This is a book about the struggle of many New Zealand families to have their children with learning disabilities included in local community schools. It reviews the influences in the post war period that shaped the state response to the right of all children to attend school. Reflections from both education policy makers and parents of that time are included. The book also examines the more recent impact of neoliberal politics on education policy and the consequences experienced by families with school-aged children with disabilities who may well become ‘collateral damage in the enterprise of improving schools.’

After examining the families’ experience the book asks how inclusion can be fostered in schools and classrooms? Practitioners and academics present research findings that indicate alternative ways of thinking and acting that attest to more ethical and humane responses to human difference. Citizens, school personnel, politicians and policy makers should be challenged by the tales from school arising from attempts to achieve a ‘world class, inclusive education system.’

Cover photograph by Rod Wills, “Oratia District School”
Tales from School
STUDIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Volume 27

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Scope
This series addresses the many different forms of exclusion that occur in schooling across a range of international contexts and considers strategies for increasing the inclusion and success of all students. In many school jurisdictions the most reliable predictors of educational failure include poverty, Aboriginality and disability. Traditionally schools have not been pressed to deal with exclusion and failure. Failing students were blamed for their lack of attainment and were either placed in segregated educational settings or encouraged to leave and enter the unskilled labour market. The crisis in the labor market and the call by parents for the inclusion of their children in their neighborhood school has made visible the failure of schools to include all children.

Drawing from a range of researchers and educators from around the world, Studies in Inclusive Education will demonstrate the ways in which schools contribute to the failure of different student identities on the basis of gender, race, language, sexuality, disability, socio-economic status and geographic isolation. This series differs from existing work in inclusive education by expanding the focus from a narrow consideration of what has been traditionally referred to as special educational needs to understand school failure and exclusion in all its forms. Moreover, the series will consider exclusion and inclusion across all sectors of education: early years, elementary and secondary schooling, and higher education.
Tales from School

Learning Disability and State Education after Administrative Reform

Edited by

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SENSE PUBLISHERS
ROTTERDAM / BOSTON / TAIPEI
Dedicated to the memory of Burton Blatt (1927-1985) who reminded us of the importance of two central beliefs; all people are *valuable* and all people are *educable*. 
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: Conversations and Concerns of Tales from School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod Wills, Missy Morton, Margaret McLean, Maxine Stephenson and Roger Slee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part One: Understandings for Today</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxine Stephenson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Legitimating Exclusion: Compulsory Education, the Standards and the Experts</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxine Stephenson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Parents, Professionals and Schooling</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxine Stephenson with Charlotte Thomson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Special Education and the Changing Role of the State 1984-1989</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen Brown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part Two: Thinking about Our Children</strong></td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod Wills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reforming Special Education at the Local School: Getting Ideas about Difference Sorted out</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod Wills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Section 10 Appeals: A Safety Net or a Holey Promise? Parents Reflect on the Appeal Process</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen Brown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Problematics of Inclusive Education in New Zealand Today</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod Wills with Stephen A. Rosenbaum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Limiting the Definition and the Discourse: How ERO Limits Inclusion</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher McMaster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part Three: Parent Struggles with Education and the School System</strong></td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret McLean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Is Anyone Listening?</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Mara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Parent-School Relationships and Exclusion from and within School</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alison Kearney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Parents of Disabled Children Talk about Their Experiences</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after Special Education 2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret McLean with Gerlinde Andraschko, Elizabeth Elsworth,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith Harris, Judith Selvaraj and Colin Webster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. How ‘Specialease’ Maintains Dual Education Systems in</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aotearoa, New Zealand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernadette Macartney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Pushing the Stone up the Hill</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod Wills, Bernadette Macartney and Colleen Brown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part Four: Resisting Neoliberalism</strong></td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missy Morton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Relational and Culturally Responsive, Indigenous Approach to</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging and Inclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mere Berryman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Flying under the Radar: Democratic Approaches to Teaching in</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neoliberal Times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne-Marie McIlroy and Annie Guerin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Tales from the Market: Students with Learning Disability –</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition from School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Gladstone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Questions of Value(s): Neoliberal Education Reforms from the</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspectives of Disabled Students and Teacher Aides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gill Rutherford</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Inclusion, Disability and Culture: The Nexus of Potential and</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for Policy Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angus Macfarlane, Sonja Macfarlane and Gail Gillon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The Struggle for Inclusion in Aotearoa</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Slee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributors</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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INTRODUCTION

Conversations and Concerns of Tales from School

THE EDITORS

Rodney Slee has been involved with disability and education in Australia and internationally for more than 30 years, routinely visiting New Zealand since 2001. Maxine, Margaret, Missy and Rod have all been involved with disability service providers, institutions, special education and teacher education for a similar length of time. This book reflects the engagement, by the editors and contributors, with the development and delivery of the legislation, regulations and guidelines that have shaped the evolution of education for disabled learners in New Zealand since 1984 and its longer historical antecedents. More particularly their work can be identified in the area of education for students with an intellectual disability. Alongside their teaching, research, and service roles in the field of special education and disability services, both formal and voluntary, the editors and contributors have all made significant and particular contributions in the move toward an inclusive education response for this group of students in the schooling system in New Zealand.

The work we called ‘the book project’ reflects the investment of ourselves, not just as academics, but also more often than not as advocates and protagonists in an ideological, social and educational struggle. The struggle has been in our institutions amongst our colleagues and peers; in the community with service providers; and alongside families and students in their schools and communities. The response to disability is not a high priority, anywhere. It never has been!

The editors acknowledge commonalities of concern identified in international research but recognise also the significance of certain factors specific to the New Zealand context. We ask here what are the points of difference that the New Zealand context might contribute to international conversations on common problems.

WHY THIS BOOK AND WHY NOW?

One of the main points of concern is that there is currently so little teaching going on within the university in this field and yet it is a major issue in education. Reflecting changing demographic trends, the issue of inclusion as a non-categorical approach, as identified in research and among practitioners, has been reduced to
one of ‘diversity.’ The educational response has often been expressed through technicist approaches that focus on managing categorical difference. The lack of attention to disability in teacher education particularly disturbs all the contributors to this book. We are concerned that some teacher education providers may not be preparing teachers to work appropriately with disabled children and families. As one contributor says disability has got lost in the morass of diversity.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN NEW ZEALAND?
WHAT IS USEFUL TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT?

*Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (The Treaty of Waitangi), New Zealand’s foundational document, gives us space to question inequitable social dynamics because it makes the values underpinning relationships really explicit. The Treaty is one of the biggest points of difference because it has legitimation in the country and Māori are part of the hegemonic block. It is through the Treaty that we have established in both legislation and rhetoric those principles of partnership and sharing, of social justice and collaboration, of mutuality and duality. This became the basis for institutional respect of human difference that could be mobilised by interest groups experiencing marginalisation in the 1970s and 1980s.

The renaissance of Māori cultural rights within New Zealand was engendered and given impetus by people working at the grass roots and learning from one another. This gave way to a variety of social networks organised from below and energised by concerns relating to human rights and a vision of community seeking an end to prejudice and oppression. This included a growing consciousness of and concern about the educational experiences of many groups including learners from Pacific cultures, children of the poor and disabled learners. This text demonstrates how a small population offers the potential for effective action and advocacy, while political ideology can become hegemonic and limiting of the dynamics of change from below.

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS THREATEN INCLUSION?

The commodification of education as a purchasable benefit is one threat. Another is the unintended consequence of the policy goal of attaining a ‘world-class inclusive system offering educational opportunities of equal quality’ by imposing a model of rationing and fiscal control across supports and services for learners with disabilities. Decentralising the administration of education removed both the steady hand of educational advice and allowed schools as competitive business units to value and prefer some groups of students over others.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO REMIND YOURSELF OF IN ORDER TO SUSTAIN THINGS THAT MIGHT BE ACHIEVABLE?

As a small group of practitioners and researchers the work of the Disability Studies in Education special interest group has provided a theoretical framework because it
INTRODUCTION

expands the traditional ‘special’ education paradigm to include social, cultural and political understandings. This book has enabled parents to tell the stories of their children’s school experiences, and practitioners to explore and reflect on their own actions and concerns. This illustrates how a lot of people are doing really good things in educational contexts. The book brings together people from different vantage points engaging in good talk, good writing and sharing ideas.

Since the implementation of the policy *Special Education 2000* it has been the activity of some families and teachers at the local level that has offered strength and certainty rather than the policy framework itself. *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007) also offers the potential for inclusion and participation of disabled children and their families. The common characteristic of both of these policies is the potential for teachers and parents to become directly involved in decision-making with their local school communities to get things up and running. Concern remains where older separatist paradigms continue to have a powerful influence over the education and community future of disabled learners. The limitations arising from hegemonic views of difference, children and their learning creates a risk. This means that the actions of individuals, their vision, their clarity, their truthfulness to each other and getting on with the job and just being good at education may not go far enough to overcome the resilience of old ideas.

Stories can be very potent. The text is not a recipe for getting it right or being totally successful. We can all learn from the *Tales from School*. 

3
The major restructuring of the administration of New Zealand’s education system that was written into the Education Act of 1989 sought to address both economic imperatives that emanated from the fiscal crisis that was facing the nation, and social imperatives precipitated by the social movements relating to human rights that had gained traction in the previous two decades. Governance arrangements under the new public management model legitimated the introduction of market principles, but also posited a rhetoric of equity. For disabled learners, the most influential clause in the Act was that which decreed that all children should have the right to enrol at their local school, thus inscribing in legislation a paradigm shift from exclusion to inclusion. This demanded a radical change in thinking about the “children, difference, learning and schooling” nexus (Slee, 2001, p. 106) than that which had shaped the educational experiences of many young people from early colonial times. However, 25 years later, New Zealand continues to struggle with interpreting and implementing the principles of inclusion at multiple levels. One of the arguments being put forward to explain this policy/implementation impasse is the resilience of discourses through which exclusion and targeted provision to address some supposed abnormality became naturalised as the response to understandings of difference in the country’s history (Selvaraj, 2014). With a view to providing a well-informed critical foundation from which to interrogate current reform and debate, the opening section of Tales from School presents an historical examination of the shifting and constitutive circumstances through which segregated institutions were developed.

In her comprehensive study of special education in North America, Margret Winzer warns against work in the field that is presented in an historical void or that is examined against narrowly conceived historical snapshots. She talks of a tendency of some writers to be “uncompromisingly critical of past endeavours” when viewing them with a contemporary lens, and also of the dangers of assuming a liberal stance which casts current arrangements in the field as both inevitable historical developments and as the pinnacle of progress (Winzer, 2009, p. viii). Education initiatives or systems do not simply appear as if in a vacuum. The form they take is neither natural nor inevitable. Rather, according to Foucault (1977), such social institutions emerge from a specific historical context, from the
interactions, which take place within that context, and in response to social, economic, political, and ideological factors and forces. Foucault adopted a method of historical analysis that he called ‘genealogy’ to encapsulate his objective of providing a critical diagnosis of the present. Genealogy provides a way of looking at the past of our present – to reveal the source of entities, expectations, practices or actions that we might have unwittingly accepted without question in our current lives, but that “in ways we don’t realize, are rooted in the past” (Rajchman, 1985, p. 4). He is particularly interested in analysing “the way an unproblematic field of experience or set of practices which were accepted without question … becomes a problem, raises discussion and debate, incites new reactions, and induces a crisis in the previously silent behaviour, habits, practices and institutions” (Foucault, 2001, p. 74). In reflecting on the resilience of now outmoded responses to difference, tracing practices that are no longer in existence, but that nonetheless continue to contribute to our ideas and understandings seemed a useful way forward. Capturing echoes of earlier pasts would not only support a critique of the present, but would also enable the awareness required to support attitudinal and ethical transformation.

The opening section of the book, comprised of three chapters, presents an historically-based understanding of the development of what came to be called special education in New Zealand as institutionalised practice. It draws attention to the resilience of troubling and contentious issues as they have emerged in their varying guises in different historical, social, political, and ideological contexts to both reflect and impact policy and practice. A key point of focus is the historically contingent development of the bourgeoning professionalism of the sector, the location and representation of children and their parents, and the implications of this for parents and families as advocates for their children.

Boorstin (1969, p. 46) pointed out “even in modern times, communities existed before governments were here to care for public needs.” In New Zealand it was the meliorist crusade of missionary and middle class charitable organisations that initiated much of the early western educational provision. The civilising agenda of the Native schools, and the practice of isolating ‘criminal and neglected’ children in the country’s early industrial schools and orphanages were justified on the grounds that, as agencies of sound moral correction, the institutions would not only support social stability, but would also offer hope of redemption for the children. When the Native and industrial schools came under state control on 10th October 1867, a focus on correcting what was considered to be asocial or uncivilised behaviour was maintained, embedding further value distinctions that shaped notions of racial and class superiority in colonial times. Such distinctions readily accommodated ideas about intellectual ‘backwardness’ that were facilitated following the nationalising of state education ten years later. This is the subject of Chapter One which locates the beginnings of special education in New Zealand within the constellation of varying axes of material and ideological power, where knowledge of the population became as much a defining factor as the already institutionalised political and economic understandings of class and race.
Dyson (2001, p. 21) explains that understanding past attempts to address complex situations, regardless of their outcomes, provides insights into “both the possibilities they opened up and the contradictions that they embodied.” Education for disabled children has been characterised by periods of tension and controversy as well as periods of optimism and this is a key theme for Chapters Two and Three. These two chapters traverse much of the twentieth century to take account of ways in which parents have been represented at the official level, and their varying responses over time. Following an examination of the circumstances under which special classes were introduced and a professional body for the sector was formalised, Chapter Two introduces two key professionals who worked alongside parents and parent advocacy groups for change. One of those professionals, Charlotte Thomson, provides invaluable insights into those heady times of optimism, and of the resilience of the parents in their struggle for change. Parent advocacy is also central to Colleen Brown’s Chapter Three, which casts the struggle in relation to the contribution of politicians and other leaders who also saw the potential of the period for change. Together Chapters Two and Three highlight factors and forces that have emerged in more recent times to define the terrain in new and challenging ways; to highlight the possibilities in social movements and expressions of dissatisfaction with, and resistance to existing institutional arrangements; and to consequent challenges for understanding and providing for school populations.

This section demonstrates that the history of education in New Zealand is a history of the categorisation of children on the basis of cultural, emotional, behavioural, physical and learning characteristics. Whether grounded in ideological notions of race, civilisation, redemption, eugenic value or ability, systems of classification have been central to institutional differentiation within education and the particular forms it has taken at particular points in time. Decisions about which children should be schooled where were rationalised variously at specific times – as humanitarian; as addressing goals of moral conformity, social control, and social reform; as responding to developments in medical and scientific knowledge; as enabling liberation of the individual and in recognition of their rights.

REFERENCES
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1. LEGITIMATING EXCLUSION

Compulsory Education, the Standards and the Experts

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the national education system in New Zealand in 1877 made education free, secular and compulsory bringing all children under public scrutiny. The following year ‘the standards’ were introduced as the official basis on which school students were to be organised into classes and have their progression through school determined. This operated through a national curriculum, examination and promotions regime, which enabled all primary school pupils to be assessed for their readiness to cope with the demands of the next level. As compulsory attendance became more rigorously enforced, the number of children taking the annual standards examinations increased. Those who did not reach the level of achievement required for promotion became officially recognised as failures. Thus was created a new student identity – the backward child – and a new problem for education (Stephenson, 2013).

Educational performance also came to be seen in medical terms. Political and educational centralisation in New Zealand had been followed by a period of severe economic depression. The social impact was high and prompted a raft of welfare initiatives in the 1890s from the country’s first liberal administration. Highlighting issues relating to health, sanitation, disease, morality, crime and education, which were seen to be inextricably linked to poverty, the aim of the legislation was both ameliorative and preventative. At the same time, the conflation of social, medical and educational concerns resonated with those raised through ‘the science of heredity,’ or eugenics, that had been expressed in parts of the western world and formally articulated by Francis Galton (1883) in Britain. These factors coalesced with new and developing social knowledges and classificatory strategies to inform the management of social and educational problems. Legitimated because of the supposedly neutral scientific solutions they offered, the medical and educational professionals, and the psychologists who worked within the medical model became especially influential in categorising students and in prescribing rehabilitational, custodial and educational treatments as a medical necessity (McLean & Wills, 2008). By 1900, the problem of the backward child was being understood in terms of new knowledge about children that educationalists around the world were developing and sharing through professional networks.

This chapter historicises the development of what came to be called special education in New Zealand. It examines the circumstances under which experts and expertise gained influence in the formulation of more refined classificatory
strategies, practices of segregation and institutionalisation than those begun with
the cultural and social imperialism of the missionary and middle class civilising
agendas. Although grounded in assumptions of individual pathology, these
practices became increasingly concerned with the perceived source of pathology as
a means to seeking a more permanent solution to the social problems it precipitated
(Stephenson, 2008). Experts in social knowledge came to exercise influence, not
only in defining policy and practice in the field of special education, but also in
speaking for those whose interests they were perceived to represent. It is this aspect
of the client/expert relationship, which prompts De Swaan to refer to clientele of
state related experts as a “virtual constituency” (De Swaan, 1998, p. 232).

Although the focus of the chapter is on macro level politics, consideration is also
given to instances where students figured in this history, how they were
represented, and whether their voices could be discerned anywhere within the
official discourse.

EXPERTS AND SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

German sociologist Max Weber sees the appearance and evolution of modern
(western) experts as an integral feature of the institutionalisation of scientific and
technical reason in the secularisation of society (Weber, 1958). In this view
specifically trained technological and managerial experts become essential in
supporting the developing mathematisation of social and natural knowledge and
experience; to its being sustained by the use of measurements and empirically
rationalized proofs; and, in the pursuit of efficiency, in the application of such
scientific procedures to social and technical problems (Fischer, 1990). Fischer
claims that capitalist development, with its characteristic economic behaviours and
bureaucratic state administration, has been an influential mechanism in its
expansion. His critique of intellectual transformations in the modern world rests on
his concern that a positivist understanding of knowledge serves to uphold
technological and material values. This conceals the political implications of any
practice which fails to take account of the full range of human and social values.
Hence, Fischer claims, social problems come to be conceptualised in technical
terms, their resolution expressed in terms of value-free administratively designed
and empirically calculable management, control and efficiency, and their
identification and treatment left in the hands of objective experts.

In New Zealand, expertise and its purveyors became an increasingly
authoritative component in the formulation of early social policies. This influence
was extended as the central administration took over more and more responsibility
for social policies which had previously rested with local authorities, and for
institutional practices which had previously been the domain of voluntary agencies.
Central in mediating the social needs, demands, problems and dilemmas associated
not only with a capitalist society but also with the process of nation building were
“the new uses of knowledges and the new roles of knowledge-generative
institutions and knowledge-bearing elites” (Skocpol & Rueschemeyer, 1996, p. 4).
Policy makers, politicians and others who were in positions of power supported the
perpetuation of existing patterns of privilege, justifying them on the basis of their being in line with the natural organisation of a society, and in the national interest (Smith, 1985). This union of scientific knowledge and social power that Foucault (1980) called power/knowledge fuelled the influence of eugenicists who were particularly active in the early years of the twentieth century. Although criticised for running counter to individual liberty, eugenic principles became increasingly supported in scientific circles, and it was those eugenicists who served as public officials and whose scientific and professional expertise combined to legitimate their position, who were to the fore in seeing realised a number of restrictive legislative measures, many centred on schooling.

THE POLITICS OF BIOLOGY

Before that legislation was put into effect, however, a virulent indictment of the nation’s ‘losers’ was brought to public attention. In 1903, politician and surgeon Dr William Chapple published, with the endorsement of some influential medical and political figures, a work which focussed on the disturbing decline in birth rate amongst “the most fit to produce the best offspring” and what he identified as the associated problem of the “relative proportion of the unfit born into the world” (Chapple, 1903, p. 8). For Chapple, a key purpose of the work was to suggest possible solutions to this problem, and to consider the role (and right) of the state to intervene in the issue.

Chapple presented a number of arguments, which appealed to various sectors of the population, addressing matters that had been simmering as both personal and national concerns. The book’s introduction was explicit. It drew on the Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest to justify the relative success of one group over another. Thus any questions about colonisation by a dominant imperial power, the increasing ascendancy of a middle class in New Zealand and the apparent imminent demise of Māori as a distinct group could be rationalised and concerns appeased. Ideas about criminal inheritance, proposing crime to be a natural function of mental and physical differences, appealed to the concerns of those members of society exhibiting moral panic about conditions emanating from the growth of the urban sector, and offered ideological support for the establishment of middle class cultural hegemony. For Chapple, “the criminal, the pauper, the idiot and imbecile, the lunatic, the drunkard, the deformed, and diseased” were “the fit man’s burden” (p. xii). This struck chords with indignation being expressed about increased taxation and welfare provision for those who were perceived to be the undeserving and incorrigible poor.

Providing statistical data to demonstrate an increase in dependence on the state and other forms of support enabled Chapple to draw attention to issues of national efficiency and the quality of the population as a national resource. This spoke to concerns about racial fitness that had emanated from disturbing evidence of substandard physical strength and general health revealed through the medical examinations prior to recruitment for the South African War. It also supported his view that the outcomes of previous humanitarian based charitable or state
initiatives had served to perpetuate national degeneracy rather than alleviate individual suffering. Chapple’s treatise also provided ‘scientific’ evidence on which immigration restrictions could be legitimated, particularly in relation to those of Chinese origin; “any idiot or insane person”; those having a contagious disease considered to be “loathsome or dangerous”; or those having had a conviction for an offence involving “moral turpitude” (Immigration Restriction Act, 1899, p. 116). Significantly, Chapple’s arguments had relevance for the rising professional middle class who, in dealing with perceived social problems, were able to carve out a niche of expertise for themselves, and so enhance their authority and secure a position of status, power and authority (Shuker, 1987).

The human pedigree, a statistically sophisticated analysis of a family’s genetic information, was used by eugenicists from divergent theoretical bases to support their claims of intergenerational mental retardation. This was possible because it “presupposed no particular theory of heredity, yet made the visible fact of heredity easy and convincing to demonstrate” (Mazumdar 1992, p. 71). It was supported by powerful political allies and experts in the fields of medicine, psychiatry, psychology, statistics, criminology and social work, eugenicists drew on and moulded knowledge produced within the biological sciences to produce a new discourse of racial fitness. Provision of perceived appropriate forms of care, education and treatment for those classified as mentally defective evolved around this discourse as groups that by eugenic definition possessed inferior hereditary material, that exhibited anti-social and immoral behaviours, even a tendency to physical differences, became problems of mental degeneracy whose lack of self-control and disproportionate fecundity was a focus of policy and practice.

The rise of experts and associated forms of specialised knowledge in the field of education was most significant in the area of special education for groups of children schooled primarily in segregated settings. In a shift away from the paternalistic charity discourse, which gave meaning to, missionary and voluntary sector activity in the nineteenth century and its underpinning dichotomy of care and control, problems for education came to be framed increasingly by constitutive notions of national efficiency, utility and eugenic value. If managing the population became the panacea for the nation’s problems within the scientifically based reasoning which saw “abnormal” groups in biological or hereditarian terms as “breeding isolate[s] at the margin of the human race” (Mazumdar, 1992, p. 2), segregated educational institutions had an important task to fulfil. The medical profession became especially influential in redefining, in medical terms, conditions which previously had been perceived in terms of moral deviancy or of social dysfunction, but which nonetheless remained symptomatic of some deviation from, or conflict with, moral, social or legal norms or expectations.

Whilst provision was established to address the educational needs of children who had previously either been exempted from school or accommodated (often reluctantly) within regular classrooms, the delineation and redefinition of what constituted the normal was accepted uncritically under the supposedly objective discretionary guidance of a small number of experts. Reducing difference to individual deficiency in this way, as De Swaan cogently argues, ensured that
apparent failure of an individual (or any number of individuals) to operate successfully within specific and anticipated norms was never seen as part of a wider structural conflict – as indicative of the way in which such norms served to exclude certain people from meaningful participation. “Medical diagnoses,” he argued, “no matter how many, never added up to a social critique” (De Swaan, 1998, p. 241).

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

At this time also problems for education that had been highlighted by the introduction of compulsory attendance and central performance measures were being understood in terms of international developments in knowledge about children and their development. Close study of genetic patterns revealed minimum capabilities or capacities in some young people, which in turn legitimated institutionalisation of those seen to be ineducable. In a similar way, inhibited potential could be revealed and appropriate treatment planned to optimise development. This was often some form of specialised provision. Implicit in the philosophy around which these initiatives were formulated was the notion of education as a science underpinned by a developmentalist perspective.

The late nineteenth century research of G. Stanley Hall constituted the earliest endeavours to position childhood central to, and as an object of, serious academic study. Hall initiated the child study movement in America with his survey of Boston kindergarten children on their entrance to school. His investigations into childhood sought to gain insights into children’s thought processes through his use of surveys, questionnaires, and anecdotal reports from adults, primarily parents and teachers. Reported in a major two-volume work, Adolescence (Hall, 1904), these would inform social and educational reform movements that aimed to improve the health and welfare of children. However, in adopting a scientific statistically grounded method of child study, Hall presented his data with a degree of classification that would have implications for student identities. Furthermore, the early participation of teachers and parents was subsequently marginalised in the successful bid by the medical profession to legitimate child study as a science for the experts.

Hall’s influence amongst his peers was considerable, most notably in the establishment of a site for continuous debate and theoretical development in the first institute of child psychology in America (Hulse & Green, 1986). The development of institutions like the Chicago Board of Education’s Department of Child Study and Pedagogical Investigation facilitated the dissemination of the ideas more readily, making them available to small nations like New Zealand. Equally influential were the technological measures of intelligence initiated by French psychologist Alfred Binet in collaboration with Théodore Simon, a physician experienced in working with children who were not progressing with their age peers (Binet & Simon, 1915). In this early work (originally published in 1904), Binet and Simon used a diagnosis/school placement model – the information of the intelligence of the child according to the test would determine
whether the child would benefit from a special education placement, or one in a regular classroom.

Valerie Walkerdine (1984), drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, isolates the practices of child study and mental measurement as pivotal to scientifically legitimated classification of children at the beginning of the twentieth century. Within the historically specific understanding that this knowledge confirmed, she contends, not only were the practices, opinions and decisions of experts in the field of developmental psychology legitimated, so too did the techniques and instruments they employed become acceptable apparatuses of scientific judgement and classification. Case studies of individual children and mental measurement provided educationalists with what was considered to be well-founded knowledge of the child, which, in the hands of the designated experts, became a powerful instrument of control in a number of ways. Because pedagogic practices became totally saturated with the notion of a normalised sequence of child development, Walkerdine argues, the knowledge of the child was used to determine and shape the classroom experiences most conducive to optimal development. Under these conditions, and concealed in a liberal rhetoric of humanitarian concern, educational reform and progress, children became objects of pathological description and norms of development, and subsequently subjected to an array of what Foucault (1977) called normalising techniques.

In the process of normalising against a standard, however, knowledge of the individual was juxtaposed with knowledge of others similarly studied. This enabled comparatively devised classification in developmental terms as normal, slow, a fast learner for example. Rather than supporting a liberating and meaningful learning experience, Walkerdine argues, by assessment and continual observation and recording, developmental psychology as a field of specialised knowledge became implicated in constructing the individual and his/her place on a similarly constructed normal/abnormal continuum. The institutionalisation of the standards provided the conditions under which such a regime could take hold in New Zealand.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE ‘BACKWARD CHILD’ IN NEW ZEALAND

Advocacy for special consideration of children who were falling behind their age peers in New Zealand schools centred to a considerable extent on their perceived (in)ability to cope with the first of the standards examinations. These examinations were conducted each year by school inspectors who, from as early as 1892 were commenting on children in the infant classes who were being held back (or ‘retarded’) by their teachers from advancing to the first standard class. In their reports, inspectors explained that teachers had offered varying explanations for retardation – late entry to school, irregular attendance, bad teaching, poor health and mental or physical incapacity (see for example AJHR, 1893, E-1). Further concerns emanated from the performance of those who were unsuccessful in the examinations. In 1894, when measures were taken to reinforce the compulsory clause of the 1877 Education Act, a Wellington inspector expressed concern that
schools would be inundated with backward children who, he felt, would be more appropriately placed in segregated settings to facilitate their preparation for the higher standards (Winterbourn, 1944). The problem of the ‘backward child’ had emerged.

Sustained and/or combined advocacy by inspectors was difficult, however, because of the nature of the administrative hierarchy in the New Zealand education system. Oversight of the inspectors was with the regional Education Boards rather than the central Education Department and they were virtually the only professional support and advisory presence external to the everyday classroom. They visited only once or twice annually and were clearly heterogeneous in opinion and outlook. Their reports reflected the diversity of opinion concerning an equally heterogeneous group of youngsters who were not conforming to the normalised expectations for their age group and who relied on confirmation of a successful level of achievement to be moved from one standard to the next. Inspectors’ comments which privileged the advantages of social promotion stood alongside those that favoured promotion by merit (Winterbourn, 1982). Debate was further generated when the teachers’ professional organisation, the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) began expressing concerns about the implications for ‘normal’ children in the class when the teacher was obliged to devote excessive time to the ‘backward’ children. The problem, it appeared, was with the children, but the consequences were everyone else’s. The backward child was not just atypical, but also a classroom liability. The solution favoured by many was segregation and a concentrated effort to bring the child in line with his/her peers.

This solution was increasingly seen in medical terms as NZEI members, drawing on links which had already been forged within medical circles between intellectual dullness and physical causes, began lobbying for a school medical service to assist in diagnosing the causes of backwardness. Co-terminously, the New Zealand Department of Public Health was struggling to persuade the government to fund regular medical and dental inspections of school children as part of its “preventative rather than curative” philosophy on community health (Dow, 1995, p. 11). Clean healthy bodies equated with healthy minds and disciplined and regulated bodies with moral normalised citizens. This meant that calls for medicalisation of the New Zealand school system came from two independent departments.

Although it was the backward child who initiated NZEI agitation, it was the children in the industrial schools who provided the greatest stimulus for action. The institutionalisation of problem populations had long been an accepted practice of the young colony. Those who failed to meet accepted social standards, who were not engaged in employment, who failed in some way to conform to the virtues of morality and industry, were morally condemned and segregated from the rest of society. Whilst the legitimating discourse had not always been grounded in biological determinism, conflation of mental difference with criminal behaviour had been commonplace in early institutionalisation practices. Prior to the establishment of provincial ‘lunatic asylums,’ the practice had been “to confine lunatics in the gaol,” often under the supervision of “some of the best conducted
criminal prisoners” (National Archives Wellington: LE 1/1858/4). Incarceration under the custodial care of the gaoler and the medical care of the provincial surgeon, whose responsibilities included the position of medical attendant to the gaol and hospital, made manifest the ideological underpinnings which were to provide fertile terrain for future eugenic debate. Furthermore, as provincial asylums were established, and in the absence of other more appropriate facilities, the ad hoc consignment of orphaned or destitute children to the institutions, (i.e. those “incapable of managing himself or his affairs and whether found lunatic by inquisition or not” (Lunatics Act, 1868, p. 59) foreshadowed the explicit linking of poverty with feeble-mindedness which was to characterise eugenic discourse. It was just a short while later that Dr Duncan MacGregor, Professor of Mental and Moral Science at Otago University, and later Inspector-General of Hospitals and Charitable Institutions, classed “hopeless drunkards, hopeless criminals, and hopeless paupers” as insane and dangerous (MacGregor, 1876).

These practices also informed an on-going concern to have recognised differentiation between destitute and delinquent children in industrial schools that resurfaced at the turn of the century. This was an early-identified legislative measure for the newly appointed Inspector-General of Schools, George Hogben. In reviewing industrial schools legislation he considered boarding out as the most appropriate strategy for neglected children. The ‘delinquent,’ however, required more careful consideration if the appropriate treatment were to be prescribed. To this end, Hogben identified six causes of juvenile crime – the stress and struggle of life; bad hygienic surroundings and consequently inferior physique; the temptations that result from overcrowding and from the greater facilities for committing petty thefts with impunity that exist in the towns compared with the country; inherited low physical and moral nature; weakness and want of control on the part of parents; the neglect and bad example of parents (AJHR, 1900, E-3, p. 2). If insanitary environmental conditions, poor parenting and economic circumstances were considered significant, associated personal characteristics were rendered unproblematic. Hogben thus created a subject whose actions were a function of a criminal nature. Socially the criminal of his list was an abnormal being. The impact of eugenic thought had penetrated the ranks of the influential education bureaucracy (Stephenson, 2013). In reorganising the industrial school system, an increasing awareness of the neglected child’s right to protection was expressed in an extension of the boarding out system and the intention to segregate the “more difficult types of young people” in newly established reformatories (Beck, 1928, p. 129). Hogben would draw on initiatives already operating in Chicago on which to develop this phase of New Zealand’s specialist educational facilities.

**A MODEL FOR NEW ZEALAND**

In 1907 Hogben visited Europe and America to investigate schools and other educational institutions, including those, which had been established for backward children. He considered his visit to Chicago was especially fruitful. The Director of the Department of Child Study and Pedagogical Investigation was able to offer...
what Hogben believed to be particularly valuable expert advice about the appropriate treatment that children in general, and backward children in particular, should receive at various stages of their schooling. Two initiatives gained Hogben’s attention as offering possibilities for the New Zealand context. One was the special ungraded classes that were being trialled for four groups of students – “subnormal” or “incorrigible” children, those “behind in some school subject” or children who were “unable to understand the English language” (AJHR, 1908, E-15, p. 50). The other initiative that impressed Hogben was Chicago’s Parental School for feeble-minded boys (see Breckinridge & Abbott, 1912).

Recognising the heterogeneity of the classroom populations, Hogben became convinced of the need for various forms of specialist provision in New Zealand and a range of educational and medical specialist knowledge, which would enable individualised diagnosis and treatment to the needs of the child. He was also confident that strategies planned for New Zealand were in line with international expert opinion.

There is general agreement among specialists who work for the education of the mentally defective that the test we propose to use in New Zealand for the classification of such cases is the best that can be applied in practice, namely that the feeble-minded children, as distinct from idiots are those who can keep themselves clean and out of personal danger, and, further, as distinguished from imbeciles (who can also satisfy this test) are those who can be trained to earn their own living, wholly or partly, in subordinate positions. (AJHR, 1908, E-15, p. 67, emphasis in original)

To this end Hogben intended to establish a dual special school/special class system, starting with a residential school for the feeble-minded. While he was abroad, he sought a suitable specialist in the field who could take control of the institution. The following year the Otekaike Special School for boys considered “capable of being trained in some degree” (AJHR, 1910a, E-4, p. 3) began its operation under the leadership of George Benstead. Its establishment was presented as being grounded in a greater degree of understanding of the feeble-minded than that which had previously guided their treatment. Chicago’s Parental School was drawn on as an archetype, and as a working financial model in its operation (AJHR, 1910a, E-4, p. 4).

Early reporting on the school for backward pupils reflected the then hegemonic conflation of moral and mental deficiency, and assigned a student identity, which was both personal and social (Kenway, 1990). Initially, Benstead stated, it was believed that students such as those at Otekaike would be able to assume full rights and obligations of citizenship. However, it had become clear that:

The peculiarities of temperament, the lack of inhibitory powers, apathy, and other idiosyncrasies, which, more or less, are concomitants of mental defect, are generally so persistent that at no time can the majority of feeble-minded persons be looked upon as responsible members of society. (AJHR, 1910b, E-4, p. 9)
Because mental deficiency rendered individuals morally irresponsible for their actions, it was considered that the majority should be allowed neither the liberty nor the rights of responsible citizenship. However, to ensure that some “practical return” could be gleaned from their labours, Benstead had introduced training which would render those who, he stated, “would otherwise remain absolutely useless units” capable of contributing to their upkeep. He would thus be “lessening the misery of the world, and preventing increase of the helpless and hopeless section of the Empire” (AJHR, 1910b, E-4, p. 9). The passage of the youngster who may have at one time failed to pass his examination, to the status of dull-witted and finally morally and mentally deficient (non)citizen had been successfully completed by their enlightened benefactors (Stephenson, 2013).

AND FOR THE GIRLS?

By 1910 a number of philosophical and legislative shifts had occurred as eugenic thought contributed to determine wider social policy, many focusing on women. Besides official measures on immigration, steps had been taken to legislate for dissolution of marriages where there was a likelihood “to produce offspring with a strong tendency to become insane, feeble-minded, epileptic, or otherwise neurotic [and who were] likely to become a charge upon the State” (Bolt, 1905, p. 726). The concerns about racial fitness, compounded by awareness of the declining population, especially as it reflected lowering of the birth-rate amongst those of the eugenically good class, had prompted the founding in 1907 of the Society for Promoting the Health of Women and Children (The Plunket Society) by Dr Frederick Truby King (King, 1913). As an overt attempt to reverse these alarming trends, the society sought to give credence to the notion of the innate value of women as “race-producers” and “race developers” (Seddon cited in Shuker, 1987, p. 215). King, whose expertise was legitimated in his role as superintendent of Seaciff Mental Asylum, later became Director of Child Welfare. Subscribing to the branch of eugenics that recognized the benefits of early environmental intervention, King argued that by rendering women better prepared for maternity, by discouraging instrumentally assisted deliveries, and by disseminating information concerning advantageous methods of feeding and training children, aims to enhance racial fitness and purity would be realised. In this way, he stated, “the main supplies of population for our asylums, hospitals, benevolent institutions, gaols and slums would be cut off at sources” (AJHR, 1906, H-7, p. 9).

The ideals of the Plunket Society were expressed at one level by efforts to differentiate educational experiences in the regular schools on a gendered basis in order to underscore the importance of motherhood as a vocation, and at another, by identifying those not considered suitable to assume the role of parenthood as “a vocation of national importance” (Shuker, 1987, p. 215). For Sullivan, King’s discourse on mothercraft, its disciplinary rituals for the expectant mother and its precise techniques for subsequent mothering, which aimed at “formation of character as much as survival of the infant,” was virtually “a modified and repackaged version of the eugenic creed in which healthy bodies were seen to

More rigid procedures in the institutionalisation of girls continued to be advanced, and was central to the debates preceding the Reformatory Institutions Act, 1909. To gain support for legislation that was “to make provision for the establishment and control of reformatory institutions for the reception and detention of habitual inebriates and of fallen women,” Attorney-General, Dr Findlay lobbied from an overtly eugenic and economic platform, urging his fellow members to consult the records of ex-residents of the various state or charitable institutions, particularly the women, to ascertain the danger of indiscriminate release on the grounds of age (Findlay, 1909, p. 878). “In some cases,” Findlay argued, “we have released women from an industrial school at twenty-one years who were morally degenerate, and the State today has to support four and five illegitimate children of theirs in the institution without getting a brass farthing from any one of them towards that maintenance.” “Are we to allow them,” Findlay questioned, unproblematically conflating notions of mental and moral degeneracy, “to degrade themselves and to bring into life children who are tainted with their parent’s imbecility?” (Findlay, 1909, p. 1036).

Similar arguments were presented in relation to education. With the passing of the 1910 Education Act Amendment Act it became possible to detain young people in special schools beyond the age of 21 when it was considered to be in the interests of the child and the community. Benstead’s immediate concern was in having established an appropriate facility in which feeble-minded girls who were eugenically unfit could be appropriately accommodated. In suggesting that the facilities at Otekaie could be developed to that end, Benstead, as had Findlay the previous year, drew on economic as well as eugenically-based arguments to claim that an institution for feeble-minded girls was a necessity because of their propensity to become “prostitutes, criminals, drunkards, and … prolific breeders.”

Probably some people will say that too much money is already being spent on the education of feeble-minded children; but I may point out that it is entirely false economy to delay providing for the segregation of feeble-minded girls, inasmuch as delay means a continuous increase in the numbers. … No one who looks the question of race-betterment squarely in the face can for one moment condemn the expenditure necessary to equip an institution for the accommodation of feeble-minded girls (AJHR, 1910b, E-4, p. 12)

Benstead lauded the fact that the 1910 amendment had enabled prolonged detention of some young people who were deemed unfit for release at 21, claiming that the government of the young dominion had made inroads into curbing the excessive fecundity of the unfit (AJHR, 1912, E-4). Records of Otekaie indicate that from 1913 until 1916 girls had been accepted into the Otekaie Special School as a temporary measure until the Richmond Special School for Girls of Feeble Mind was established in Nelson in 1916. The first stage of Hogben’s plan for special education had been realised. The special classes that he had envisaged to be part of the dual special education provision were still to eventuate.
SPECIAL CLASSES

In the discussion of his overseas investigation of schools, Hogben reported a general consensus amongst the countries visited that the special expert and the teacher should collaborate to decide on whether or not a child should be classified as subnormal.

The importance of co-operation between the teacher skilled in the treatment of the mentally defective and the medical specialist is recognised everywhere – in the first instance, for the proper classification of the child, and afterwards for the adjustment of physical and mental work to secure the best development. … it is infinitely better for one of these unfortunates to become the humblest kind of farm labourer than a hanger-on in a town slum. (AJHR, 1908, E-15, p. 68)

Children belonging to “the subnormal group,” according to the Director of Chicago’s Department of Child Study and Pedagogical Investigation, required “special remedial measures” (AJHR, 1908, p. 51), specially trained teachers, curriculum adaptation to suit the needs of the child, and appropriately equipped classrooms. From his observations of the ungraded classes of Chicago Hogben concluded that, for New Zealand:

it might be expedient to establish an ‘ungraded room’ say, in each of the four Normal Schools, for the milder cases, leaving the more marked cases, and those from other districts, to be treated at special homes like that now established at Otekaie. (AJHR, 1908, p. 51)

Although Hogben was convinced of the potential value of the classes for the New Zealand situation, and despite advocacy from NZEI members, school medical officers and inspectors, similarly devised special classes that he had planned to operate as part of the normal schools were slow to develop. The Education Act Amendment Act (1907, p. 195) had first made specific reference to children whose mental functioning was classified as ‘defective’ and of their possible education in special schools or special classes. This had supported the establishment of the special school at Otekaie in 1908, and related to attendance requirements and to mechanisms through which the choice and authority of parents whose children were so classified could be regulated. In 1911 a classificatory distinction was made under the Mental Defectives Act, which made the Education Department officially responsible for “feeble minded and epileptic” children, and mental hospitals for “idiots and imbeciles” (Mental Defectives Act, 1911, p. 24). The legislative mechanism was in place for special classes but they did not follow immediately. Further developments will be examined in the next chapter.

THE RHETORIC AND THE REALITY

Hogben’s decision to model New Zealand’s system of special classes and special schools on Chicago, along with understanding of the wider contextual factors that
worked towards shaping the nature and direction of education at the time, perhaps helps explain the contradictory nature of the rhetoric of the initiatives – and others introduced by Hogben at this crucial time of educational change in New Zealand – and the reality of the experiences the changes mapped out for the young people. The legitimation of developmental psychology as a science meant that notions of a normal sequence and rate of development became largely unchallenged. For the developing child, it was being argued, the most favourable learning opportunities were through spontaneous, active and interactive response rather than by rigidly imposed conformity and passivity. ‘Learning by doing’ was a phrase used by educationalists Francis Parker and John Dewey whose work in Chicago had signalled an explicit attempt to encourage children to engage more closely with the education process. Their child-centred pedagogy aimed to render method and curriculum relevant to the intellectual and social development of the children and focused on integrating academic with practical skills. Dewey’s experimental class in Chicago was a focus for progressive educationalists. In his analysis of the Chicago-based endeavours to reform education practices, David Hogan contends that Chicago, perhaps more than any other city “exemplified and symbolized the market revolution of the nineteenth century.” The reforms, he suggested, were an attempt “to mediate the worst extremes contingent on this” (Hogan, 1985, p. 83). The implications of an obsession with grade averages, promotion, and competition for recognition for the child-centred pedagogy in Chicago were significant. According to Hogan (1985), democratisation of the social relations of the classroom, an essential aspiration of the child-centred philosophy, was initially not realised because Parker and Dewey “both failed to intellectually confront the power exercised by competitive evaluation and grading over classroom processes and outcomes, and to directly challenge, therefore, the heart of bourgeois pedagogy” (p. 92). Rather, he argues, in a socio-economic environment which privileged the culture of capitalism, and in the face of continuing bureaucratic demands, learning by doing simply served to “industrialize pedagogy” and the study of child development became reduced to improving the social efficiency of the schools by providing the criteria on which children should be separated according to individual capacity (p. 93). The implications of these contradictions were as significant for children in special education facilities as they were for those in the regular schools and classes, especially as they reinforced the practice of segregation and correction established in earlier colonial days. What, then, do we know of schooling as it was experienced by children in those early years? How were they represented, and are their voices discernable at all within the official discourse? The following example is one of the rare glimpses we have into their comments on their world.

TALES FROM SCHOOL: KOHIMARAMA NAVAL TRAINING SCHOOL

The Kohimarama Naval Training School, later Kohimarama Industrial School, was established in Auckland in 1874. It was to train “certain classes of the youth of the Colony of New Zealand … to a knowledge of the art of seamanship and maritime
The establishment of the institution was discussed in official records in ways that signalled a number of underlying objectives to its vocational purpose. Each related to the way the residents were perceived and classified, and justified their exclusion from the type of educational experience other young people were receiving in New Zealand’s provincial schools. One argument focused on the institution’s potential economic benefit to New Zealand as a trading nation. The location of the country made it inevitable that it would become a nation of maritime activity, it was argued. The country was already developing its own shipping fleet and the lack of internal transport development meant that coastal shipping was also crucial. Having a ready supply of seamen to work the ships would support such activities and avoid having to use foreign shipping in these endeavours (Reynolds, 1874, p. 428).

The school was also to serve a social control function. In proposing the Bill Mr Reynolds had a clear view of who the potential pupils would be. The object of the Bill before parliament, he said, was “to establish industrial schools for neglected and in some cases criminal children … to train up our youth of the Arab class to the service of the sea” (Reynolds, 1874, p. 743). By Marine and Education Department personnel alike, the boys were discussed in pathological terms, their misdemeanours being seen as a function of their “tempers and dispositions” (New Zealand Herald, 6 August, 1875, p. 6), their “restlessness” (AJHR, 1875, H-29, p. 2), their “unsettled and roving disposition” (AJHR, 1875, H-29, p. 3), and their “criminality” (AJHR, 1880, H-1G, p. 6). Their circumstances were attributed to internal failings, to some undesirable trait specific to the boys themselves, or to their families. As was usual with children in institutions of correction, much care was taken to enunciate the circumstances of the parents in registration records and annual reports of the school: “mother dead – father a gum digger and in gaol for manslaughter” (National Archives, Auckland: R1000723).

In 1875 several children were absconding from the Kohimarama Naval Training School – some of them repeatedly. Within the tradition of seamanship, absconding was a serious offence, and was linked to notions of individual honour and national responsibility. So it was that at Kohimarama absconding was the epitome of deviance, not only because it contravened the imperative to confine, but also because it demonstrated a failure to accept the rules and norms which governed the institution and all that it stood for, and to which all other members of the institution and of the vocation itself, subscribed. The seriousness of the offence against that tradition was reflected in the measure of punishment offenders received – whipping or confinement in cells. One young lad, the archives tell us, absconded five times in six weeks. He was “apprehended on a charge of theft, sent to gaol and whipped” (National Archives, Auckland: R1000723). Clearly the extreme punishments were not having the expected deterrent effect, however, as boys were reoffending within days, and were not short of companions in their exploits. In response to the bad press from the local newspaper, the manager requested an inquiry be conducted. This included interviews with the boys by the Collector of Customs, a regular visitor to the school, and these were reported in the official records of the school (AJHR, 1875, H-29, p. 3). At first glance it appeared that space was being made for
the voices of the boys which had hitherto been submerged in their institutionalisation. In fact, any opportunity that space may have offered up was denied by the nature of the relationship between the interrogating official and the boys, the restrictive form of questioning and the representation of the voices in the report.

The report was presented to the Department as a record of a fair and impartial inquiry. None of the officers of the school had been present when the boys were interviewed, it was explained, so their responses had not been shaped by any “undue pressure” (AJHR, 1875, H-29, p. 3). In his report the Collector of Customs acknowledged his “frequent visits” to the school. As a senior officer of the Marine Department such visits would align him with the management perspective, not with that of the boys. There was little chance that undue pressure would be avoided. For the Collector, the evidence of the boys, combined with his observations on his frequent visits allowed him to conclude that all the boys had been treated kindly, and that “with very few exceptions, [they] seemed happy and contented.” Those few exceptions were again represented in terms of some inherent failing – their “insubordinate spirits,” for example. That they were so easily able to have their “bad example” followed reinforced also the inherent weakness of others of their class. There could therefore “be no other reason for the late desertions” (AJHR, 1875, H-29, p. 3).

Appended to the report were the statements “as nearly as possible verbatim” of the boys examined (AJHR, 1875, H-29, p. 3). These statements speak volumes for their closed nature, for their tone and for their silences. Four of the seventeen responses are cited here to illustrate.

John Bates: likes being in the school first-rate; treated all right by both Captain Breton and the schoolmaster, – would not like to run; gets plenty to eat.
Charles Carter: has nothing to complain of; is well treated by both Captain Breton and schoolmaster.
J. T. Lyons: has nothing to complain of; bolted once; was enticed to do so, would not do it again; Captain Breton and the schoolmaster both kind.
Frederick Charles Grey: was persuaded by another boy named Roberts to run away; is well and kindly treated; has no wish to run away again; would like to be on the ship always; has no complaints. (AJHR, 1875, H-29, p. 3)

The ‘evidence’ is cleverly represented through the boys’ jargon, to represent them as active in framing their own experiences, suggesting to the world outside that they are central actors in an inclusive space, where the perspectives of all are taken into account.

CONCLUSION

The rise of experts and associated forms of specialised knowledge in the field of education was most significant in the area of special education for groups of
children schooled primarily in segregated settings. In a shift away from the paternalistic charity discourse, which gave meaning to missionary and voluntary sector activity in the nineteenth century and its underpinning dichotomy of care and control, problems for education came to be framed increasingly by constitutive notions of national efficiency, utility and eugenic value. These developments that provided knowledge of the child underpinned the redefining and expanding of the realm of exclusion in New Zealand.

This chapter examined the values and principles which structured the discourses of deviancy and defectiveness in New Zealand and which shaped the policy and practices implicated in its treatment and control. The historical, social and economic conditions under which these values were conceived, the key human influences in their definition, and the consequences for a variety of individuals and groups whose ‘unacceptable’ and ‘inferior’ characteristics were generated through the consequent categorisation have been considered. These understandings contribute to an explanation as to why special education, in the specific form it took, became an issue of central bureaucratic and legislative concern in the early years of the twentieth century.

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   Memorandum of Evidence taken by Collector of Customs, Auckland, on a visit to the Naval Training School at Kohimarama, on 26th July, 1875, p. 3.
AJHR. (1880). H-1G, 1-6. Report upon inquiry into the management and working of the Kohimarama Naval Training School by W. Habens, Minister of Education.


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2. PARENTS, PROFESSIONALS AND SCHOOLING

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the ideological basis of exclusionary forms of special education in New Zealand was discussed. Deeply implicated in its development were judgements about families that framed an equally oppressive form of exclusion of parents from decision-making and control over their children. Such judgements had their roots in the civilising agenda of missionary education for Māori and middle class charitable endeavour. With colonisation had come Victorian attitudes towards deserving and undeserving poor and perceptions of need and entitlement, which engendered constant wariness about irresponsible dependence on state relief. As the colonial state bureaucracy strengthened and the public sector came to assume dominance over a particularistic, paternalistic, insufficient, and amateur voluntary sector (Stephenson, 2013 after Salamon, 1995), direct intervention in indigenous and colonial family life became increasingly apparent. According to Musgrove, in writing of the English context, “the triumph of public over private influences as formative in social life and individual development … recognized the obsolescence of the educative family, its inadequacy in modern society in child care and training” (Musgrove, 1960, p. 377). Special education was an area that developed from compulsory schooling that most reflected state legitimation of bureaucratic technologies and an associated dismissal of parent voice and perspective. This chapter begins with a discussion of ways in which parental control over their children was marginalised during the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century. The development of a Division of Special Education within the state bureaucracy is also traced.

“No assemblage of ideological practices and meanings, and no set of social and institutional arrangements can be totally monolithic” (Apple, 1995, p. 85). Oppositional tendencies and practices will always occur. That such opposition may not be sufficiently powerful to confront the reproduction process with any major threat does not justify ignoring its existence, as to do so is to ignore the daily actions, experiences and struggles of individual or collectively organised actors. The main aim of the second part of this chapter is to highlight the importance of parent resistance in seeking to interrupt the history of exclusionary schooling experiences that were prescribed for their children. It is also the history of their own exclusion from decision-making processes over their children’s education. The parents were not alone in their struggles, and the chapter identifies the role of concerned professionals working in the field whose support was crucial in mediating opportunities for parental action. Two of those professionals were Don Brown (then Director, Special Education in the Department of Education) and
Charlotte (Lottie) Thomson (teacher and Senior Psychologist in the Department of Education). Sadly, Don Brown is no longer with us, but this, and the next chapter, tell something of his passion, energy and commitment to supporting parents in their quest for direct involvement in the education of their children. I am indebted to Lottie Thomson for her willingness to have included in this chapter large sections of an article that she and Don wrote together in 1990 (Brown & Thomson, 1990), and also for allowing inclusion of extensive comments from a conversation we shared earlier this year. This part of the chapter is essentially Lottie’s section.

**STATE SCHOOLING, SOCIAL RULES AND THE FAMILY**

The first central state involvement in education was focused on those children, socialisation of whom was seen to be too important to both society and to the developing nation state be left to the family or the voluntary sector. The Ordinance for Promoting the Education of Youth in the Colony of New Zealand (1847) was to apply “chiefly to the education of Māori and half-caste children,” but also to “orphans or destitute children of European parents” (Despatch from George Grey, 1847). In providing boarding facilities, a key objective of the schools was to remove Māori and impoverished children from situations which were considered threatening to a sound moral upbringing so that they could receive appropriate training. Concerns for national cohesion and social order underpinned the passing of the Native Schools and the Neglected and Criminal Children Acts of 1867, the latter of which in particular sought to make parents recognise their responsibility in creating social problems and to assert the principle of family responsibility in alleviating it.

If the problem of troublesome children increasingly came to focus on notions of family deviance, the perceived value of positive home and family experiences was expressed in boarding out and fostering provisions in the legislation. The expectation was that a healthy family environment would provide a moralising influence and would assist in the reformation of the child. Deviancy was also viewed as a function of external influences to which a destitute child could succumb and boarding out was preferred for these children. Just as the poor home was seen to be responsible for creating social problems, so did the good home promise redemption, and this was particularly valuable when linked to work. For children in some of the institutions that had been established during the provincial era, provision was made at the discretion of the provincial superintendent, to be placed out to service under certain conditions, for periods of up to three years.

Regulations controlling boarding out practices were altered by the Neglected and Criminal Children Amendment Act (1870) primarily concerning the length of time for which placements could be organised and monitored. In addition, children under sixteen years convicted of a crime could be sent to foster homes, on the proviso that the presiding body should deem it in the best interests of that child. Parental control was further eroded when the original legislation was again amended in 1873 to authorise the master of the industrial schools to act in loco parentis where parents “of immoral and dissolute habits” were deemed unfit
guardians (Neglected Children’s Act, 1873, p. 305). When, shortly after the establishment of the national education system in 1877, the industrial schools were transferred to the Department of Education along with the new Dead-and-Dumb Institution at Summer, the Inspector-General of schools visited Australia and reported on what he saw to be the benefits of the boarding out system and the extent of its practice in the various Australian states (AJHR, 1881, E-6: 1-4). His comments endorsed the view that a healthy family environment would provide a more positive influence for some children than would institutional life.

Children who are boarded out associate naturally with other children in the homes and at school. They acquire habits of self-reliance that cannot be formed in the seclusion of an institution that is a kind of prison. They come to look upon their foster parents as their natural guardians, protectors and counsellors, and the home becomes a starting point and a rallying point as they enter naturally into the ordinary relations of common every-day life. (AJHR, 1881, E-6, p. 1)

The introduction of compulsory schooling brought parents further into the spotlight and has been variously interpreted by historians of education in different national contexts. For Tyack, this was to some extent at least, because compulsory schooling in America was considered the preferred institution of socialisation if a home could not ensure the moral and vocational training of their children. Some children, Tyack claimed, were being “schooled by the street and their peers more than by Christian nurture in the home” (Tyack, 1976, p. 363). Reformers, he argued, were expressing a combination of “fear of social unrest with humanitarian zeal” in supporting state intervention in family life. In New Zealand, also, social control was a major rationale for compulsory schooling – despite the fact that the incidences of larrikinism that sparked moral panic paled into comparison against those of the major industrialising nations (Shuker, 1987).

Compulsory schooling was also seen by many as an invasion of parental rights. In that it rested on a specific organisation of family economy, it set up tensions with traditional patterns of child labour and represented an ideologically conceived effort to consolidate a specific relationship between the state, the family and the child (Snow, 1989). From an official viewpoint, though, failure to conform to attendance regulations was construed as being a function of poor family life and home conditions, and bad parenting. Problem children who were not attending school as expected “were simultaneously dangerous to social order, victims of parental neglect, but potentially productive and conforming citizens in the making who could be redeemed” (Jacka, 2010, p. 62). Legislation that enforced attendance was therefore an important cog in the wheel of the social rules that governed parents and their children. Parents of non-attenders could be fined and, in the cause of egalitarianism and training for citizenship, the state could act as a parent to children whose physical and moral welfare were at risk.

Parental rights were further marginalised when scientific instruments of measurement enabled the experts to develop more precise classifications of individuals and families. Medical and moral problems became scientific ones, and
called into question the eugenic worth of some parents or future parents. By 1909, with the addition of the School for the Blind and the Special School for the Feeble-minded, these institutions were collectively reported by the Minister of Education as “Special Schools: Afflicted and Dependent Children” (AJHR, 1909, E-1, p. 21) and the children and young people were understood in terms of their particular ‘deficiencies,’ the associated disciplinary, medical, moralising or educative treatments that would meet those deficiencies and the teacher and/or appropriate expert who would be able to support their care and education. Education thus became a multi-faceted concern as disciplinary power, with its vast array of technicians and techniques, sought to diagnose, assess, judge and normalise young people in terms of a “whole range of passions, instincts, drives and desires, infirmities and maladjustments” (Sarup, 1982, p. 15). The marginalisation of parental control was integral to the successful implementation of this process.

Occasionally – and strategically – parents were visible as illustrated in the discussion of the Kohimarama Naval Training School in the previous chapter. When the industrial schools were placed under direct Education Department control, annual reporting began to include tables that grouped and classified the children “according to character and circumstances of the parents at the date of committal” (AJHR, 1881, E-6a, p. 3) – father drunkard, mother of good character; father deserted, mother of very bad character; in lunatic asylum; sickly and poor; noted for villainy, for example. From the first year of its operation, in legitimating the work of the Otekaike school, Benstead provided details of improvements in “promising cases” and incorporated comments from parents “expressing their gratitude” into his annual reports. “Thank you so much for the splendid report of my dear boy,” the first such letter began. “It gives me great comfort … I know that he is well looked after” (AJHR, 1909, E-4, p. 15). In subsequent reports, correspondence from parents continued to be strategically placed to support Benstead’s case for extra provision for the boys and adaptation of the facility to allow for the inclusion of girls. “The climate of Otekaike is an ideal one, the grounds most suitable, and the cost of administration would be considerably reduced by extending the work so as to provide for the training of feeble-minded girls,” Benstead argued, in citing letters he had received from parents of feeble-minded girls to demonstrate the need for such provision (AJHR, 1910, E-4, p. 12). Also incorporated was an example of a family pedigree to demonstrate that mental retardation had occurred through successive generations in a family.

SPECIAL CLASSES

By 1919 the work of the Special Schools section of the Education Department had broadened its functions through developments initiated by the then Minister of Education, J. A. Hanan in the industrial schools system and extension of the juvenile probation system. A major concern, Hanan explained, was that every year there was “a constant supply” of neglected, uncontrollable and delinquent children “claiming the State as its foster-parent” (AJHR, 1917, E-1a p. 2). Primary causes of problem children came down to problem parents.
Parental ignorance and incapacity or indifference … a large part of a child’s time spent on the street; street trading and the cupidity of many parents and employers; parental indulgence, lack of parental control, and excessive freedom to children … desertion by parents, intemperance of parents, with the consequent deterioration of home-life, and often the lack of the ordinary comforts of life and the essentials for healthy living; employment in unskilled labour; defective education; and lack of reasonable means of occupying leisure-time after leaving school. (AJHR, 1917, E-1a, p. 3)

Steps to address these issues included ensuring school instruction of girls in efficient and economical home management; providing greater support to the kindergartens; and extending school and post-school opportunities to learn trade skills. Eugenically grounded arguments insisted that unfit parents should be placed under restriction as “physical or mental infirmity are often stamped on the children for life through moral or physical degeneracy of their parents” (p. 4).

In the same year “a systematic canvas” of schools was made to identify feeble-minded and epileptic children with a view to ensuring their perceived appropriate educational placement. Correct classification was seen to be “of the utmost importance if the physical and mental standard of the race [were] to be preserved” (AJHR, 1917, E-4, pp. 4, 5). The minister was emphatic in his view that the educability of feeble-minded children should not be confused with that of “merely backward children who make unduly slow progress under the ordinary methods of school instruction” (p. 5). Foreshadowing more recent debates about inclusion, he warned against any possibility of the participation of feeble-minded children in regular schools. “It should be definitely known,” he stated, that it was not possible to look towards the curing of feeble-minded children, “or to their replacement in ordinary schools under ordinary instruction, or to their being able to take their place in the ordinary community” (p. 5).

Provision for “deaf or hard-of-hearing children and for mentally backward children” was also on the agenda (AJHR, 1919, E-1, p. 46). This would take the form of special classes, initially for children with hearing or speech difficulties established in Wellington, then Auckland and Dunedin, while the issue of establishing special day classes for backward children in populated centres was still “receiving consideration” (AJHR, 1920, E-1, p. 47). Such consideration was in the form of a Royal Commission on Backward Pupils in Schools (Bowler, 1997) and was the culmination of more than 20 years of concern about the length of time children were taking to progress through school – first from the anticipated two years in the preparatory classes (often called ‘the infants’), and second, through the six progressive standard levels that was the basis of the national primary school curriculum and assessment programme. Annual reports from school inspectors as early as 1893 were noting the extent of ‘retardation’ of children, with questions being raised about whether so many instances of children being held back, especially in the infants, were justified. Over the years, explanations for retardation considered teacher-related factors that included poor teaching, but focused more on reluctance to promote children who were deemed unlikely unsuccessful candidates for the following year’s examination. Primarily, however, they dwelt on student or
family factors such as late entry to school, irregular attendance, frequent changes of schools, dullness or mental backwardness.

Further development of special classes for students in a small number of schools who were behind in their progress for a variety of reasons was reported by the chief inspector of primary schools, T. B. Strong, in 1923. Sometimes called ‘ungraded’ classes because they were comprised of students from across the standards levels, these initiatives finally saw realised the second part of Inspector-General George Hogben’s 1908 proposals – discussed in the previous chapter – for special education in New Zealand. Citing the practice of “more progressive” American states that had engaged the services of specialist teachers and psychologists in addressing “the problem of the retarded pupil,” Strong felt that a more comprehensive approach was required in New Zealand. Given the complexity of the composition of the classes, he believed, “an expert psychologist [was] required to direct the method of selecting pupils” for placement (AJHR, 1923, E-2, p. iii).

In fact, the number of ‘experts’ becoming involved in the broader field was ever increasing. The Child Welfare Act (1925) had created a special branch (the Child Welfare Branch) of the Education Department to support the maintenance, care and control of children under state guardianship. This included those in the schools for the feeble-minded and the industrial schools. Of the 49 special classes established by 1930, sensory, physical and health-related issues were a basis for placement, and 11 hospital classes were included. A shift towards social promotion had also brought a focus on measures of a child’s mental capacity rather than attainment relative to others. Reassessment as to whether they were ‘educable’ or ‘ineducable’ would determine which children would be within Education Department facilities and which would be with the Mental Hospitals Department. Others could be looked after by the Health Department. The Medical Superintendent, school medical officers and medical practitioners were all involved, as were supervisors of special classes and the psychiatric clinic (AJHR, 1930, E-1). In 1948 the psychological service within the Department of Education was established (Bowler, 1997). According to Winterbourn (1953), this became one of the major sources of support for students with special educational needs in the country.

One impetus for this development was the increased participation in secondary education that had followed the abolition of the selective proficiency examination from 1937 and the formalisation of the leaving age at 15 years. Secondary schools, once considered the preserve of an elite group, were having to cater for the needs and interests of a much more diverse group of students. As 1948 records indicate, 85 per cent of all young people in New Zealand were having some education beyond their primary school years (AJHR, 1948, E-1). In addition, the increased tendency to promotion by age and physical and emotional development as well as academic factors, meant that ‘retardation’ in the sense of students being prevented from advancing with their age peers, had become less of an issue.

Children are no longer kept forlorn ‘dunces’ in Standard IV until they are old enough to leave school, but even though their arithmetic and English may be only say Standard IV level, they are permitted to go on to Form II, or even Form III, to work on academic subjects at their own rate and to get what
benefit they can from practical and social activities with children of their own age. (AJHR, 1948, E-1, p. 6)

In its comprehensive 850-page report on education released in 1962, the Currie Commission acknowledged that “special education for the handicapped” required careful consideration (Currie, 1962, pp. 464-475). The report lauded the New Zealand system for its provision of all of the services through the education authorities, for its privileging where possible of special classes and clinics over segregated institutions, and for its “reluctance to set apart from their fellows any group of children who [could] reasonably well be catered for in the normal classroom” (p. 465). It noted also the increasing forms of provision that had developed and the significance of the psychological service in coordinating and supporting inter-agency initiatives—those of the Child Welfare Division, special classes for backward children and their area organisers, occupation centres for children with intellectually disabilities, cerebral palsy schools, remedial reading clinics, facilities for the partially sighted and Deaf (p. 467). On the basis that experienced teachers were considered to be those more likely to cope more effectively with children with special needs in regular schools, in-service professional development, rather than pre-service training was favoured as the preferred approach to teacher education. In addition, greater support of after-care services through which school leavers were mentored into work was recommended. Parents, this liberal, celebratory report suggests, were not part of the considerations at all.

TOWARDS CHANGE

Shifts in the way young people with special educational needs have been understood and provided for during the past 25 years in New Zealand had their genesis in world-wide social movements, and more specifically in two historic American anti-discriminatory measures—the Brown v Board of Education decision in 1954 that ruled ‘separate but equal’ to be unconstitutional and in violation of the 14th Amendment rights of African-American children by separating them on the basis of skin colour, and the Education For All Handicapped Children Act (1975) (Public Law 94.142) that established the rights of students to a “free appropriate public education which emphasises special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs” (p. 775). The rights of parents were also assured, and parental needs were to be integral to the development of the child’s “individualised education program” (p. 776). Also legislated for was a Commissioner who could guarantee state and local provision of education in “the least restrictive environment” (p. 792).

In New Zealand, the medical model of diagnosis and correction remained largely unchallenged until the concerns with rights and social justice began to emerge in response to rising awareness of inequalities in the 1970s. However, the passing of the Human Rights Commission Act (1977), which aimed at eliminating discriminatory laws and practices in employment and education on the basis of “colour, race, ethnic or national origins, sex, marital status or religious or ethical
belief” (p. 401) failed to identify disabilities as creating potential axes of discrimination. It was the United Nations’ proclamation of 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons (UN Documents, 1976) that provided a focus for advocacy, including requests to amend the education legislation in line with the inclusive direction of United States Public Law 94-142. Subsequent developments in New Zealand, and the response of successive governments to these issues, are discussed in the following chapter. What is significant here, is to note that this provided a context in which resistance to structural inequalities gained traction and the potential for change was enhanced – not only legislative change, but also change in the possibilities of who could speak for the children, and more importantly, whose voice/s would be heard.

LOTTIE’S STORY

In 1990 Don Brown and Lottie Thomson published in I.H. Review what was introduced as being “one of their most popular parent-empowerment papers – the analogy of the hundredth money” (Brown & Thomson, 1990, p. 9). Presenting their thoughts on the circumstances in which change in special education policy came about – where parent advocacy was central, they drew on the hundredth monkey phenomenon first put forward in Lyall Watson’s Foreword to Laurence Blair’s Rhythms of Vision (1975). They began the paper with the story, much of which I repeat here as it appeared in the I.H. Review.

Let me tell you a story about some monkeys. They lived on an island far, far away – a beautiful tropical island. Life was good and the monkeys lived well on the abundant sweet potatoes that grew there. One day, one monkey began to wash her potatoes before eating them. She did this in the stream. We may never know why – perhaps she was an obsessive compulsive monkey but in this company, where categories are out, maybe she just accidently let it fall and discovered it was so much nicer to get a mouthful of pure sweet potato, rather than earth with her food. Soon another monkey, after observing her, started to wash his potato. And gradually, very gradually, more and more monkeys washed their potatoes.

What happened next is important because it illustrates something, which we believe has happened in our work. It offers us a model to develop further, more appropriate programmes for the people we serve and illustrates how choice can be an effective vehicle for progress. A critical point came in the behaviour of the tribe. When the hundredth monkey started to wash her potato – every monkey in the tribe converted to the new behaviour and potato washing became an integral part of their life. … What we can take from the behaviour of the monkeys is that effective change builds slowly till it reaches a critical point where it can carry everyone with it. …

In the United States, the major legislation, which led that country and many others towards change, came in 1975. But their PL 94-142 did not just appear. It evolved from determined advocacy over a long period of time. We
saw the same process here with the amendments to the Education Act in 1987. A lot of people had been working for a decade or more to achieve this legislation. A lot of monkeys had been washing a lot of potatoes noticed only by the most perceptive members of the tribe. But in America in 1975 and in here in 1987 the hundredth monkey had finally been seen to act and legislation legitimised the behaviour.

The monkeys in our story exercised choice. Change came about through the modelling of one upon another. The obvious benefits of washing the potatoes became universally understood. Every monkey came to it because it was a notion of value and worth. (Brown & Thomson, 1990, p. 9)

Despite the contentious nature of the observations on which this ‘phenomenon’ had been based (see Amundson, 1985), the story itself remains a useful analogy from which to make sense of the significance of the 1980s and the possibilities for change that were established amongst parents and other interested groups and individuals at that time. When I spoke with Lottie to request using the work she and Don had written, she made reference to journalist and popular psychologist, Malcolm Gladwell’s *The Tipping Point*, to help understand why this particular period was one in which meaningful change was possible. Taking the title of his book from the language of the medical world, Gladwell defines the tipping point as “that one dramatic moment in an epidemic when everything can change all at once” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 9). Modern change happens as it does, Gladwell suggests, because ideas, products, practices, behaviours, trends etc. spread in the same way as do viruses. They build to a crescendo and under specific circumstances can tip into a social epidemic. It is the processes and mechanisms through which this tipping point occurs that interest him.

Gladwell identifies three factors or principles that enable the source of such change to gain popular acceptance and influence. The first of these he calls the Law of the Few. A small number of people – Connectors, Mavens and Salesmen in Gladwell’s terminology – together possess the qualities, which will generate sufficient impetus for the tipping point to be reached. Connectors are “people with a special gift for bringing the world together” (p. 38). They are needed to spread a “word-of-mouth epidemic” (p. 56) through their intricate networks of socially valuable connections and relationships. Mavens are the “information specialists” (p. 19) who support the social epidemic through their desire to share the information they have accumulated about a speciality area. Salesmen are enthusiastic and charismatic figures, able to persuade, convince, negotiate and counter opposition to new ideas, trends or behaviours that will bring about change.

For change to be accepted, Gladwell suggests, people must also be compelled to give it attention. The basis of change must be relevant, memorable and ‘catchy.’ This underpins his second principle of the tipping point – the Stickiness Factor. It is “its ‘sticky’ quality or ability to lodge in the cultural mindset” (Schultz, 2001, para. 5) that will influence future behaviour. This will often require a significant shift in accepted public opinion, as it might well be in opposition to ideologically embedded conventional wisdom(s). For this reason conditions for change might
develop in small stages, in an incremental way, until the context is ripe for it to take hold. The final crucial mechanism that will determine whether a trend will achieve mass popularity is what Gladwell terms the Power of Context. Encapsulating the view that epidemics will respond to the time, place and circumstance in which they occur, the tipping point might be conceptualised as the historical moment in which the wide variety of complex factors and variables that have contributed to igniting seemingly small changes that make other changes possible, cumulatively create the context in which the trend or idea will be embraced by the critical mass.

**People Power**

Gladwell’s notion of the Law of the Few had meaning for Lottie, and in our talk she identified those whom she felt were crucial to establishing networks; who would bring the diverse needs and interests together to strengthen advocacy for the parents; who would keep the interested parties informed of their rights and the possibilities to be seized; and who would be able to convince them, and the wider public, that the time was set for change.

> What I liked about his book – and it’s ages since I’ve read it – he said there were three groups of people who had an influence in change, and I was thinking it would be a nice framework to say, ‘Who are the movers and shakers in the inclusion thing? Who do we need to help bring about change? We need the policy makers, those in the [Special Education] Division, we need the teacher educators, we need the parents, we need a sort of ground swell from the public.

I asked Lottie who she thought were the chief movers and shakers during the crucial time of parent advocacy. She saw leaders both within and external to the parent groups.

> I think Don [Brown] had a big influence. Don – and Russell Marshall was a very sympathetic Minister [of Education]. And Don had a real vision. He had a real concern for parents; he really did believe in getting to know parents. And parents like that – they need leaders. That’s where the middle classes come in. They know systems and they can work systems better. These parents, they just fought so hard for their kids, they worked so hard together. And their paths might have been quite different through life if they had not had a child who had Down syndrome. They got into it. They got to learn the systems, they got to see where the power was, and even though there are only a few of them who can do that, we need them. That would be one of those things about Malcolm Gladwell’s groups of people – we need parents with knowledge and skills to fight the system. Yet you need some expertise from the professionals – and you need politicians that are on your side but you need those parents, too. Dr Beeby [Director of Education from 1940-1960] said that no change will occur unless the bulk of the teaching staff go along
with what’s been developed, so, if you’re looking at the Malcolm Gladwell thing – the teachers have to be on board and the educating institutions should be also.

Shifting Terrain

In their paper Don and Lottie made it clear that if ‘the few’ could support change, others could hamper it. Effecting a change in the cultural mindset, or Gladwell’s ‘stickiness factor,’ required turning many of the long-established assumptions about the respective roles of parents and professionals in defining what was in the best interest of the children on their heads. This would take time and patience and would involve tensions.

We must be patient. We can’t achieve it like yesterday. But the change will be longer lasting and more harmonious if we can canvas all the opinions and review all the options. Those with a vested interest in their own needs alone will, ultimately, become apparent. What is happening at any one time in our field will be a balance between emergent and established practice. There will always be a tension between the two. There will be champions of the one and of the other. Indeed, from our previous lives we are more than familiar with the determination of those with differing positions to find the high ground. It is from such a position of advantage that one can influence the lives of others with a degree of safety, if not impunity.

From such positions we find emerging the fortress mentality of those who want no change … no matter how inevitable or justified. There will be those professionals who have not changed themselves. … There are those who will want to maintain the status quo in order to sustain their influence in the system, to communicate with their colleagues and to maintain the distance so many professionals place between themselves and parents. Equally there will be those professionals who would fill the role of radical innovators, banner carriers who fearlessly exhort others to go where none have gone before. Their sureness often derives from the support of people who come from places some of them have never been themselves. Their objectivity, or lack of it, is protected by their zeal.

From this other side of the debate we can hear the unfortunate approach we experienced not so long ago where two professionals exercised their influence. One wanted to burn a publication, prepared for parents by parents, because one page offended his personal philosophy. That page suggested that parents should have the choice of where and how their children should be educated. The other was challenged by a mother, whose voice trembled with emotion when she said that she wanted to exercise her choice, which differed from that of the professional. The professional just did not hear. With more fervour than judgement, the professional replied that it was worth the risk and that: “My heart is with these children.” Where on earth the mother’s heart
was supposed to be is anybody’s guess. Insensitivity like the examples we have quoted can be an unfortunate by-product of radical innovation. (Brown & Thomson, 1990, p. 10)

The first example mentioned here refers to the way parents and professionals worked together to share their experiences, skills and knowledge so that the parents could then compile a ‘kit’ of information and advice that would be by parents for parents (Baldock et al., 1988). Lottie told me more of this initiative. The story is an important one because it demonstrates the importance of those key people who provide information and those who contribute to the mobilisation of enthusiasm towards a new idea and who are undaunted in confronting barriers in order to make things happen.

The Pack – how that came about? It was Don’s idea – he said, we need to get parents together to listen to them basically – and that was my brief. He gave it to me to do and I involved the psychologists that I knew. ... So what we did, we tried to get a representative of all the advocacy groups – there was Down’s Association, Crippled Children, which it was called then, we even managed to get somebody who represented special classes – they had an organisation at that time. We had somebody from the Deaf, the Autism Society; everybody on that list [of parents cited as having prepared the Parent Pack] is representing some parent advocacy. ... We said to them what is it you need most of all? And without doubt it was information. So the rest of the time we set to garner the information that was important. And little groups were working and producing bits. A lot of these parents are skilled people and one of them was an editor, so she edited it. It was very simple – it was really simple. It was meeting the first needs. And you know we tried to get the Department of Education to publish it, but it wasn’t in Department language so the Special Ed Division just published it ourselves, but we weren’t allowed to put our names on it, and it just had to go out to parents. So we sent it out. We published it – as much as Don’s travel allowance would afford. We sent it out and each of the organisations just took it on themselves to distribute it. Then all this feedback came in about how useful it had been. Believe me, I’ve never had such positive feedback from anything I’ve done – and it wasn’t up to Ministry standard because it was written in plain English by parents for parents ... because that’s what the parents at the time wanted. OK we maybe think it could be different but at the time that’s what parents wanted. Because at the time I think some parents were worried about letting their kids into the big wide world – some of them still are.

The Parent Pack provided a tool with which parents could negotiate the new and unfamiliar territory. It was a critical success factor in making the new developments ‘stick.’ This helped enable them to move beyond old certainties to recognise and embrace new possibilities. As Don and Lottie explain, “[o]ur experience tells that effective change can be accomplished when people are knowledgeable of the issues and the options” (p. 10).
Right Time, Right Place, Right Circumstances

The significance of contextual factors in shaping the nature, direction and acceptance of change is also addressed in Don and Lottie’s paper. Despite the impact of rights-based legislation and resource allocation; moves towards educational and vocational equity; and of research, development and professional activity in the field, Don and Lottie believed that parents had been “overtaken by the professional charge,” and were well aware of the “professional capture of decision making that had been a corollary of the virtually irresistible rush of progress” (p. 11). The ideal of parental participation was vulnerable in this context, and using the example of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) to demonstrate, Don and Lottie claim that New Zealand was not alone in this. American legislation decreed that parents would be full partners in the development of their child’s Individual Education Program. New Zealand’s IEP, although not a legislated requirement here, was nonetheless written into Ministry of Education contractual requirements for IEP training. At the time of writing their paper, Don and Lottie pointed out that only one such contract had identified a role for parents in the process. Both countries, it seems, were experiencing similar difficulties in translating the spirit of the initiative into practice. As Lottie explains:

I did a little bit of research on IEPs. I did focus groups of parents and it quite horrified me what was still going on – they would go to a meeting and there would be people around the table that they didn’t know – you know, experts that they had never met before – and were often not introduced to them. And they really resented psychologists and people like that to be involved in IEP meetings who did not know their kids. Basically an IEP meeting was for the input of the teacher and the parent, and they really did resent it. But I was just quite horrified that they were still being treated like that – and it was interesting because … the parents and the teachers valued them because it was an opportunity for them both to come together and support the kid. And that was their strength really. But I have mixed feelings about IEPs. I think the core element of people involved with a child with needs coming together to contribute their knowledge so that they can do something useful for the child – I just can’t fault that – but the practice falls a bit short of that. … The research that I did found very much what the American researchers found, and yet it was legislated there.

For Don and Lottie, the key was to strike a balance between parent and professional that was mutually beneficial, and that would therefore benefit the children. A fundamental concern was to empower parents “to win their own successes” (p. 11). They cited examples of successful initiatives where parent involvement was crucial, and talked of ways in which such models could be made available to others.

Only by the empowerment of parents to speak on an equal footing with professionals can a satisfactory balance be achieved. It is our view that families can reach that level of autonomy and act with equal confidence in
the system. … We have said that wherever possible, we should be looking to needs as a basis for advocacy and negotiation. The hundredth monkey analogy suggests slow process of change until a critical point has been reached. You cannot hurry that process but you can enhance it by ensuring access to the models. (pp. 11-12)

Local exemplars were important, and in considering the significance of context, two key factors come through strongly. One relates to the parent/professional relationship. The other carries a word of caution that we should not lose sight of national specificities in looking to possible ways forward.

But when families are well supported, when their needs are understood and efforts made to meet them, when their voices are heard and when professionals realise their role is to facilitate decision-making more than it is to make decisions, then we have a climate that allows us to move toward the newer programme alternatives, which are available. We have looked closely at advocacy agencies in the United Kingdom, in the United States and in Australia. We are concerned that in some cases, particularly in the United States, the approach to advocacy taken by some of these agencies is confrontational in a fashion, which may well suit their needs but does not necessarily suit ours here in New Zealand. Here in New Zealand, we must ensure that our advocacy style suits our cultural environment and our legislative system. (p. 12)

Closing Thoughts on the Hundredth Monkey

It is not possible to take from what we have said, that one must work hard to get the hundredth monkey up to speed, so to speak. The monkeys started washing potatoes because it made sense to them to do so. It improved the quality of their lives. They chose to do it, nobody imposed it upon them. We are saying that change will come when exemplary models are available to everyone in sufficient numbers for the advantages of new models to become obvious. When people can see that their needs and those of their sons and daughters can be better met by new and more socially valuing programmes they will lend their support. We have spoken today about new developments and how parents should be valued enough that they can find themselves included in what these developments offer. We have tried to say that the inspiration and dreams of new opportunities must be matched by demonstrations of how these dreams can be turned to reality. It is not enough to have ‘a vision.’

Saul of Tarsus had the most famous vision of all – and it left him blind. Professionals must not be blinded by their visions to the needs of people who do not yet share them. They are in danger of being unable to hear as well as see the needs of others. The challenges that we face demand people with vision – there is a difference. Think about it. Most of all we need people with
PARENTS PROFESSIONALS AND SCHOOLING

a capacity to listen. That in our view is the basis on which the advocacy for parents is built. (p. 13)

PROGRESS

This opening section of the book aims to provide an historical context from which to read subsequent chapters. This chapter has focused primarily on the positioning of parents of children for whom the history of exclusion and the current context of inclusion have the greatest consequence. The second section of the chapter has brought the discussion to a less distant historical period, the point at which major legislative change was occurring and the following chapter highlights the politics behind the political process at this time. To conclude this chapter, and as a means of looking back, and looking forward, Lottie provides some thoughts about that period of change, and the tensions and contradictions of retaining ‘special education’ in a policy context of inclusion.

We won some battles, but the forces against us are … certainly when I see some of the things that the psychologists are doing … back into the old IQ testing and stuff. You know I thought we’d got rid of that battle. One of the reasons I gave up was – I worked as a psychologist at [a district] and they were always trying to get resources for the kids there. When the new senior psychologist came he said we need to go out and survey the kids and show them [the Ministry] that we needed more special classes. I felt a bit uneasy about it but I thought well we are trying to make a case so we got our WISCs and our reading tests and things and went and did a whole lot of tests – and suddenly there are a whole lot of kids there who are mildly intellectually retarded – and they’re not and they know they’re not. They are socially disadvantaged but they’re not intellectually retarded. Then you’d get a whole lot of kids at intermediate level who are reading at five or six year level and you think it’s not a special class they need it’s a programme in the school to teach them reading. You know the Marie Clay thing that if a kid can’t read it’s because we haven’t learned how to teach them. And I went home really bothered about it. I felt this is just not right because it feeds into racist stereotypes and stuff like that. And luckily that’s when Keith Ballard – he was right into anti-intelligence tests and he had time as an academic to look into all the literature. Apart from the fact that I thought there must have been more important things to do with the kids than IQ tests – you know – more useful ways of involving kids than seeing how bright they are on an American based test. But again, we thought we’d won that battle. As Don said you didn’t need to have an IQ test to get into a special class.

I was Director of Special Education here and I was conflicted because I was such a believer in inclusion that I thought here I am believing in inclusion and I had my own little territory here – you know Director of Special Ed – and maybe I should be out there. But my fear was – and I can see it happening again with Māori – because they’ve got a school of Māori
MAXINE STEPHENSON WITH CHARLOTTE THOMSON

education and they don’t want to be integrated – my fear was that I would lose advocacy. And when I left the schools were just being dissipated and that’s what happened. The advocacy for special education just went into teacher education. And it’s now just a very minor part of diversity. Now it doesn’t have that real focus.

I think that hopes were really raised with Tomorrow’s Schools and I don’t think it’s really quite come up to what the expectations were. They thought they were really going to have a voice and it didn’t quite work out. There has been some progress but it seems to me that parents are still having to fight.

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