

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

**EDUCATION FOR TOMORROW:
CHALLENGES FACING
THE UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

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1 The Union

Thank you for the invitation to deliver this inaugural address as part of the establishment of the new College of Education at the University of Canterbury. It is indeed an honour to be able to witness the coming together of the Christchurch College of Education and the University's School of Education. The union makes good sense and recognises that the elaboration of knowledge and professional advancement embrace practice, theory and research. Indeed unless all three components are firmly embedded in the undergraduate and postgraduate offerings, the profession of teaching will not be able to grow and develop in new directions to meet the changing needs of learners. Nor will education – as an academic discipline – be able to achieve the level of relevance that society will demand. Important to the union of the two entities will also be the opportunity for staff in the new College to share their accumulated wisdom, whether gained from professional experience within classrooms, from mentoring trainee teachers, or from academic research and scholarship.

2 Two Traditions

Canterbury University is of course not the first University to have taken this step and in that respect will be able to draw on the experiences of similar institutions. Invariably others have found that well after the formalities of unification are over, the cultures, practices and styles of each institution remain, to the point that there will be times when the perceived priorities clash. The primary focus on teacher education and professional practice, which was the rationale for the Christchurch College of Education will not automatically be the main concern for the former School of Education where educational theory and educational research

were directed at education as an academic subject area. And PBRF may not be embraced with the same degree of enthusiasm by all (or any) in the new College. However, different perspectives and objectives need not necessarily be obstacles to progress; instead by accepting the two traditions, and recognising that the process of amalgamation is more in the nature of a merger than a take-over bid, students and staff will be able to reap the benefits of two conceptual frameworks, two approaches to the transfer of knowledge, and two ends of the theory-practice continuum. Each has context and legitimacy.

3 Treaty of Waitangi

Living in the shadow of two traditions should not be novel to New Zealanders. Earlier this month the nation celebrated the 167th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Those who signed were keen that the country should develop as a modern nation founded on two sets of traditions, two models for the acquisition and elaboration of knowledge, two world views, two languages and a joint commitment to the future. Although the celebration of Waitangi Day as an historic occasion and the settlement of grievances dating back to 1840 have sometimes created the impression that the significance of the Treaty is primarily about the past, in fact it was, and still is, not so much about 1840 but about 2040 and beyond. The point of the Treaty was to prepare for tomorrow rather than to immortalise yesterday. Projected demographic trends give added emphasis to intent of the Treaty. By 2051 about one third of all schoolchildren will be Māori, many of whom will be expecting to be taught in Māori using Māori idiom, metaphor, and ways of engagement.

4 The Merger

I am not suggesting that the merger of the Christchurch College of Education and the University of Canterbury's School of Education has quite the same implications as the merger that took place when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, or that the merger we celebrate today will be followed by decades of misunderstandings, litigation and political turmoil. But I am suggesting that bringing two traditions together requires ongoing

dialogue, good faith, compromise, a readiness to embrace what each can offer, and perhaps most important, keeping an eye on the future.

5 Predicting the Future

Predicting the longer term future is no easy task but some trends are discernable now. I have already mentioned the changing Māori demographic. In addition there will be very significant increases in the Asian and Pacific populations so that within thirty years close to a half of all schoolchildren will be brown and for many, English will be a second language. Moreover, the country's population will continue to age; we will have many more centenarians; first time mothers will be older, and the dependency ratio will change with a relatively smaller section of the population being engaged in the workforce. Technology, and with it the flow of information can also be expected to impact enormously on our capacity to communicate with each other in ways that we cannot yet imagine. And because of innovations in ICT more people in New Zealand will work from home, or even from another country, rendering obsolete the inflexible 8 to 5 factory floor work ethic established last century.

6 Secondary Futures

Anticipating the future is the main purpose of the *Secondary Futures* project. *Hoenga Auaha Taiohi, Secondary Futures*, was launched by the Minister of Education, Hon. Trevor Mallard, in 2003. The brief was to stimulate debate and discussion about secondary schooling in twenty years time and to identify the implications for students, teachers, and others involved in the education sector, including parents and whānau.

Four OECD scenarios, adapted for New Zealand, provided a useful starting point and a series of workshops throughout the country gave opportunities for participants to think beyond present day practices and consider the possibilities for schooling a generation ahead. In addition to scenario development, other tools for future planning have been introduced, including trend cards, time charts, narratives and focussed conversations with people from diverse backgrounds and mixed interests.

The aim was not necessarily to identify a definitive future, but to encourage communities to scope future possibilities and to extend their own planning practices beyond the usual two to three year timeframes. *Secondary Futures* provided the space to contemplate the future, and the tools.

7 Futures Themes

In the first phase of the *Secondary Futures* journey, five clear themes associated with educational success in the future emerged. All themes have implications for the ways in which learning will occur and the outcomes that will benefit students and society. The five themes are:

- Students First
- Inspiring Teachers
- Social Effects
- Community Connectedness
- The Place of Technology.

8 Students First

Students First recognises that schooling, and education more generally, should be focussed on the needs of students and the achievement of best educational outcomes for them. There is no single benchmark against which student outcomes should be measured nor is there a single prescription that can apply to all students. But all students should be able to expect that the learning process will recognise their unique potential and play a constructive part in preparing them for the years ahead. That is not the case in New Zealand at present. In 2005 around one-fifth of male school leavers did not have marketable qualifications and for Māori boys that figure was more than one-half. *Students First* is about placing students at the centre, building a system around their futures, and expecting that they will succeed.

9 **Inspiring Teachers**

Inspiring Teachers is a theme that emphasises the critical roles teachers play in achieving good outcomes for students. It recognises that in the future the traditional role of transferring knowledge may not be as important as assisting student learning by acting as mentor and guide. Greater flexibility, partnerships for learning, and facilitating access to new learning environments will be increasingly relevant, and inspirational teachers will be those who are able to build a relationship and transfer a sense of excitement about the learning process.

10 **Social Effects**

Social Effects are of primary relevance to learning. While academic achievement is to be valued, there are other outcomes of equal importance including the capacity of learners to participate, succeed and contribute – as citizens, as part of the economy, as families and whānau, and as members of multiple communities. Social outcomes do not negate the relevance of other educational goals but underline the broader context within which students will spend most of their lives.

Over the next twenty years New Zealand communities will become more diverse and more complex and there will be high expectations from communities that the educational process will prepare learners to be useful members of the ‘new’ society. Moreover, increasingly, families will expect students to be able to make their way in a global context.

11 **Community Connectedness**

Community Connectedness is a further reminder that education does not occur in a vacuum. Learning is connected to people and places outside the immediate school environment and harnesses all the resources of the community. Learners in the future should have access to expertise beyond the school walls, whether from parents, marae, industry, or leaders in sport. Already there is evidence that effective role models for learning are not necessarily in the formal education system – they may be much closer to home. A challenge for education will be to facilitate the development of

an inclusive environment that is aligned to the real life experiences of students.

12 Technology

Although new technologies, in the fields of communication and science, defy prediction they will predictably establish new contexts for living and working and provide both an aid to learning and a conduit to learning portals. Technology by itself will not be an educational end point, but it will nonetheless become integral to the learning process, to the extent that teachers who lack technical competence will be at a disadvantage, schools that do not have access to new generation technologies will be unable to reach into the future, and students who have not been able to access new technologies may be forced to forfeit opportunities.

13 Theme One

So far, of the five themes, Students First has been explored in some detail and was the subject of a report launched by the Minister of Education in 2006. In brief students who are successful will have a capacity to learn, a capacity to participate in a future society, a capacity to be part of the New Zealand tradition and a capacity to value self and others. Customised learning pathways, individual learning plans, linked-up learning programmes, multiple modes of learning, and synchronised learning platforms will all be key to the development of those capacities. But given the constraints of current practice they will not be attainable unless there are significant changes to both policy and methodology.

14 Customised Learning

Customised Learning Pathways for example will only be successful if the focus of attention shifts from classroom conformity, with its associated structures around programme delivery, lack of flexibility of choice and 'bulk teaching' to individualised pathways for growing and learning. A personalised approach to learning is often criticised on the grounds that classrooms are too large to allow a focus on individual students. However, it is worth noting that the largest school in New Zealand, the

Correspondence School offers students a wide choice of subjects and is able to provide highly individualised guidance.

15 Linked-Up Learning

Linked-up Learning Programmes will test institutional loyalty and institutional self-sufficiency, favouring more collegial relationships between schools and centres of learning so that *Students First* rather than institutional priorities can be the driving force. Rivalry between schools and competition for students will be out of place in a society where learner loyalties are more important than loyalty to institutions.

16 Multiple Learning Portals

A significant shift in teacher roles will be part of Multiple Learning Portals; teaching students how to learn and how to handle information will challenge traditional views that teaching is mainly about transferring knowledge. Although secondary education will continue to be about the acquisition of knowledge, students may depend less on teachers for specialised subject knowledge and more on electronic access to international and national experts. They will however, turn to teachers for guidance on accessing learning portals and interpreting the relevance and validity of knowledge.

17 Synchronised Learning

An integrated community approach to learning through Synchronised Learning Platforms will demand a breakdown of silo attitudes to education. Students do not learn only in schools, nor do schools necessarily provide the most relevant learning experiences. Synchronised Learning Platforms will challenge fragmented approaches to education especially evident in the education sector (e.g. early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary), as well as community disempowerment, and family estrangement.

18 Towards 2027

Although they are options for the future, it is of course already possible to see the future unfolding in pockets around the country. Quite how they will plan out in 20 years time, however, is not so clear. Take for example a scenario where formal schooling will play a lesser role in a deregulated educational environment.

19 Scenario 1: Deregulated Secondary Education

In 2027 New Zealand took the radical step of making secondary education non-compulsory. There were several reasons for the move. Even though the Government declared that any savings would be made available as scholarships for needy students to facilitate access to learning programmes, cynics maintained that deregulation was simply a cost-cutting exercise. Others were convinced that it was a way of dealing with truancy. As early as 2007 levels of truancy were alarmingly high, and had now, by 2027, become so out of control that it was senseless to make truancy an offence. If going to school was no longer compulsory, there could be no truancy.

Moreover, research from the University of Canterbury College of Education found that most truants were in fact actively engaged in learning - through the internet, through marae programmes, and with tuition from parents working from home. The research was linked to the College's interest in working across sectors – with health, business, and community agencies. In many cases it seemed to the researchers that formal education had actually become an obstacle to successful learning. Political pressure had also come from the PACT party (Pacific & Asian Coalition Team) on the grounds that schools had completely failed some ethnic groups who were better off learning within their own communities and without compromising cultural and religious beliefs. In any case, because schools had become so reliant on the web for teaching, students were more inclined to by-pass New Zealand schools and enrol directly in web-based international programmes that would ensure entry into overseas universities.

20 Scenario 1: Learners Co-op

A group of young teachers from Christchurch had meanwhile successfully launched Learners Co-operative, a private organisation that offered a consultancy service to parents so that learners could gain access to the programmes they sought – in New Zealand and abroad - and to advise on how best to match learner attributes and aspirations with the most appropriate learning experiences. Using sophisticated IT skills and their extensive knowledge of learning processes and community networks, gained while students at the Canterbury College of Education, the teachers had been quick to realise that opportunities as learning consultants far outweighed opportunities as classroom teachers.

21 Scenario 2: Academies For Learning

Quite another scenario would see schools function in a very different way – more as specialised academies that socialising agencies. In 2027 and largely as a response to research conducted in the University of Canterbury College of Education, a major overhaul of the secondary curriculum was introduced. The research had shown that schools had increasingly usurped the roles of whanau and family, were failing to prepare students for work in the real world, had very mediocre results for most students, produced students who were unable to compete in global markets, and were so determined to ignore race and colour that they were simply unable to relate to large sections of the community.

The new curriculum removed any doubt about the role of the school by reducing its scope to teaching only those subjects that had international currency. Teachers would focus entirely on the transfer of knowledge across a narrow range of subjects. Responsibility for the transmission of values, social skills, sporting expertise, and cultural competence was transferred to Community Centres of Experience so that teachers in schools could concentrate on equipping students with the necessary knowledge to gain entry into national and international higher learning programmes. The Community Centres of Experience were designed

around the particular needs of communities and groups within communities. Some were based on marae, others in gymnasia and sports stadiums, museums and art galleries, in work places, churches, synagogues and mosques. Government funding for Community Centres of Experience was the responsibility of the restructured Department of Internal Affairs and a transfer of funds from vote: Education had occurred – although there was ongoing debate about the actual quantum.

22 Scenario 2: Teacher Qualifications

Meanwhile the new academies had close links with universities and most teachers taught part-time at both secondary and tertiary levels. Joint appointments at universities and schools were important to reduce the gap between secondary and tertiary levels of education. The minimum teaching qualification had become a doctorate in a specialised subject area and Colleges of Education had opted for a devolved model with learning experts seconded from the College to the academic departments where PhD studies were located. Acquiring a doctorate, no matter what the subject area, now involved dedicated study on the transmission of information.

23 Educational Leadership 2027

Educators may well be relieved to know that neither the Deregulated Education Scenario nor the Academies for Learning Scenario has any particular status, either with Secondary Futures or with the wider education sector. Nor as far as I know are they on any political agenda. At the same time, however, neither scenario is entirely improbable nor are they entirely beyond recognition within current practice. But the main reason for introducing them here is not to debate the pros and cons of deregulation or a specialised (if restricted) role for schools but to underline the point that the new College of Education has an enormous responsibility to prepare teachers who will be able to adapt and lead education into an uncertain future.

Graduates in 2007 will be educational leaders in 2027. If by then they are unable to read the signs – at national and global levels - or are unable to move beyond the comfort of maintaining an irrelevant status quo they will do a disservice to their students and to the nation. There is a role for the new College to ensure that the next generation of educational leaders is confident about grappling with uncertainty, enthused by the pace of change, convinced that New Zealand students can hold their own with the rest of the world, and unreservedly committed to success for all. And they should continue to reflect those values and traditions that distinguish New Zealand as a nation in the South Pacific.

24 Preparing for the Future

As if the current curriculum is not already stretched to capacity, ‘futures studies’ deserves consideration as an area of examination in its own right. And by futures studies I mean exploration of the changing nature of the world and, importantly, the changing nature of New Zealand. If we ignore global impacts we do so at our own peril. If we fail to understand and appreciate the New Zealand tradition and at the same time the changing New Zealand reality, we run the risk of alienating our children and grandchildren from their due birthright. The central challenge will be to anticipate future trends, grasp the best of international theory and practice and at the same time develop an approach that is germane to New Zealand.

25 Indigenising the Pedagogy

Significant steps in developing a New Zealand-specific approach to education have occurred over the past twenty years. There has been recognition that Māori language and custom as well as a Māori workforce within the education sector, are integral to the nation’s past and future. Although the level of inclusion has been variable, and often elementary, the evolution of a distinctive New Zealand pedagogy is likely to continue. Obvious cultural markers such as kapa haka and formal powhiri will increasingly be strengthened by more fundamental cultural concepts that revolve around Māori perspectives relating to space, time, relationships and, in contrast to psychological theories of development, ecological

orientations that are more in accord with Māori world views. Māori models and frameworks will find a stronger place in both theory and practice.

By 2027 New Zealand's education system will stand to benefit from indigenous knowledge. Apart from being exposed to conventional educational methods, often derived from scientific bodies of knowledge, students will also be able to engage in other forums where learning outcomes will depend on active involvement in indigenous worlds and experiential learning modes. The two styles of learning may create confusion for some students and their lecturers but there is also the prospect of an integrated pedagogy where indigenous knowledge interfaces with science and global educational theory.

26 Four (Main) Challenges

There are really only four challenges I wanted to highlight today. First the merger between the two institutions may well have problematic moments but the challenge is to allow those moments to fade into insignificance alongside the longer term benefits of having a strong and well-grounded new entity. Because of the traditions and expertise which each brings, the new College has a depth and breadth that extends well beyond the sum total of the two contributing entities.

Second, as an important educational centre, the College must consider how best it will contribute to the realisation of human potential so that success is not the province of a few, but the reality for all. It is unreasonable to expect that educators alone should bear total responsibility for learning and for educational achievement; indeed that is a challenge for the whole community. But educators as teachers, researchers or managers, have crucial roles to play in understanding learning processes, enabling learners to reach their potential, and publicly rejecting the very notion that there will always be winners and losers.

Third, the College must balance the implications of being part of an international academic community, with the New Zealand ethos - our traditions, and our ways of doing things. Insofar as the creation of new knowledge and the ongoing analysis of old knowledge are core to academic inquiry, the challenge will be to create a framework within which universality and distinctiveness can both form part of the knowledge highway generating pathways to bring relevance and opportunity for all New Zealanders.

Fourth, it is not enough to conclude that the job is done once papers are published and students are equipped to teach in today's schools; the more critical tasks are to constantly critique and reform the educational context so that it keeps pace with a changing world, and at the same time to educate tomorrow's teachers so they can provide effective leadership and negotiate educational transformations that will be desirable and necessary 20 years or so from now.