

NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION TE HUNGA RANGAHAU MATAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Sutton-Smith Doctoral Award 2007

EdD Thesis Title:

Curriculum integration for early adolescent schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand: Worthy of serious trial

The recipient of the 2007 Sutton-Smith award for excellence in a doctoral thesis in education is: Richard Anthony (Tony) Dowden of Massey University.

In his systematic and insightful thesis, Tony applied historical and theoretical analysis very effectively to accomplish three main purposes:

- investigate the origins and development of curriculum integration, predominantly in Great Britain and the USA;
- document New Zealand schools' historical adoption and use of curriculum integration and variants of it; and
- examine its suitability as a preferred direction for the schooling of early adolescents in Aotearoa New Zealand.

His analyses disentangled notions of integration from a range of other educational ideas and strategies commonly associated and often identified with curriculum integration, in particular distinguishing student-centred, integrative approaches from subject-centred, multidisciplinary approaches. A key conclusion is that the integrative curriculum model that James Beane developed, in the progressive educational tradition of John Dewey, is best justified educationally, developmentally and ethically. The thesis builds on and extends New Zealand's pioneering curriculum work based principally on Dewey's ideas.

Throughout his thesis, Tony displayed a deep commitment to identifying an educational model that would be highly effective for students in the middle school years, and giving a clear rationale for his choice. These years seem to have a critical influence on the subsequent educational pathways of a substantial proportion of students. Tony's analysis and advocacy suggest a promising pathway for the education of adolescent students, albeit one that requires deep understanding and strong commitment from teachers and schools to realise its potential.



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