

TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

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Bridging Education: An Option for Home Educators?

The Hon Steve Maharey, Associate Minister of Education, made a speech to the Inaugural Conference of the NZ Association of Bridging Educators at the Manukau Institute of Technology, Auckland, on the 6th of April 2001. His speech highlighted some of the services state and private organisations provide for people who want "to access tertiary education but who do not have the traditional credentials or qualifications required for entry." This should be good news for home educators even though we already know that the "traditional credentials" of some kind of certificate issued by a registered school are not in fact "required". Even so, the main thrust of the initiatives outlined under the banner of "Bridging Education" appears: 1) to be guided by the economic assumption that employment opportunities are more and more becoming dependent upon holding a tertiary qualification; and 2) to be aimed at those groups who are traditionally underrepresented on the rolls of tertiary institutions.

Mr Mahary was not slow in trying to score political points in the process. He said that higher education should not be elitist or for the privileged few, even though it was special and should not be taken for granted. He point blank promised that the present Government not only had a supportive policy position on this, but that it would become more so for "we are a Government that is serious about bridging education" and "we came to Government with a commitment to bridging education."

Indeed, he even repeated a couple of campaign promises which on

the surface surely need to be taken by home educators at face value:

Before the last election we stated categorically that we would, "make sure that all young New Zealanders have access to education and training opportunities, so that at all stages of their lives students can learn progressively and build easily on their existing knowledge." We also stated our commitment "to ensuring that all New Zealanders, regardless of their background, have access to tertiary education." Since coming to office, our aim has been to create clear pathways for all learners

into tertiary education.

So what are some of these "Bridging Education" options?

Well, Mr Maharey referred to adult and community education providers, such as night classes at local high schools. Unfortunately, these appear to be arbitrarily closed to anyone under 16. He also referred to "Bridging Education courses or General Foundation Education programmes" saying that such "have been offered by many of our tertiary education institutions since the mid-1980s." And indeed there are a few courses offered at some universities and polytechs which have no prerequisites at all, except perhaps age requirements again. In correspondence with the

(Continued on page 2)

M.I.T. for Free

One of the world's most prestigious universities, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has announced a 10-year initiative to make nearly all of its course materials - from lectures to problem sets (but not the solutions) - freely available on the internet. The aim of the project, OpenCourseWare or OCW, was to freely share the university's knowledge. Though course materials would be free, there would be no credits or MIT degree.

While MIT students can expect to spend about \$US33,000 for next year's tuition, room and board, the university's president, Charles Vest, says, "The MIT education really comes from the interaction with the faculty and the students."

At the end of 10 years Vest

expected more than 2,000 of the courses across MIT's entire curriculum -- in architecture and planning, engineering, humanities, arts, social sciences, management and science -- would be available. This project is different from what is available from universities offering degrees online. "The institutions that are doing this are all trying to make a profit," MIT spokeswoman Patti Richards said. "But we're not. We're trying to share our knowledge." Vest said he expected to spend between \$US7.5 million and \$US10 million in the first two years just making the courses freely available.

MIT's move certainly presents a challenge. "(MIT) should definitely be recognised for this bold step," said William Jennings,

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MoE these age restrictions have been said to be there to prevent double dipping: something like a home educator being subsidised via the Supervisory Allowance for primary or secondary education and then also being subsidised for tertiary education via enrolment in a polytech, for example. Or it could be that the state pays out for a secondary student to a school during the day and if that same student attended night classes at the same school, the state would pay out for that student a second time, the school being the double dipper.

Tertiary Institutions also have a discretionary power to extend to a student who applies for it the status of Provisional Enrolment which of course bypasses the need for Bridging Education and puts the student directly into the tertiary courses of his or her choice. This appears to be the most straight-forward route for home educators.

When the NZ Qualifications Authority was first formed about 10 years ago, they promised a facility called RPL, Recognition

of Prior Learning. This seemed to hold some promise for home educators, as RPL would give nationally recognised NZQA qualifications to those who obviously knew their stuff. Otago Polytechnic appears to be the only one prepared to take on this task of assessing what one knows and arranging for the issuing by the NZQA of the appropriate pieces of paper attesting to the fact, be they Unit Standards, Certificates or Diplomas. (See the Centre for Assessment of Prior Learning at www.tekotago.ac.nz/capl/index, ph. (03) 479 6027). This Assessment costs plenty, but perhaps it is less than a full-time course at a high school or polytech and takes only a fraction of the time.

Skill NZ

This is an umbrella organisation for several "learning pathways" which wind their way through industry training and work experience -- programmes such as Modern Apprenticeships, Gateway, Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR), Training Opportunities, Youth Training, Rangatahi Maia and Tupulaga le Lumana'i. Following these trails, students can accumulate credit from curriculum-based (usually classroom delivered) achievement standards and/or from industry-based unit standards at each level of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement. The NCEA can also be awarded by post-school providers, such as the various Industry Training Organisations, allowing "second chance" opportunities for those who did not achieve a secondary-level qualification while still at school.....or the opportunity for home educated students to get the NCEA, should

they want one, while on the job.

Skill New Zealand has just introduced Stage 1 of these "Modern Apprenticeships" nationwide this year. It is meant for 16 to 21 year olds and covers the eight industries of boating; building and construction; dairy; electricity/electrical; engineering; hospitality; printing; and telecommunications. To find out exactly what Modern Apprenticeships are available right now and where they are, ring 0800 4 APPRENTICE (0800 4 27773) or see <http://www.skillnz.govt.nz/new/modappindex>.

"Gateway" is for senior secondary students, is work-based and is only being trialled in 21 schools this year. The "Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource" (STAR funding) enables schools to purchase or provide higher-cost tertiary level programmes, which can be either courses of study and/or workplace experience. Home educators may be able to access STAR funding by approaching a local school.

"Training Opportunities" is designed to assist people with low qualifications or limited skills to gain recognised qualifications and to move into further education and training or employment. There are a range of training courses - from fishing to customer service - which are completely free to those who qualify: usually those aged 18-19 years with low qualifications, who have left school in the last 6 months and are registered with the Department of Work and Income (WINZ). In fact one can continue to collect the unemployment benefit and possibly even a travel allowance to take part in one of these "Training Opportunities". See www.skillnz.govt.nz/programmes/tops/training_opps for more information.

"Youth Training" targets around 13,000 students aged between 15 and 17 each year who have nothing higher than Sixth Form Certificate, spending \$65 million annually from Vote Education. It is free and the family can continue

(Continued on page 3: **Bridging**)

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

Trading Post



Wanted:

Work Texts for Bob Jones Reading (Student Books) Comprehension 3:1 and 3:2. It does not matter if they are written in.

For Sale:

Edmund Spencer's Fierce Wars, Faithful Loves (as new).\$20 o.n.o.

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Evelyn
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For Sale:

ABeka Language A, Teachers Ed.....\$15
ABeka Language A, Teacher Test Key.....\$5

Contact:

Susie Moir
ph. (06) 363-5886

For Sale:

Brand new not used Scott Foresman Math, Grade 2, 456 pp. (Paid US \$33).....\$60

Contact:

Chareen
ph. (03) 354-3448

(Continued from page 2: *Bridging*) to receive Family Support. (See http://www.skillnz.govt.nz/programmes/youth_training/youth_training.htm).

"Rangatahi Maia" is a programme for Maori aged 16-21, and "Tupulaga le Lumana'i" is for Pacific Islanders aged 16-21.

Skill New Zealand's National Office is at PO Box 27-048, Wellington, ph. (04) 801-5588, Fax (04) 801-5598, email: information@skillnz.govt.nz, www.skillnz.govt.nz.

(*TEACH Bulletin* hopes to have more on the NZ Association for Bridging Education in a future edition.)

(Continued from page 1: *M.I.T.*) vice provost for professional and distance education at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He said the initiative "may make all of us rethink the way we do things and encourage us all to be more open."

(From *NZ Herald*, Thursday April 12, 2001, www.nzherald.co.nz/storyprint.cfm?storyID=181267)

Here is dramatic evidence that education and even educational resources are becoming more and more freely available. Fantastic resources have always been freely available to home educators in our public libraries and through altruistic people and organisations. NZ's own Carey College has already made its secondary curriculum available on line for free: see www.careycollege.com. As always, an education is there for whoever is willing to pursue one: and now the job is getting easier!

National Libraries and Home Educators

Joy Hamilton, (Manager of the National Library's Client Information Services in Palmerston North) is doing a research paper on the National Library and Home Education. She wants to find ways the National Library (NL) can help their Home Educator (HE) clients and then present these ideas to her boss. The wheels of change grind slowly, but she will do what she can and so should we: mainly by making more use of the NL services.

Neither schools nor the general public can request that the NL get specific books, but until Joy finishes her research, HEs can! The NL has three buyers who acquire books, and these need to tie in with the National Curriculum Guidelines (NCGs). If we as HEs have in mind any books we'd like the NL to carry, books that can also tie into the NCGs, Joy would like to hear about them for her research. (Just

let the *TEACH Bulletin* editor know by the end of May the titles you'd like.)

School teachers can only get one book per child in their classrooms, but we HEs are allowed 10 books per family! And here's a tip: if you are dealing with the NL by post, you can actually have 20 books out at once, for they allow for a cross-over period. However, they won't send a further 10 until they get the first 10 back.

In addition the NL has negotiated a flat rate for returning freight to the NL, using NZ Post, of only \$3.00 for each parcel up to 25kgs. Rural Delivery returns will be collected by the rural delivery contractor with your outwards mail. For everyone else the returns must be delivered to your nearest Post Shop, mail Centre or NZ Post Agency. If you are only sending one or two books back, then it may be cheaper to just pay the normal rate. But this is certainly a good rate for when you send back your 10 books.

For those HEs who have not yet used the National Library you are missing out on a great resource. The NL welcomes us as clients and will do all they can to get suitable books for us. For example you can ask for books with no evolution in them. But please be reasonable in your requests. HEs do have a good name at present with the NLs, and they would like to see us use them more. First time users need to take down the exemption for each child for them to sight. There is a limit that you can take out per child with a maximum of 10 books per family including one free video.

Loan Period: 28 days for either books or videos.
Freephone: 0800 17 17 17
Freefax: 0800 907 600
Email: cisreq@natlib.govt.nz
Catalogue: www.natlib.govt.nz
and <http://tepuna.natlib.govt.nz>
Postal address:

National Library of NZ
Pvt Bag 11032
Palmerston North

Abolish High School

by Ross G. Douthat

This time, his name is Charles Andrew Williams, and he is 15 years old. He has a slender frame and a soft, sad-looking face, and in photographs he seems young and lost, and yes, even innocent. He isn't innocent, though. Not since Monday, March 5 [this year], when he took his father's gun to school and fired it 30 times at his teachers and classmates, wounding 13 people and killing two.

There were other, similar incidents last week, although they tended to blend into one another amid the general hand-wringing. In Twentynine Palms, California, two 17-year-old students were arrested after someone overheard them discussing their "hit list" of 16 classmates, while a student in Harlingen, Texas, was expelled for having a "hit list" of his own. In Williamsport, Pennsylvania, a female student shot another girl in the shoulder during lunch period. In the Seattle area, a 16-year-old student pulled a gun on his classmates. Then there are the kids who were arrested for bringing guns to school (in Philadelphia and two Florida towns) and the kids who made bomb threats or threatened to kill their classmates (three in Arizona, one in New Jersey and one in Iowa). And that, mind you, was all in one week.

The "search for answers", as the media is wont to call it, has already begun--or rather, picked up where it left off after Columbine and Jonesboro and all the other dark, bloody incidents. The usual suspects are being hauled into the dock, from America's permissive gun laws and violent popular culture, to familial breakdown and the nihilistic ethos of adolescence. And everyone has a solution to offer, be it more gun control, more metal detectors, more psychiatrists, more teachers, or, in the insipid phrase of America's goo-goos, more "tolerance".

They're all wrong, though. What we really need to do is to get rid

of high school.

Oh, I'm perfectly aware that we never will. The idea of high school is, alas, so deeply embedded in American life that it would take some sort of natural disaster to uproot it. Still, it would be nice if we recognized that there is something bizarrely ill-fashioned about the way we go about "educating" our adolescent population. The teenage years are a critical period of transition, when "children" are transformed into "adults", with all the privileges and responsibilities of age. Teenagers are dangerous--they have adult desires and passions, but without the experience necessary to handle their new-found inner turmoil. In a word, they need to be socialized.

Of course, this is exactly what high school sets out to do. But high school socializes adolescents by forcing them to spend all their time, not with adults who offer examples of maturity, but with other adolescents. The only adults in grades 9-12 are teachers, whose role as disciplinarians casts them as adversaries rather than as role models. Few high school students set out to emulate their instructors -- instead, they set about emulating their peers.

The result, predictably, is the warped culture that holds sway in the halls of most American high schools. Adolescents are conformist, so the culture demands conformity. Adolescents are vicious, so the culture is cruel beyond belief. Adolescents are insecure and anti-intellectual, so the culture despises academic achievement. And, of course, adolescents (or their parents, more likely) adore athletics, and so the culture treats athletic stars and their paramours as its kings and queens.

When a student finally graduates out of this culture, he has undoubtedly gained a smattering of practical knowledge. But after four years in a shallow, conformist world, he is no closer to being an adult, really, than when he entered high school in the first place. Or if he has matured, than it has been in spite

of his "socialization", not because of it.

But it's so important for kids to spend time with their peers, the objectors will bleat. Well, yes, time with one's peers is great -- but must it be every day, from eight till five and beyond? Surely this is arrant nonsense. Adolescents are messed-up, confused, insecure human beings, each buckling under an individual, angst-ridden burden. Why on earth would it be good for them to spend all of their time with other angst-ridden, insecure, unhappy types?

In a saner world, they would be forced to live with, and as, adults for large chunks of time -- making it more likely that they would actually become adults. Such a world would encourage home-schooling, for instance, by easing the economic burden for parents who choose to stay home and teach. It would offer a more flexible, decentralized system of education, balancing classroom time with, say, vocational training and programs allowing kids to work under and alongside adults in local workplaces. It would be a world where adolescents were integrated into society, not ghettoized in the local high school.

In the absence of such a world, everyone will continue to go through the high school zoo, and most people will manage to cope. I, for one, rather enjoyed the experience. But I knew plenty of people who didn't, people who couldn't accommodate themselves to the warped hierarchies of an adolescent culture. I don't doubt that in their darker moments, these unhappy high schoolers fantasized that they, like Al Pacino in *Scout of a Woman*, might "take a flame thrower to this place".

But they never did it, of course. It was unthinkable.

Now all that has changed. Not only is it thinkable, it's easily done. Just ask Charles Andrew Williams.

Mums Make a Difference

A study for the Ministry of Education demonstrates that statistically a mother's education levels have more bearing on children's maths, reading and writing than family income. By following 505 Wellington children from pre-school to age 10, it found the average maths score for the children of university-educated mothers was 77 per cent compared to 45 per cent for children whose mothers had no university qualification. Results for literacy tests were similar. While family income was tied to children's success - it was easier for children coming from an advantaged home - the mother's qualifications made a bigger difference.

Statistically, children whose mothers had no qualification watched more television, were twice as likely not to belong to any clubs or groups, and were nearly three times less likely to go to lessons outside school or play a musical instrument. However, researcher Dr Cathy Wylie said parents with few qualifications could improve their children's chances of success at school through good quality early childhood education and the way they communicated with them.

This is precisely in line with what home educators believe: it is not the parents' education or income that is determinative, but the parents' interest in their children's development which is most important.

A large statistical analysis of data compiled by Dr Lawrence Rudner of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation (see web site <http://epaa.asu.edu>) from the achievement test scores of 20,760 home educated students in 11,930 families in 1998 showed little difference in outcomes depending on parental education or money spent on the education. Fourth grade home schoolers had composite percentile scores of 82 (meaning 82% of other 4th graders taking the test battery scored below them) whether one

parent was a certified teacher or not. Eighth graders with at least one certified teacher scored at an average of the 83rd percentile and those with neither parent being certified scored at the 84th percentile!! Fourth grade home educators who had US\$199 or less spent on their education in the year scored an average composite score at the 79th percentile while those who had US\$600 or more spent on them scored at the 84th percentile. Eighth graders in the lower spending category scored on average at the 80th percentile and those in the highest spending category scored at the 83rd percentile.

(Some excerpts above came from a *NZ Herald* article of 6 April 2001 by Rebecca Walsh.)

— Home Education at the Cutting Edge —

Home Education in NZ is a genuine grass-roots movement. It has engendered the best of Kiwi volunteer spirit in the spontaneous formation of innumerable support groups, both local and national, wherein HE mums voluntarily develop their own extremely efficient low-cost or no-cost academic solutions, such as:

- * cooperative teaching, which uses the existing talents and interests of parents;
- * information sharing among parents about what works and what doesn't for different learning styles;
- * renting community rooms (or homes) for group activities and classes;
- * setting up resource libraries and networks for locating/evaluating/buying/selling/trading curriculum materials;
- * hiring professional specialist teachers by the hour;
- * field trips for hands-on learning;
- * providing all of the social activities found in traditional schools, etc., etc.

HEs refute the "more money equals better education" mantra of the teachers unions. The average HE family in the US spends approximately 10 percent of the per-pupil costs associated with government schools in achieving

equivalent or superior academic results.¹

HEs pose a direct economic threat to local schools. Funding for these government schools is based on attendance, with a national average of about \$3,500 per student. Homeschooled children in NZ, officially numbered at 5,877 as of 1 July 2000, represent over \$20 million out of reach of local government schools, and at its current growth rate, another \$1.4 million slips away each year.

With the seemingly irresistible financial inducements offered by the Integration Act slowly but surely bringing every single private school securely into the Government educational fold, HEs are providing something the state education system desperately needs: some good stiff competition. In addition, HEs are at the cutting edge of civil and religious liberties in New Zealand. If we ever are so foolish as to let the state impose total compulsory attendance (with no exceptions) at any sort of "approved" educational establishment, even if that is our own home (which then becomes subject to state "approval"), then we can never complain when the state comes for our homes and our bank accounts. As the Presbyterian scholar of Princeton and Westminster Theological Seminaries, Professor J. Gresham Machen, warned way back in 1926, "If liberty is not maintained with regard to education, there is no use trying to maintain it in any other sphere. If you give the bureaucrats the children you might just as well give them everything else."

Remember these things if ever asked to consider ways of getting more money from the *public* purse for educating your *own* children.

Note:

1. Dr. Brian Ray, "A Nationwide Study of Home Education: Family Characteristics, Legal Matters, and Student Achievement" (National Home Education Research Institute, 1990). The homeschooling families in the study averaged US\$488 per pupil per year.

High Tech Bullies

Te Aroha College and Hamilton Girls High School have banned students from bringing mobile phones to school after bullies sent threatening text messages to other students.

Hamilton Girls High principal Lil Garland said the ban was sparked by a group of fourth-formers who had been spreading rumours via text messages about other students. Some had also been physically threatened.

Waikato University childhood aggression expert Ian Evans praised Hamilton Girls and Te Aroha College for banning the phones. Professor Evans said cellphones were suited to female bullying in particular. "There is evidence that girls resort to more of these slightly meanish and underhanded interpersonal tactics - name-calling and spreading rumours. They're usually trying to disrupt relationships, especially with boys."

Auckland University psychology lecturer Niki Hareé said schools often had no choice but to enforce bans on current crazes if they caused conflict. But she said a cellphone ban would not stop students bullying one another.

(Excerpted from *NZ Herald* article by Libby Middlebrook, 11 April 2001.)

The home education situation, almost by definition, prevents bullying because the intense competition for attention, the peer pressure and the unrelenting focus on relationships is

H.E.A.R.T.

Home Educators' Annual Retreat
25-27 May 2001
Totara Springs Christian Centre
Matamata

For Mums and dependent infants. Singing, chatting, crafts, relaxing and some speakers.

Contact:

Chris Bovill, ph. (07) 883-2771
or Sue Abernethy
abernethy.clan@xtra.co.nz

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 Luck 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