
This work offers a comprehensive coverage of the history of the institution which started as the Auckland Training College in 1881 and concluded its independent existence through amalgamation with the University of Auckland in 2004. The work has brought together a range of primary and previously unpublished secondary source material to provide a holistic view of the institution. The addition of a substantial body of interview data provides a personal dimension to the work, and has added to both the quality and accessibility of the offering.

The work is a traditional institutional history which adopts a chronological approach. An Introduction contextualises the work, and this is followed by fourteen chapters which each consider a period of the College's history and growth. Amongst the issues traced through these chapters are the relationships with Boards and Councils, the student body, and external and internal factors. Details of the influential figures like John Tomlinson, Rae and Duncan Macmillan are included, notably the relationships with the local and national communities, and the courses, such as those related to the contribution of the College to the development of Maori community education.

In one sense the work is a story of educational and social change through the curriculum. In the context of this essay, it is also a story about the local adoption of ideas and beliefs. This is shown in the rich texture of the text, which is rich in detail and context. The story of the College is told through the eyes of those who were there, and through the work in the College.

As is often the case with historical writing, the story of the College is one of change and difficulty emerging. Through the stories of important periods, the development of the College as a social and educational institution is evident. There are important themes which run through the story, such as the development of the curriculum and the role of the College in the education of the community.

The work is a valuable contribution to the history of the Auckland College of Education and offers a comprehensive and accessible account of its development. It is a rich and well-researched piece of work that offers a valuable resource for students and researchers alike.
the relationships with Government agencies, other educational institutes, and various education Boards and Councils. Similarly, the changing nature of the curriculum, College structures, the student body, and extra curricula activities are explored. Interspersed here we also find significant details of the influences of key individuals on the college, notably the principals Bert Milnes, Duncan Rae and Duncan McGhie. The work includes many of the features of good institutional history, notably the relationships with the local community and development of, and changes to, campus locations and structures. It also contains some excellent accounts of the development of specific courses, such as those for Primary Education and Social work, and the involvement of the college with Maori communities.

In one sense the work is insular, in that it does not stress the relationship of the wider educational and social movements which clearly impact on the college, its structure and its curriculum. In the context of the work however this is a clear strength. Shaw maintains a tight focus on the local adoption of such influences and the flow of the narrative is maintained. Indeed, it is this narrative flow, punctuated by well chosen interview extracts, which provide the work with its rich texture. A texture which is further enhanced through the inclusion of a range of photographs and documents. Typical of this is the inclusion of the timetable for first year students for 1910, which shows the students’ Tuesday afternoon fare to include ‘Sewing with Miss Purdie’ or ‘Shooting with Mr. Cottrell’.

As is often the case with institutional histories which adopt a chronological approach, the themes which run through the work, tend to be so tightly woven into the narrative that they have difficulty emerging. Similarly, the approach can lead to uneven coverage of key themes during important periods. Thus, while the introduction emphasises the role of the college in a range of social and educational advances, for example “the emancipation of Auckland’s young women”, this seems to emerge more as a afterthought than as an overt intent. Likewise, the importance of the persistent debate between the notion of Teacher Training and Teacher Education, which is evident in the early sections of the work, is notable by its absence in the concluding chapters. Finally the internal structure of the chapters lacks the consistency to allow the reader to trace these themes through the work in a systematic way.

These however are minor issues with a study which has produced an eminently readable history of an important institution. The scope of the work is simultaneously ambitious and realised. Whilst tending to be more celebratory than reflective, the work is well researched and has much to offer institutional historians, and those with an interest in the history of teacher training.

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