edge of knowledge, become mind-boggling tasks. About one in every twelve of these theses is in the field of education, or its related disciplines, representing a huge investment of time devoted to the solving of educational problems.

In previous years, some theses were included in the Index New Zealand (INNZ) database, but the listing in the *Annual Review* was incomplete, as not all universities submitted their theses. A distinctive feature of this year's *Annual Review* is the comprehensive and up-to-date listing of education-related theses, downloaded from the fully-catalogued records held on the New Zealand Bibliographic Network (NZBN) mainframe database, abbreviated, and re-keyworded using the Australian Public Affairs Information Service (APAIS) thesaurus to make them comparable with the other entries in the bibliography. In all, the

bibliography includes 160 theses presented in 1996, and another 69 which were presented in 1997 and had been entered on the NZBN database by 31 January, 1998. It is expected that the remaining 1997 theses will be catalogued on the database in due course, and these will be included in the 1998 issue of the *Annual Review*. Because of the thesis backlog, the bibliography, with its total of 629 entries, is very much larger than usual. As in previous years, it includes a considerable number of difficult-to-locate references drawn from the INNZ databases, including various addresses on educational topics, conference papers, as well as many journal articles. It remains an invaluable and popular reference for teacher and student alike.

A unique feature of the *Annual Review* has always been its very substantial reference section, giving it a distinctive place among similar publications from other tertiary education departments in New Zealand. Apart from the bibliography, this section has contained the education diary and a collection of information gathered from a variety of sources, including parliamentary bulletins reporting the process of legislative change in education, information which both now and in years to come should prove a valuable record.

In this issue, the 1997 Diary of News from the Education Sector, which forms the essential underpinning for the review, is retained, but entries have been expanded to give a little more information of their context. Those students who have engaged in historical research know full well that it can be extremely difficult to find material fleshing out the significant events of any given time period. A review in which day-to-day material is recorded sequentially, in association with in-depth comment on selected current issues, has the potential to be a very useful research tool. In this issue some ephemeral and difficult-to-assemble material on such matters as educational conferences and overseas visitors has had to be omitted, to conserve space.

There are thirteen specially-commissioned articles in this issue, each subject to peer review prior to publication, and each dealing with an important policy matter which has become current during 1997, or reviewing a significant new piece of research. The *Annual Review* is a vehicle for staff of the School of Education itself to express their views, but a significant number of articles come from outside the university. Once again this year, two of the articles are from graduate students at Victoria University of Wellington, based on first-class assignments submitted during the year.

The first two articles, one by Michael Peters and Peter Roberts, of the University of Auckland, the other by Cedric Hall, Professor and Head of the School of Education at Victoria University, provide thoughtful critiques of two of the “Green Papers” issued in late 1997, giving the Government’s thinking on the way ahead for tertiary education and for the National Qualifications Framework. Both papers take the Government to task for perceived inadequacies in its approach, but both give constructive suggestions over which of the various options presented in the Green Papers are likely to be fruitful.

The next two articles, by Dave Guerin and John Barrington, examine further issues of national policy and administration, one in connection with the funding of private forms of tertiary education, advocating a more in-depth consideration of equity issues, the other tracing historically the swings of the balance between central and local control in education, and making the important distinction between *decentralisation* (the transfer of responsibility) and *devolution* (the transfer of power).

Next comes an article from the “Smithfield project” research team, raising worrying issues about the undesirable ethnic side-effects of increased parent choice of school on many Maori and Pacific Islands children. The authors argue that competitive mechanisms introduced into educational provision over the last few years have been to the disadvantage of such children.

A most interesting article written by a bicultural team based in Hamilton and Tauranga describes five innovative experiments designed to develop and trial learning and behavioural resources for Maori students, their teachers and families. Then Lesieli Tongati’o, from the Ministry of Education, outlines a whole range of initiatives undertaken by the Ministry to raise the quality of education for Pacific peoples in New Zealand through its long-term plan entitled *Ko e Ako 'a e Kakai Pasifika*.

The events surrounding some very hasty legislation designed to remove kindergarten teachers from the State Sector form the focus for an article on early childhood education by Claire Davison. There is no doubt that this chronicle of a whole series of remarkable policy manoeuvres will engender considerable interest and much concern to those working in the early childhood area. Sarah-Eve Farquhar, from Massey University, continues with a concise but very timely article on the increasing feminisation of the teaching profession, and some of the reasons for it, particularly in the early childhood area.

The curriculum piece for this issue is provided by Bob Garden, who outlines some of the implications of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study for New Zealand students and teachers, highlights the dangers of an unthinking use of “international league tables” of student achievement, and makes some suggestions on how the results of such large-scale international comparative studies can be used wisely in policy formation.

Keith Sullivan addresses a very current and concerning issue, that of school bullying, and in a novel use of three varied focus-groups as a research methodology, evaluates the Police anti-bullying programme *Kia Kaha*. He also joins two other authors in an examination of provisions for “at risk” secondary school students through the CRASH programme (Cultural, Recreational, Academic, Skills for Life, and Health), which makes use of community youthworkers to establish rapport with youth who are in some way marginalised from mainstream society.

In our final article, David Stuart uses a study of primary documents relating to the 1954 Morals Enquiry (Mazengarb Committee) to place current concerns about youth, morals and values in an historical framework. In outlining his thesis of “crisis manufacture”, he relates this to current developments following the implementation of policies under the Tomorrow’s Schools reforms.

All in all, I believe this is a bumper issue, with a very diverse group of authors tackling a very diverse group of issues, and I commend it to all our readers, in New Zealand and overseas.