

**Forgotten Students, Forgotten Teachers:
Positioning the middle years in New Zealand
teacher education**

by

Brenda Shanks, MEd.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Statement of Ethical Conduct

The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.

Brenda Shanks

(October, 2010)

Abstract

For over a century the New Zealand education system has been defined by a bipartite organisation of schooling that is divided philosophically, pedagogically and structurally along primary and secondary lines. Initial teacher preparation and in-service professional development provision perpetuate this two-tiered division by providing programmes of teacher education in almost exclusively primary and secondary education. While the New Zealand education system has achieved many successes, concerns have been expressed in recent years about the variable quality of education young adolescent students in Years 7-10 experience in New Zealand schools. Current research shows that it is what teachers know and do in the classroom that is the most significant factor influencing student learning. In view of the concerns around the provision of effective middle level education, it is timely to place New Zealand teacher education under the lens. This research investigates how the middle years are catered for within initial and in-service teacher education across a number of key New Zealand institutions. Using qualitative methodology the study examines how, and to what extent middle level teachers are prepared through their primary or secondary programme of initial teacher education, and through in-service support, to meet the specialised needs of young adolescent students. The findings are informed, through an in- depth interview with an internationally recognised expert in middle level education, to ascertain the wider systemic factors influencing the uptake of specialised middle level teacher preparation in New Zealand. Additionally, comparative insights have been obtained from the perspectives of six international teacher educators involved in middle level teacher education programmes in Australia and the United States. The findings from this study have been synthesised to provide recommendations for the reform of New Zealand teacher education so that it is cognisant of the middle levels of schooling. It is hoped that these recommendations will inform future directions and will result in the learning pathway for Years 7-10 identified in the current New Zealand curriculum, becoming a reality.

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Glossary

Associate Teacher	A teacher in the schooling sector who mentors student teachers during teaching practicum.
Composite Schools:	Schools that cater for children from Year 1 through until Year 13.
Early Adolescence	The term used to denote the period of human growth and development that occurs between the ages of 10 and 15 years.
ERO:	The Education Review Office evaluates and reports publicly on the quality of education in all New Zealand schools and early childhood centres.
Education Support Services:	Education Support Services, usually under contract to the Ministry of Education provides teacher professional development programmes to schools.
Initial Teacher Education:	Undergraduate and postgraduate tertiary education programmes that lead to a qualification to teach in New Zealand schools.
Intermediate Schools:	A particular type of school that is unique to NZ and caters for middle level students in Years 7 and 8.
Māori:	The indigenous people or tangata whenua (people of the land) of New Zealand.
Middle Level Education:	Educational provision designed to meet the specific needs of young adolescent students in Years 7-10 and across a range of school configurations.
Middle Schooling:	A term that refers to a particular philosophy or set of principles about teaching, learning and curriculum for young adolescents.
Middle Schools:	A specific school structure or organisational unit that caters for young adolescent students in Years 7-9 or 10.

Ministry of Education:	The Ministry of Education is the government's lead advisor on the New Zealand education system, shaping direction and developing strategic policy for the education sector.
NCEA:	The National Certificate of Educational Achievement is New Zealand's national secondary school qualification.
NZAIMS:	The New Zealand Association of Intermediate and Middle Schools whose aim is to promote early adolescent education.
NZEI:	The New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa (NZEI) is New Zealand's largest education union.
New Zealand Curriculum:	The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) is the official policy for teaching, learning, and assessment in New Zealand schools.
NZ Teachers' Council:	The professional and regulatory body for teachers in English and Māori medium settings for early childhood, schools and other related education institutions.
Pākehā:	New Zealanders of European descent.
PPTA:	The professional association/union representing teachers and principals in secondary and area schools, and teachers in intermediates, technicraft centres, and community education.
Primary Schools:	Primary schooling represents the first stage of compulsory school education from New Entrants to Year 6, or in the case of a full primary school up to and including Year 8.
Restricted Composite Schools:	The official Ministry of Education designation for middle schools catering to students in Years 7-9 or Year 7-10.
School Network Reviews:	The extensive process undertaken by the New Zealand Labour-led government between 2003-2005 in reviewing schooling provision.
Secondary Schools:	Secondary schooling represents the final stage of compulsory school education in New Zealand and caters for students in either Years 7-13 or Years 9-13.

SPANZ:	Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand. National association and professional body representing secondary school principals or those with a vested interest in secondary education such as secondary teacher educators within institutions.
TEC:	The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) is responsible for policy development and implementation in the tertiary education sector. They are also responsible for funding the government's contribution to tertiary education and training.
Young Adolescent	The broad term used to describe a young person experiencing growth during the period of early adolescence or 10-15 years age span.
Wānanga	Maori tertiary education institutions.
Whanau	Maori word denoting the concept of family.

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