

TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

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Home Education Has the Right Formula

David Hood, chief executive of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority from 1990 until 1996, has written a book having a title that says what home educators have known for years: *Our Secondary Schools Don't Work Anymore*.

Mr Hood says the present system is not working for pupils, parents, employers or society. Sounds pretty grim.

Some of the changes advocated by Mr Hood include:

- scrapping traditional timetables
- doing away with age-based classes
- abandoning a subject-based curriculum
- having schools run morning classes, leaving the afternoons free for pupils to work in the community developing life skills (*Wellington Dominion*, 13 August 1998, p. 2).

It is great to see people who once were in high places advocate some of home education's favourite pearls of wisdom. It is noted, however, that Mr Hood has waited until he is out of the system to say such things.

The present Government is to be congratulated upon recognising that the schools are not always doing the best....or in fact, even the basic job....of teaching those compelled to attend how to read, write and do sums. Prime Minister Jenny Shipley and Education Minister Wyatt Creech have announced a three-year initiative to ensure all nine-year-olds will have these basic literacy and numeracy

skills by the year 2005. That means today's two- and three-year-olds. So after the three-year initiative, these children will be five and six, just starting to attend school. That means the \$19.5 million this is going to cost is either going to be spent on schools before the target group arrives, or else it will be used in a big publicity campaign to get parents on-side and developing these skills before the little ones arrived at school. Mrs Shipley did indicate that a publicity drive, something akin to a public health message she said, was part of the deal.

Or maybe it meant that today's nine-year-olds would be able to read, write and do sums by 2005, when they would be turning 16. That gives the school system seven years to knock the basics into them. As Mrs Shipley went on to say, it is not acceptable for about \$65 million to be spent each year on training programmes for 16 and 17-year-olds who need to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills (*Wellington Dominion*, 22 October 1998, p. 2).

Admissions like these from Mr Hood and Mrs Shipley put a whole new meaning on the well known words of the Education Act which demand that home educators teach as regularly and well as in a registered school.

The Family Matters

William Galston, a former domestic policy adviser to President Clinton and now a professor at the University of Maryland, U.S.A., has pointed out that you only need to do three things to avoid poverty in the U.S.A. They are, finish high school, marry before having a child and have the mother produce the child after the age of 20. Only 8% of children from families who do this are poor; 80% of children from families who fail to do so are poor. (Bruce Logan, *Cutting Edge*, July/August 1998, p. 1.)

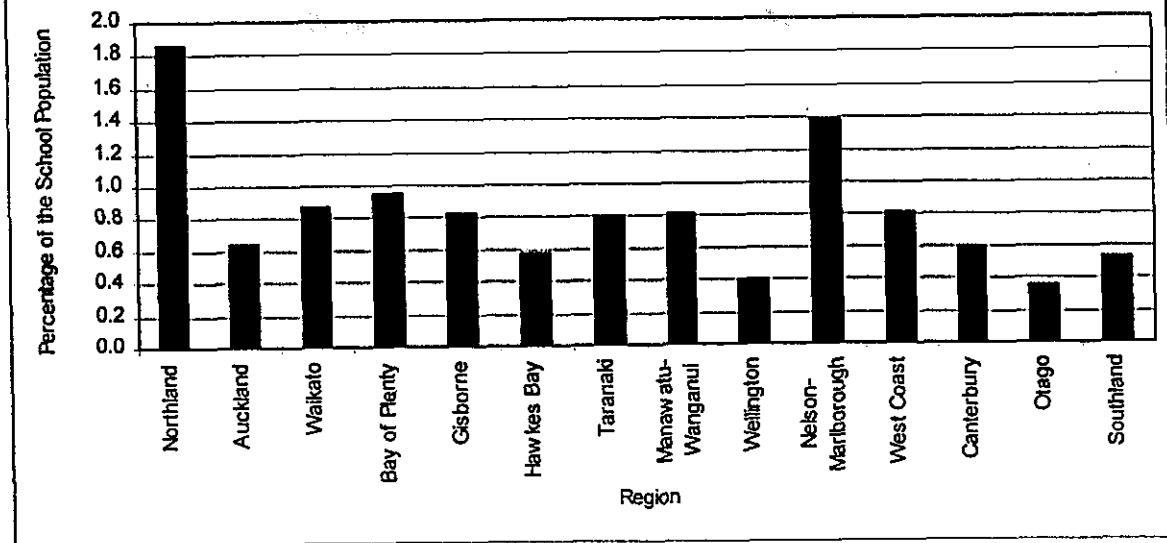
New Zealand District Court Judge Andrew Becroft recently said a common thread characterised youth offenders. "They are street-wise and seem to lack basic moral values...and the majority lack a male role model in the home....It is an accepted theory that today's youth are the most under-fathered in the history of the western

world." He said 37 of the last 41 young male offenders he saw in court this year had said they had either no meaningful contact with their father, did not know where he was or did not want anything to do with him. (*Wellington Dominion*, 4 August 1998, p. 17.)

The notion that geniuses and elite athletes are gifted or possess innate talents has come into question in a study by Michael Howe, professor of psychology at Exeter, who has concluded that excellence is determined by opportunities, encouragement, training, motivation, self-confidence and — most of all — practice. Studies of accomplished artists, mathematicians, elite athletes showed few early signs of promise prior to parental encouragement. Highest achievement levels require 1000s of hours of serious practice. (*Wellington Dominion*, 19 October, 1998, p. 15.)

Desk Copy

Figure 3: Proportion of Homeschoolers by Region at 1 July 1998



TEACH Bulletin is a monthly publication of TEACH Publications, and is concerned with those things which may impact on home educators. Articles will deal with political developments, statist and professional trends, correspondence with educationalists, and other items of general interest to home educators. There is also a regular opinion poll regarding educational issues of the day that may impact home schoolers.

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Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching.
 — Proverbs 1:8

Seventy-eight percent of all home educators reside in the North Island. Relative to the school population, Northland and the Nelson-Marlborough regions show the highest proportions of home educators, while Wellington and Otago show the lowest proportions.
 (Graph prepared by Denise Bode, Data Management Unit, Ministry of Education)

48 Ways to Remain Unemployed

The University of New York has made a list of reasons most frequently given by employers for turning down candidates applying for a job with their company. These reasons were taken from reports produced by 153 businesses. It appears to be mainly a matter of attitude. And the time to brush up on many of these qualities is NOT the week before submitting the CV: these things need to be built in during the formative childhood years. In other words, the parents need to be consciously working on developing these traits in their youngsters. Home educators possess most of the advantages for accomplishing this task with the best results.

- 1 Poor personal appearance.
- 2 Arrogance, aggressiveness, self-satisfaction, superiority complex, know-it-all attitude.
- 3 Difficulty in expressing oneself clearly, a weak voice, poor diction and grammar.
- 4 Complete lack of any career

- plans, projects or aims.
- 5 Lack of interest and enthusiasm, passiveness and indifference.
- 6 Lack of confidence and poise, nervousness, being ill at ease.
- 7 No participation in activities.
- 8 Very interested in money, and only interested in the best offer.
- 9 Poor or borderline academic achievements.
- 10 Applicant refuses to start at the bottom of the ladder or is too demanding and stubborn.
- 11 Applicant makes all kinds of excuses for an unfavourable report.
- 12 Lack of tact.
- 13 Lack of maturity.
- 14 Lack of courtesy, bad manners.
- 15 Applicant criticises his/her former employers.
- 16 Lack of social insight.
- 17 Dislike for study.
- 18 Lack of vitality.
- 19 Applicant does not look the interviewer straight in the eye.
- 20 A lifeless handshake, without warmth.
- 21 High degree of indecision.
- 22 Marital problems.
- 23 Inability to get along with parents.
- 24 Applicant neglects to answer all the questions on application

(Continued on page 4)

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form.
25 Very limited job search.
26 Looking for temporary work.
27 Little or no sense of humour.
28 Insufficient knowledge of his/
her area of specialisation.
29 Lets his/her parents make the
decisions.
30 No interest in the company or
industry.

- 31 Applicant stresses the fact that he/she is well connected with someone in the company, tries to "pull strings".
- 32 Unwillingness to transfer to new location.
- 33 Too cynical.
- 34 A poor moral attitude.
- 35 Candidate displays laziness.
- 36 An intolerant candidate.
- 37 Limited interests.
- 38 Mismanagement of personal finances.
- 39 No interest in community activities.
- 40 Inability to take criticism.
- 41 No consideration for the value of experience.
- 42 Radical ideas.
- 43 Late for the interview without a good reason.
- 44 Applicant has no knowledge of the company to which he/she is applying.
- 45 Failure to ask questions about the job.
- 46 Too aggressive and too insistent.
- 47 Applicant answers questions evasively.
- 48 Lack of personal initiative.

Technology Downside

A study from Lincoln University shows that computer-savvy students fare no better than their techno-illiterate peers when tackling applied computing papers. Lincoln's Dr Theresa McLennan researched the performance of 100 applied computer science students then studied their backgrounds.

She found that previous experience with computers does not mean better performance in class, and young students with information technology skills are, in fact, less likely to succeed.

The research shows that mature computing students (older people) do better at introductory papers than young ones. Dr McLennan attributes this success to their dedication to study, and better communication skills. (*Infotech Weekly*, No. 364, 28/9/98, p. 8.)