

# Teachers and Curriculum



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

KAIAKO ME TE MARAUTANGA

VOLUME 8 2005



# TEACHERS AND CURRICULUM

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**Teachers and Curriculum** is an annual publication of the School of Education, the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. It includes articles about curriculum issues, research in the area of curriculum and informed curriculum practice. Reviews of curriculum-related books may also be included. The Opinion item is contributed by a leading New Zealand educationalist.

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## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

*Teachers and Curriculum* provides an avenue for the publication of papers that:

- i raise important issues to do with curriculum
- ii report on research in the area of curriculum
- iii provide examples of informed curriculum focus
- iv review books that have a curriculum focus

This peer reviewed journal welcomes papers on any of these from tertiary staff and students, teachers, and other educators who have a special interest in curriculum matters. Papers on research may be full papers, or if time or space is at a premium, research notes, that is, a 2,000 word summary.

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Please provide copy in 12 point type on single sided A4 paper, line and half spacing for the main text, with 20 mm margins on all edges. Follow the style of referencing in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

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CATHERINE LANG  
EDITOR 2005

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou

With this edition of *Teachers and Curriculum* we farewell Jeanne Biddulph from our editorial committee. Jeanne, along with Fred Biddulph, was a founding editor of *Teachers and Curriculum* in 1997, and throughout her career has been an advocate for teachers and for teachers' voices in curriculum development. We thank you Jeanne, for your vision and energy, in helping establish *Teachers and Curriculum* as a venue where those voices can be heard.

We welcome Marilyn Taylor, who works in mathematics teacher education, to the editorial committee.

This edition of *Teachers and Curriculum* continues our position of being an advocate for teachers, children, learning and the curriculum.

Clive McGee, in his opinion piece, rightly recognises that New Zealand teachers deserve credit for their central role in bringing about New Zealand's world-class education system, and that teachers are the key curriculum decision-makers. He argues that it is counter-productive to expect teachers to adhere rigidly to a national curriculum prescription. Clive also identifies the importance of school-based curriculum decision-making. The Ministry of Education has also identified its importance in recent times, and indeed has hailed it as an 'innovation'. Like much in education, 'what goes around comes around', and ideas that once were popular go out of favour, but later return to popularity. It was not very long ago that local curriculum goals were part of schools' initial charters (1988-89), and that the University of Waikato was involved in a Ministry research and development contract<sup>1</sup> on school-based curriculum development (1994-5).

A little earlier, in 1988, the then Department of Education published a draft national curriculum statement, which contained the following statement, under the heading *Who decides what schools will teach?*

*It is therefore essential that all three groups – parents, teachers, and the wider school community – work in partnership in designing an effective school curriculum. The aims of a school can be more readily achieved when they are developed jointly and can be supported and reinforced at home and by the community. (p. 6)<sup>2</sup>*

The results of successful collaboration in local curriculum decision-making, using the above document, were published in a text that was distributed free to all New Zealand schools.<sup>3</sup>

School based curriculum decision-making, and teacher autonomy to decide what is best for the particular students she/he teaches, has in the past, been a feature of New Zealand's education system. But the notion of trusting teachers to do their job sometimes feels submerged, in a mix of prescriptive curriculum 'delivery' and written assessment.

The opinion piece is followed by articles that carry the voices of children. Sally Peters writes about children's transition from early childhood education to school, and the potential of the current curriculum developments to make that transition period less of a hurdle for children. Margaret Scratchley writes about primary school children's views on what the health curriculum should contain, and Peter Stanley about the views of adolescents and their needs for health services.

Stephanie Dix and David Whitehead provide us with thoughtful examples of classroom practice in reading and writing; and Sashi Sharma and Jenny Young-Loveridge do the same in mathematics understanding and thinking.

Colin Gibbs emphasises the importance of relational connectedness in teaching, and argues that if education is to be a liberating experience, it must have at its heart, creating and nurturing meaningful relational connections between teachers and students, and with self, others, place and our world.

Barbara Whyte advocates for beginning teachers and provides us with an example of a school that sees it as an obligation to support and nurture new colleagues into the profession.

Colin Gibbs completes the list with his thought-provoking comment piece about standards setting for teachers in Aotearoa-New Zealand, and asks us to consider what makes suitable evidence that a person has the qualities to be a teacher.

I hope the journal prompts reflection, discussion and debate, and I invite contributions in response to these articles.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ramsay, P., Harold, B., Hill, D., Lang, C., & Yates, R. with Patara, L. & Jeffs, C. (1995). *School Based Curriculum Development Project: Final report of the SBCD Project: Milestone 6*. Occasional paper No. 6 of the SBCD Project. Hamilton: School of Education: University of Waikato.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Education (1988). *Draft national curriculum statement: A discussion document for primary and secondary schools*. Wellington: Department of Education.

<sup>3</sup> Ramsay, P., Hawk, K., Harold, B. Marriott, R., & Poskitt, J. (1993). *Developing partnerships: Collaboration between teachers and parents*. Wellington: Learning Media.