

TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

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Achievement 2001: But What About Now?

"Starting in 2001, senior secondary school students will be aiming at a new set of national qualifications."

These are the opening words of a colour glossy brochure from the MOE and the NZ Qualifications Authority, a copy of which is enclosed with this issue of *TEACH Bulletin*. Significant changes to school-leaving qualifications are being introduced in the year 2001 at Fifth Form (Year 11) level and phased in at Sixth and Seventh Form levels in 2002 and 2003. The prime school-leaving qualification will be the NCEA: the National Certificate of Educational Achievement. There is a qualification by that name now, but it (like all the other present qualifications: School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate, University Bursaries, Higher School Certificate) will be changing.

Even so, during this change-over time, the mixed bag of qualifications currently available will all continue to be available.

The trouble is that those students wanting or needing qualifications between now and 2003 when the system is planned to be fully operational, may end up with a hard-to-identify mix of certificates and credits from both old and new systems.

Already an increasing number of school leavers arrive at the tertiary institution's enrolment office or at the job interview with a combination of a) credits for various Unit Standards (chunks of knowledge) which are recorded on this new (since 1989) National Qualifica-

tions Framework and b) other traditional results from School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate, etc. Now the employers and tertiary institutions are all used to the traditional qualifications, but are not yet fully up to speed with Unit Standards or the National Qualifications Framework. In addition, it appears that the NZQA is introducing another type of knowledge chunk called the Achievement Standard. It is different from the Unit Standard. Unit Standards lead to qualifications developed by industry and other national standards bodies. Achievement Stan-

dards are used for school curriculum subjects and can be both internally and externally assessed.

A notice circulated to schools by the NZ Qualifications Authority dated 6 November 1998 said, "Most secondary schools now provide programmes that enable students to gain credits on the National Qualifications Framework. Many of these programmes yield Framework credits in addition to results in School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate and University Entrance, Bursaries and Scholarships. However, an increasing number of schools now provide programmes that yield Framework credits only, as an alternative to School Certificate, Sixth Form

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ERO Review Appeal Procedure: There Is None

The Hon Annette King, MP for Rongotai, asked a question of the Minister of Education, Hon Wyatt Creech: Is there a review process for parents providing home education following an Education Review Office report, if not, why not?

Hon Wyatt Creech provided this written reply 10 November 1998:

The Education Review Office reviews the education programmes of parents whose children have been exempted, under Section 21 of the Education Act 1989, from the requirement to be enrolled in a registered school. After meeting the parents and examining work produced by the child, the review officer writes a report on the pro-

gramme and states whether the child is being "taught at least as regularly and well as in a registered school", as required by Section 21 of the Education Act 1989. The parents receive a copy of the report and have an opportunity to respond to the Education Review Office. A copy of the report is then sent to the Ministry of Education.


If the Education Review Office report does not confirm that the child is being "taught at least as regularly and well as in a registered school", then action passes to the Ministry of Education, which originally granted the exemption from the requirement to be enrolled in a registered school.

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Desk Copy

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Certificate and University Bursaries. In particular, many schools offer courses leading to Framework credits only in some subjects, and Sixth Form Certificate in other subjects. Some schools offer very few Sixth Form Certificate programmes at all... Many teachers with experience in assessment against unit standards point out that no entirely accurate comparison can be made between results from a ranking system with its pre-determined distribution of grades, and the standards-based Framework system in which only those learners who achieve a standard are awarded credit."

The idea is to eventually do away with the old SC, SFC, UB stuff and just have the National Framework made up of both Unit Standards and Achievement Standards that can be used to gain the NCEA, Diplomas, Trade Certificates and University Degrees. 

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.

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

(Continued from page 1) Appeal

The Ministry writes to the parents, inviting them to comment on the report before a decision is taken about the future of the home education programme. After considering the report from the Education Review Office and any comment received from the parents, the Ministry will decide whether or not to revoke the certificate of exemption which it originally issued.

If the Ministry decides to revoke the certificate of exemption, there is no provision for a review of the Ministry's decision. Indeed, Section 21(4) of the Education Act 1989 states that "the Secretary's decision is final". It should be noted, however, that in such a case the parents will have had two opportunities to make submissions about the situation -- once to the Education Review Office when the report was received and once to the Ministry of Education before the decision to revoke the certificate.

Although there is no provision for appeal against a decision to revoke a certificate of exemption, a senior Ministry staff member will, on the grounds of natural justice, review the decision-making process if parents argue that this was flawed. 

Who Will Teach the Teachers?

Teachers, sometimes admirably self-sacrificing, dedicated and effective as individuals but collectively the white-anting nemesis of the public education system, have been rocked back on their heels by the leaking of the Government's plans to restore literacy and numeracy. And not before time.

Employers and universities have been complaining for years that children emerging from the fluff-headed atmosphere of state secondary schools know all about Colin McCahon, global warming, Shortland Street, gay and lesbian

rights, Jonah Lomu, the Internet and the Treaty of Waitangi but they can't do arithmetic or put a sentence together.


They not only know no English grammar — they have a profound contempt for grammatical terms and rules. They not only can't calculate without a calculator — they scorn any suggestion that they should have a rudimentary grasp of number theory, and know how to add, subtract, multiply and divide small numbers in their heads and large numbers on the back of an envelope.

Now it seems the worm is turning. Teachers are to be required to stop wasting time with touchy-feely debates on biculturalism and the rights of minority groups, and start drilling their charges in the skills needed to hold down jobs in the real world.

Teachers are paid to do just this, but for a generation they have been doing less and less of it, under the malevolent influence of deconstructionism, post-modernism, political correctness and all the other modish jargonizing philosophies aimed at dumbing down the community till everyone is equally ignorant, till the dawn of minimalist egalitarianism.

This is what worries me. It's all very well to say, as the Government is now saying, that teachers will have a responsibility to see that every nine-year-old will be numerate and able to read and write by the year 2005, but who is going to teach the teachers?

Today's teachers are products of the same benighted system. They have been through self-styled "colleges of education" with entrance and graduation standards so eroded by political correctness that the schools who give them jobs are bringing into their classrooms Greek wooden horses of intractable anti-learning.

(Frank Haden, *Sunday Star-Times*, 25 October 1998, p. C4.) 

Trading Post



Wanted:

Saxon maths
54, 65, 76, & 87.

Contact:

Alison
ph/fax (03) 541 8008

For Sale:

Christian Liberty Academy
Adventures in Phonics.....\$5
Meeting New Friends
(Reader for 5-7yr).....\$5

Contact:

Cheryl Cobb
Ngahinapouri Village
R.D. 2, Ohaupo
ph. (07) 825-2900

For Sale:

ABeka -- Grade 6
Arithmetic - Teachers Key.\$25
Speed Drills & Tests -
Student x 2.....\$5 each
Teacher Key x 2.....\$10 each
God's Gift of Language C -
Teachers Ed.....\$20
Teachers Ed Test Key.....\$10
Students Tests x 2.....\$5 each
ABeka -- Grade 7
Basic Maths 1, Teachers
Key.....\$40
Basic Maths 1, Teacher Test/
Quiz Key.....\$10
Basic Maths 1, Student Test/
Quiz Bk.....\$5
Vocabulary, Spelling, Poetry
1, Teachers Ed.....\$10
Teacher Quiz Key.....\$5
Student Book.....\$10
Student Quiz Book.....\$5

Contact:

Jenny Eggink
40 Ararata Rd.
R.D. 14
Hawera
Ph. (06) 278-7657

Wanted:

Any second hand Raymond
Moore or Charlotte Mason books
or anything similar.

Contact:

Carolyn Hickey
ph. (09) 278-5205

Wanted:

Learning Language Arts Through
Liturature: Orange, Purple, Tan,
Green and Gray.

Contact:

Evelyn George
Boundary Road
Dipton R.D., Southland
ph (03) 248-5256

Wanted:

Any Rod & Staff "Little Jewel"
readers, and also any "Pathway
Publisher" readers, preferrably the
earlier age level but will take any-
thing if I can't get that!

Contact:

Carol Magee
Galatea Rd 4057
R.D. 1, Murupara
(07) 366 4774
quadsquad@xtra.co.nz

Wanted:

Scope English Grammer & Com-
position, Level 2

Contact:

Barbara Smith
4 Tawa St.
Palmerston North
ph/fax (06) 357-4399
craig.barbara.smith@xtra.co.nz

Wanted:

Saxon Math 65.

Contact:

Phone: Tania (09) 483-9014
email: pthomas@ihug.co.nz

Wanted:

Any volumes of Weaver Curricu-
lum, Day by Day Planner and
Wisdom Words.
Saxon Maths K and Math 1
Addison-Wesley Maths K, Maths
1, Math Pack
A good phonics programme

Contact:

Carolyn Timmons
ph. (06) 329-0972
fax (06) 329-0971

Wanted:

Saxon Maths 65 & 87 & 1/2 Al-
gebra

Contact:

Liz Tosh
Dipton, R.D., Southland
ph. (03) 248-5084

For Sale:

Saxon Maths 76, \$90
Modern Curriculum Press Science
E Teachers Manuals & wk bk,
\$40
Modern Curriculum Science F
Teachers Manuals & wk bk, \$40
The Roots of Language Series
Word Wise--expanding vocab
with roots & prefixes, \$10
Word Building -- learning about
roots and prefixes, \$10

Contact:

J. van Boxel
246 Farn Rd.
Hakataramea Valley
R.D., Kurow
(03) 436-0464

University Study Costs

In July this year Katrina Ani
Gray, BA, Vice-President (Ad-
ministration), Massey University
Students' Association, estimated
the cost of sending two children to
university in 10 years time. The
following projections are for the
year 2008. They represent the
least expensive degree at a NZ
university, a Bachelor of Arts, ex-
clusive of any government sub-
sidy, and based on a compounding
inflation rate of 2% per year.

Tuition fees	\$12,190
Books, etc.	\$ 1,341
Living costs (37 wks)	\$ 9,142
Total	\$22,673

A three year degree programme
would cost \$68,019 for each child,
so the two would cost the family a
total of \$136,038.

Currently the government sub-
sidises the tuition fees by 75%. If
this is still the case in 2008, it
brings the tuition costs down to
\$3,048 per student per year, so the
total cost would be \$81,186.

So your two children could antici-
pate forking out between \$81,186
and \$136,038 over three years
hoping for a return after that.
Could they not invest that same
amount in a business and realise
returns straight away? Could your
home education programme in-
clude an inexpensive cottage in-
dustry making returns right now?

The Reading Wars

by Nicholas Lemann

An old disagreement over how to teach children to read — whole-language versus phonics — has re-emerged in California. In each of the past three years legislators there have passed bills designed to force the state's public schools to move the needle in reading instruction away from whole-language and toward its arch-enemy — the phonics method. The view in the education world is that politicians have never before tried to dictate specific teaching methods to this extent. Phonics forces are agitating for similar laws in other states, and in California a related movement is pushing to establish political control over mathematics instruction as well.

The Combatants

Whole-language theory holds that learning to read and write English is analogous to learning to speak it — a natural, unconscious process best fostered by unstructured immersion. In an atmosphere rich in simple printed texts and in reading aloud, small children make a wondrous associative leap from knowing the alphabet to being able to read whole words. Their minds receive print as if each word were a Chinese ideogram. If a word is unfamiliar it can be skipped, guessed at, or picked up from context. Phonics theory takes exactly the opposite position: the proper analogy for learning to read is learning music notation, or Morse code, or Braille, in which mastery of a set of symbols comes first. Children should first learn the letters and letter combinations that convey the English language's forty-four sounds; then they can read whole words by decoding them from their component phonemes. "Sounding out" words is a phonics, rather than a whole-language technique.

Although the whole-language movement began in the early 1970s, the dispute about reading instruction goes back much further. Noah Webster (1758-1843)

believed in phonics, Horace Mann (1796-1859) in the word method. In the late 1920s, as progressive education became an influential movement, schools began to switch from phonics to whole-word reading instruction. The much-lampooned mid-twentieth-century Dick and Jane readers, and also Dr. Seuss's *The Cat in the Hat*, are based on whole-word theory: they try to get children to familiarize themselves with a limited set of simple words (to memorize them, phonics people would say, like trick ponies), not to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to decode words they haven't seen before. Rudolf Flesch's scorching 1955 best seller *Why Johnny Can't Read* turned the pendulum back toward phonics in the 1960s. By the 1980s, the glory decade for whole-language, the pendulum had swung again.

Recent History

The founders of whole-language, Frank Smith, for many years a professor of psychology at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, and Kenneth Goodman, a professor of education at the University of Arizona, see themselves as champions of teachers who are up against a hostile world. They present whole-language instruction as a joyful, humanistic, intellectually challenging alternative to deadening phoneme drills — one that turns the classroom from a factory floor into a nurturing environment in which children naturally blossom. Phonics instructors heatedly dispute the idea that learning phonemes is dull. Nonetheless, the juxtaposition of joyous whole-language learning and boring phonics is at the heart of the whole-language ethos.

The NZ Connection

The specific vehicle for the spread of whole-language through American public education was a program called Reading Recovery, developed by a teacher in New Zealand named Marie Clay, which supposedly produced nearly miraculous results with third-and

fourth-graders who were having trouble reading. Reading Recovery itself draws upon both phonics and whole-language theory, but in America it has served as a transmission device for whole-language.

Two Philosophical Camps

Rudolf Flesch, in tracing the roots of the word method he found so alarming, identified Jean-Jacques Rousseau as the original culprit. He was right: a profound disagreement over whether freedom or discipline brings out the best in people underlies the debate over reading instruction (and also over math instruction, in which the math-concepts camp wants to do away with times tables and long division). In a slightly different context Frank Smith writes, "The difference between the two sides was not one that evidence or argument could ever resolve. The difference was one of world view." From the other side of the current divide Marilyn Jager Adams, a leading phonics advocate, agrees: how best to teach reading, she writes, "may be the most politicized topic in the field of education." Although many people are for phonics simply because they believe it works better, phonics is also a long-standing cause of the political right; in a number of communities it is one of the main organizing issues for the Christian Coalition. Whole-language is generally a cause of the left.

In 1993, when the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a long-running federal study, released for the first time state-by-state comparisons of reading proficiency, California finished fifth from the bottom, among the Deep South states that always come in last in national surveys. Three years later a new set of NAEP scores was published, showing that California's reading scores had dropped to next to last, ahead of only Guam's. The consensus was that embracing whole-language had been a huge mistake.

(Excerpted from *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 1997, p. 128-13)