

TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

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NCEA Qualification Morphs Once Again

It seems that the proposed school leaving qualification, the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), may actually give secondary school students graded marks using a point system, rather than (or maybe along side of) the vague "pass" standards originally proposed of "credit", "merit" or "excellence".

The NCEA is to progressively replace School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate and Bursary from next year. Students work toward a number of "Achievement Standards" in each subject to get the NCEA. Because the earlier credit/merit/excellence proposals had caused a backlash from some universities, which said there was no way of identifying top students, it is now expected the NCEA will include detailed student grades. Each Achievement Standard is made up of exams and internal assessments.

It is not yet known what scale will be used in this latest move back to grades. Critics have condemned the move to introduce these grades as a late backdown designed to appease some universities and schools concerned at the loss of traditional exams.

Avondale College principal Brent Lewis, who has major concerns about the new qualification, said it was further evidence of how "ill-conceived" the NCEA system was.

Education Minister Trevor Mallard told Parliament he had tried a bipartisan approach to secondary school exams by

offering to include percentage marks with the NCEA qualification, but said National was not interested. There was some indication that National might even scrap the NCEA entirely if voted back into power.

Palmerston North Boys' High rector David Syms said the grade point scheme was a farce. He described it as nothing but a "political compromise between giving a mark, and not giving a mark."

Mr Syms has had talks with

Auckland Grammar to investigate "new pathways" for his school, including the introduction of the Cambridge International Exams (CIE) as an alternative to the NCEA. It is understood about 24 schools were interested in the CIEs.

The Cambridge International Examinations, though based in the UK, are geared to an international rather than an English university entrance qualification, and so have currency with universities all over the world, including those in New Zealand.

Mark Vella of Auckland Grammar told *TEACH Bulletin* that the CIEs could well be offered in other centres in the future and are about

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Teens Need "Hands-On" Parents

A CNN report from Washington D.C. reveals what home educators have been crowing about for years: that home education, wherein parents are vitally involved with their children's daily lives, creates closer family units.

A recent study shows that teens whose parents have established rules in the house have better relationships with their parents and a substantially lower risk of smoking, drinking, and using illegal drugs than the typical teen. The study was released by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (NCASA). The findings were part of its sixth annual national teen substance abuse survey.

The study evaluated a "hands-on" approach versus a "hands-off" approach, and found that only one in four teens lives with "hands-

on" parents, but those teens are at one-quarter the risk for drug abuse than those living in "hands-off" households.

Teens living in "hands-on" households have parents who consistently take 10 or more of the following 12 actions:

- * Monitor what their teens watch on TV
- * Monitor what their teens do on the Internet
- * Put restrictions on the CDs they buy
- * Know where their teens are after school and on weekends
- * Are told the truth by their teens about where they really are going
- * Are "very aware" of their teens academic performance
- * Impose a curfew
- * Make clear they would be "extremely upset" if their teen

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a third of the cost of the International Baccalaureate Exams. NZ home educated students wanting to sit the CIEs would be provided with the syllabus outline and a place at Auckland Grammar to sit the exam, but the students would be on their own apart from that. Further information can be obtained from Mark Vella at Auckland Grammar, ph. (09) 623-5400.

(Facts excerpted from NZ Herald articles of 20 & 21/3/01 and Manawatu Evening Standard of 21/3/01.)

Auckland Grammar Head Comments

Auckland Grammar's Headmaster John Morris made some pointed comments about the NCEA at the school's Prizegiving on December 7 last year. "In essence this initiative will dismantle our current system of qualifications and replace it with an unproven and untried experimental alternative system, based on a new assessment system that has no currency overseas at all."

TEACH Bulletin

is a monthly publication of the Home Education Foundation, 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. Information herein is not to be construed as legal advice. Opinions expressed in TEACH Bulletin are those of the writer and should not be assumed to reflect those of the Home Education Foundation Trustees or Board of Reference Members.

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Hear, my son, your father's
instruction, and reject not your

Much of the flack Mr Morris goes on to describe sounds somewhat familiar: home educators are criticised for similar reasons and are often involved in home education because of sensing similar attitudes within the conventional school system. Do you identify with some of these comments?:

From my perspective, present policies seem aimed at destroying schools like Auckland Grammar School because we are different, because we have shown initiative and entrepreneurial skill, because we are achieving at an extraordinary level compared to other State schools, and because we have gone out on a limb over what we truly believe is bad education policy – and I refer particularly to NCEA.

The prevailing philosophy seems to be that universal mediocrity is a price worth paying for social equality, and that gives me great sadness.

Personally I'm all for equity provided it means equality of opportunity for all to receive a first-rate education.

But equity in the lexicon of the Ministry means that every student receives the same education and also achieves the same outcomes.

We will, if this policy continues unabated, end up producing a generation of students beset with educational anorexia. Any system that involves complete egalitarianism will reduce education to the lowest common denominator, a counter culture curriculum offering no challenge to lively wits and no obstacles to the indolent or incompetent.

Schools, of course,

which buck the trend towards this mediocrity invariably get accused of being elitist

International standards of excellence and the lifting of all of our students to their full potential is what today's educational enterprise must be all about. In fact excellence in every sphere should be held out as the target, fostered and encouraged by an effort of the social will: which means, among other things, by having institutions, especially of learning which are the finest and most demanding of their kind. A society which resents excellence is a society in trouble. What good does it do us if we hold back the best to make the rest feel better? We would not dream of doing so in rugby, and we would be alarmed if we thought we did it in medicine or the law.

One of the more common denominators among home educators is that desire to do the best for our children. For others to criticise us for not contributing our well-behaved children to the schools to act as good examples, for not ourselves being on the school board of trustees and other school committees so as to influence what goes on, are manifestly unfair criticisms. Even if these things were considered good in themselves (a proposition not without controversy among home educators!), the good would still be keeping us from the best: home educating! Home educators must come to understand and never shy away from one of our most potent roles, one that comes to us incidentally, not because we choose it: and that is our role at the cutting edge of preserving the civil and religious liberties of parents to determine the kind of education their children shall have.

And who needs all this wrangling over School Certificate, 6th Form Certificate, Bursary & NCEA when, as many home educated students have found, they can enter University without them.

(Mr Morris' comments excerpted from <http://www.ags.school.nz/>, 22/3/01.)

Trading Post



Wanted:

A Beka Books
 Grade 11 Chemistry: Precision & Design
 Grade 12 Physics: The Foundational Science
 Grade 10 Backgrounds to World Literature
 Grade 10 Masterpieces from World Literature
 Grade 7&8 Vocabulary, Spelling, Poetry I & II

For Sale:

Arithmetic 3.....\$17 incl. P&P

Contact:

Jenny
 Ph: (07) 578-1904
 Email: ngaituk@xtra.co.nz.

Wanted:

A Beka
 Language A
 Language A, Teachers Ed.
 Language B
 Language B, Teachers Ed.

Contact:

Tilly
 Ph: (09) 439-2320

For Sale:

Rod & Staff
 We Learn about God - Unit 1...\$8
 We Learn about God - Unit 1 Teacher's Manual.....\$12
 More Stories about God's People Units 1,2,3.....\$10
 More Stories about God's People Units 4,5.....\$10
 Reading Workbook - Unit 1.....\$8
 Working with Numbers 2 - Unit 1 Teacher's Edition.....\$2
 Working with Numbers 2 Unit 2.....\$8
 Working with Numbers 2 Units 4,5.....\$8
 Developing Reading Comprehension 1 - Units 1,2.....\$10
Readers
 Kitten in the Well (H'cover)...\$10
 I have a Soul.....\$5
 Jamestown Heritage Readers
 - Pocketful of Posies.....\$5
 - Book AA.....\$10
 - Book A.....\$15
 Jotham's Journey.....\$8
 McGuffey Eclectic Readers - Complete Set including Speller

(Brand new - never used).....\$100

Contact:

Carolyn
 Ph: (06) 329-0972

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- used pot
- * Eat dinner with their teens six or seven nights a week
- * Turn off the TV during dinner
- * Assign their teen regular chores, and
- * Have an adult present when the teens return home from school

The survey found that despite conventional wisdom that many teens don't want their parents to establish rules and expectations, 47 percent of teens living in "hands-on" households reported having an excellent relationship with their fathers and 57 percent reported an excellent relationship with their mothers.

Only 13 percent of teens with "hands-off" parents reported an excellent relationship with their fathers and 24 percent reported an excellent relationship with their mothers.

"Moms and dads should be parents to their children, not pals," said NCASA's president, former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Joseph A. Califano Jr. "Mothers and fathers who are parents rather than pals can greatly reduce the risk of their children smoking, drinking and using drugs."

(CNN, Washington, "Study: Rules improve parent-child relationship", February 21, 2001)

Working with Schools

A recent issue of *Principals' Digest*, published in Invercargill, had an article about schools working with home educators.

"As numbers of homeschooled students grow, there will be increasing demand for access to school resources, activities and classrooms. Schools need to think about the boundaries of public education and consider how they might serve all students, not just

those enrolled full-time."

The obvious question, why should a school spend limited resources on students who have pulled out of the system, is answered this way: "A collaborative approach improves the standing of the school among parents whose views may be coloured by unhappy experiences. Many children are homeschooled for only a few years, and it is in the interests of the schools that eventually receive them to work closely with homeschoolers in order to improve their transition back into the classroom."

The article points out that schools can offer facilities such as laboratories, libraries, gymnasiums and workshops; curriculum and assessment; sports, drama and orchestra. The home schooler can offer volunteer services such as teacher aide, tutoring, coaching and perhaps widen the school's talent pool in the area of sports, music and drama.

The emphasis in the article was on helping schools understand home educators. It mentioned how HES want to maintain control over their children's education, need to be treated as educators as well as parents, and want to exercise their moral and religious beliefs without interference.

If the home educators in a locality would like access to something at the school, they can always approach the principal and/or board of trustees and work out their own private arrangements. The School Trustees Association has said it would be inappropriate for the MoE or anyone else to make an across-the-board policy on such matters.

The *Principals' Digest* is to be commended for extending the hand of mutual understanding and co-operation in this article.

Home Schoolers Honoured in U.S. Congress

Affirming that “parents have a fundamental right to direct the education and upbringing of their children,” the U.S. House of Representatives has unanimously passed a resolution honouring home schooling families.

House Resolution 578, written by (Republican Party) Representative Bob Schaffer of Colorado, declares October 1-7, 2000 “National Home Education Week” and congratulates home schooled students for their achievements. It reads, in part:

“Whereas the United States is committed to excellence in education and to strengthening the family;

Whereas parental choice and involvement are important to excellence in education;

Whereas parents have a fundamental right to direct the education and upbringing of their children;

Whereas home schooling families contribute significantly to cultural diversity, which is important to a healthy society;

Whereas home education allows families the opportunity to provide their children a sound academic education integrated with high ethical standards taught within a safe and secure environment;

Whereas home education has been a major part of American education and culture since the Nation’s inception and demonstrates the American ideals of innovation, entrepreneurship, and individual responsibility;

Whereas home education was proven successful in the lives of George Washington, Patrick Henry, John Quincy Adams, John Marshall, Robert E. Lee, Booker T. Washington, Thomas Edison, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore

Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Mark Twain, John Singleton Copley, William Carey, Phyllis Wheatley, and Andrew Carnegie, who were each home schooled; ...

Now, therefore, be it Resolved,
That the House of Representatives

- congratulates home educators and home schooled students across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education and for the role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for the Nation;

- honors home educators and home schooled students for their efforts to improve the quality of education in the United States ...”

Schaffer celebrated the resolution’s passage, saying, “I am proud to recognize parents and children who have pioneered this type of education.” He continued: “Home school students have scored highest on the ACT for 3 years in a row, and they scored highest on the SAT this year. Home educators and students should be proud of their accomplishments, and they should be encouraged by [this] recognition. ...”

The U.S. Senate passed a similar resolution in 1999.

According to the House resolution, approximately 1,700,000 children are home schooled in the United States, “thus saving several billion dollars on public education each year.”

(By Julie Foster, a staff reporter for WorldNetDaily, September 28, 2000.)

Make Regular Reading a Habit

Waikato University psychology professor Jane Ritchie has been studying children and families for decades. The reading of bedtime stories to her daughter Jenny -- now a senior lecturer in Waikato University’s Department of Early Childhood Studies (see following

story) -- was always an important part of their lives.

“Reading a story is much more than just literacy, it’s a whole relationship,” Professor Ritchie says.

A recent British study shows that parents who want to boost their children’s academic performance and social skills should try a traditional bedtime story. But it also shows that pressures on working parents mean the tradition is becoming less a part of family life. Sixty per cent of parents polled in the British study said they did not have the time to read or invent stories for their children.

Of the 84 parents in the British study, 73 per cent had been read to regularly when they were young - but only 40 per cent of their children heard a story most nights.

Professor Ritchie says there are definite literacy benefits in bedtime stories. “But it’s a loving relationship as well, and I would say that’s almost as important in building a quiet, pleasant time.

To parents who say they are too exhausted to read stories, she asks: “What is 10 minutes of your time at bedtime? It’s pleasant and enjoyable for the child, and it becomes pleasant and enjoyable for the parent.”

Wean Youngsters Off the Tube

Even the experts slip into the video trap when they are busy. Early childhood expert and mother Jenny Ritchie has confessed to putting on a video for the children to watch — not instead of a bedtime story — but so that she could carry on reading a favourite magazine. A video was the easy way to keep the children occupied. There is nothing wrong with that, but she stresses that bedtime stories are invaluable, and she has a routine where her children are read to every evening before they go to

sleep.

“It’s a lot easier to put on a video,” the senior lecturer in Waikato University’s Department of Early Childhood Studies said from her Hamilton home. “In fact, the children seem to prefer them so it’s a real battle. I find I have to make a conscious judgment that the video goes off and we have a story. They enjoy the story - it’s me fighting my inclination to just carry on with what I was doing.”

Jenny Ritchie says it is important that fathers also read books to their children, especially sons. “It’s to do with what boys perceive as cool... So if the father is modelling literacy, then literacy becomes cool.”

She suspects stressed parents may not read to their children as often as they should. The old book-reading customs of the past are being pushed aside because everyone is so tired and busy and there are other alternatives with instant appeal... such as TV and videos.

But parents should make the time. Apart from the literacy skills imparted and the increased vocabulary a child gains from regularly being read to, there is the aspect of cultural transmission to consider. At such regular story times, parents will pass on stories and songs that were passed on to them.

Get them reading....almost anything will do. “For example, two of my children have come to be readers through *Goosebumps*, which is a pretty trashy children’s horror series. My daughter, who really wasn’t much of a reader, went on from *Goosebumps* to read *Jane Eyre* and *Lord of the Rings*, and she reads more novels now than I do....I have *Goosebumps* to thank for that, so I’m not going to be too critical of popular culture. I think popular culture is attractive for kids, and if it’s going to hook them in, eventually they’ll find their way to other forms of literature that are perhaps more profound.”

Tips for Parents

* Turn off the television

* Keep books available in children’s bedrooms

* When reading to children, choose a book that you like to read, but make sure the book interests the child as well

* Match the length and plot of the book to your child’s attention span and listening skills

* Make sure the child is comfortable and ready to listen

* Make sure you are comfortable

* Get involved in the reading of the book - use facial and verbal expressions

(By Catherine Masters, *NZ Herald*, 14.02.2001)

Qualifications for ~~Teaching Your Own~~ Children

1. A Survey of Research by Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute found achievement scores of homeschoolers ranging in the 75-85th percentile and not effected by the parent’s educational degree or economic status. That means that homeschooled students whose parents have a high school education are scoring as well as those whose parents have advanced degrees or teaching certificates.

2. Parents are already teaching their children and have been since they gave birth to them. Walking, talking, bike riding, manners, social skills, self-help skills and morals are taught on a regular basis. Homeschooling simply requires parents to add academic subjects to the list of skills already being taught at home.

3. No one loves your children as much as you do. No one is going to be as conscientious with educating them as you are. The best teacher in the world has many

other students to be concerned with, whereas you can put your total focus on your own children.

4. Some parents are afraid their child will not listen to them when they assume the role of teacher. You must reclaim your children if they have been under the care and supervision of school systems. Take time to become re-acquainted with each other. Your children are your responsibility, and you will need to reclaim your authority that was lost to the school system. Your children will learn to listen to you.

There are some reasons that disqualify a parent from taking on the full academic responsibility of their children, although they are few and rare.

* If mom is chronically ill or caring for someone that is terminally ill

* If parents are not in agreement about homeschooling

* If parents are illiterate

With discipline, love and patience, parents can successfully homeschool their children regardless of their income or academic degree.

(From News for H.O.M.E. e-letter of 3 February 2001: subscribe@HomeschoolingForHome.com)

Schools Producing Little Added Value

Should alarm bells be ringing when the principal of Feilding’s North Street School says teaching has never been harder? Anne Giles, a teacher with 20 years’ experience, says children have become increasingly more violent, outrageous and unremorseful over unacceptable behaviour.

This may have something to do with recent research findings by Massey University’s Richard Harker and Roy Nash which show that schools only produce 3 to 5 percent added value to what children learn. In other words, if children have been given a good

start in life, they will do well no matter what school they attend, within a 3- to 5-percent variance.

“Family wealth is an advantage to a child’s opportunities, but giving quality time — like reading to your child at bedtime — costs nothing, but adds greatly to human development,” Mr Nash says.

(Excerpted from “The Parent Trap”, *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 27 January 2001, p. 10)

Multiple Intelligences

This is a theory of looking at the intellect not as a sum total or integrated package, but being made up of several autonomous faculties that can work individually or in concert with other faculties. Advanced by Howard Gardner of Harvard University, he identifies eight such faculties, or “intelligences”:

Musical Intelligence
 Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence
 Logical-Mathematical Intelligence
 Linguistic Intelligence
 Spatial Intelligence
 Interpersonal Intelligence
 Intrapersonal Intelligence
 Naturalist Intelligence

Traditionally, intelligence is measured by taking IQ tests. Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison were terrible at taking tests, and thus terrible at school in general. MI theory says that test-taking ability exists almost wholly in the area of Logical - Mathematical Intelligence. Apart from some students’ ability to second guess a teacher’s structuring of a test (thus demonstrating a keen Interpersonal Intelligence), tests focus at best on only one-eighth of an individual’s intellect. (Further information at: <http://edweb.gsn.org/edref.mi.th.html>)

Coming Events

North Shore Information Workshop

Saturday 5 May 2001
 9:30am to 3:00pm
 Windsor Park Baptist Church
 550 East Coast Rd.
 Mairangi Bay
 North Shore City

- \$25 per person or couple
- AM & PM teas provided
- Wide range of resources on display and for sale
- Twelve electives including: — Helping Children with Written Language; — Father’s Role; — Special Needs Discussion; — Teenagers’ Panel; — Secondary Resources, Subject by — Charlotte Mason approach — Building a Family Heritage on Scriptural Principles; — Home Education: 0-6 yrs; — Beyond Secondary: Qualifications, Apprenticeships & Employment

For further information and registration, please phone:

Two Kaitaia Meetings

Tuesday 1 May, 10am to 3pm
 *Talks by Craig & Barbara Smith
 *Question and Answer session
 *Children’s programme.
 *Bring your own lunch.

Pot Lunch Tea
 A casual evening plus
 Q & A session with the Smiths

For further information about both of these get-togethers ring:
Jennifer
ph. (09) 409-4840

Sixth Annual TEACH Forum

Saturday 28 April 2001
 Christ Church Anglican church hall, 169 Ladies Mile, Ellerslie, Auckland
 (up the hill on the left past the health food shop)
 From 9:30am until 3:00pm.

An open, home education leadership forum and opportunity for HEs from all over to meet and discuss any and all issues of common concern, both local and national, and plan whatever further action seems appropriate. The day’s agenda is formed by the people there.

Agenda ideas:

- Placing HE books in libraries
- Strategy for educating MPs
- Setting dates for Home Education Awareness Week
- Raising HE profile with CABs
- Recommended book list for libraries
- Any issues with MoE or ERO
- Working Party post mortum

Registration is free. Tea/coffee/milo provided; lunch is BYO or check out the local coffee shops. No children’s programme. Free billeting for those from out of town.

Please register numbers coming with: Craig & Barbara Smith, PO Box 9064, Palmerston North, ph. (06) 357-4399, fax (06) 357-4389, hedf@xtra.co.nz.

Whangarei Coffee & Dessert Evening

Thursday 3 May, 7:30 pm
 at the Nazarene Church
 Question & Answer session with Craig & Barbara Smith

For further information ring:
Huriana
ph. (09) 436-3649