



Editorial – A Tribute to John Codd and Roy Nash

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This editorial is a very brief tribute to the lives and academic work of two irreplaceable New Zealand academics and colleagues – Professors John Codd and Roy Nash – both of whom died recently. Both were deeply committed to the importance of education and the impact of teachers' work on students, communities and society. They both had a profound vision of a society that was fair and just for all its citizens. While they constantly argued for the value of education in creating such a society, they also were wise and brave enough to point out the bounds of what was actually realistic and possible for New Zealand teachers to contribute to this project.

Roy Nash died in October 2006 after a distinguished academic career at Massey University as a sociologist of education with a speciality in the explanation of social disparities in educational achievement. It would not be possible to canvass the enormous breadth of his publications in this short tribute, but a brief perusal of some of the titles of his authored, co-authored and edited books gives a quick idea of his academic and personal interests: *Schools Can't Make Jobs; Political Issues in New Zealand Education; Inequality/ Difference: A Sociology of Education; Succeeding Generations: Family Resources and Access to Education in New Zealand; Making Progress: Adding Value in Secondary Education; Schooling in Rural Societies; Teacher Expectations and Pupil Learning; and, Intelligence and Realism: A Materialist Critique of IQ.*

Roy also published widely in international and New Zealand journals being well able to adjust his writing style to suit different readerships. For this journal, he published three articles, a critique of the Te Kōtahitanga Report in 2005, a critique of NCEA in the same year, and an article for our inaugural issue titled, 'Teacher Effectiveness and the Explanation of Social Disparities in Educational Attainment' where he made the following statement (Nash, 2004: 50) concerning the extent of the difference teachers might really be able to make to student achievement:

To impose so excessive a demand upon teachers is simply to exploit their professional goodwill and collective social conscience. Those who accept this position, and take upon themselves this burden, are acting with a larger generosity of professional spirit than may strictly be necessary. At least, they may not need to be over-impressed by statements that appear to be based on the 'evidence-based' research that so strongly influences official policy on the importance of teachers' expectations. A press release that tells us that, 'effective classroom teaching can explain up to half of a child's educational achievements', is in itself meaningless and derived from research that is far from immune to criticism.

John Codd died a little more than a year after Roy on Christmas Day, 2007. There would be few educationists (teachers, academics or officials) in New Zealand who had not either heard him speak, read one of his many books or articles, studied with him, or had him as a masters or doctoral supervisor at some time during the last four decades. He was widely

liked and admired and seemed to have the admirable knack of saying what needed to be said (no matter how socially, educationally or politically critical) without offending people. He was a deep-thinking social theorist who knew implicitly the critical importance of education and teachers in creating a better society.

John was Professor of Policy Studies in Education at Massey University. He co-edited several books on education policy, most recently *Education Policy Directions in Aotearoa New Zealand* and co-authored the internationally acclaimed *Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship and Democracy*. He contributed regularly to international journals (including the *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *Discourse*, the *Journal of Education Policy* and *Educational Philosophy and Theory*) while still keeping a high profile nationally, publishing in New Zealand journals, presenting at conferences, and undertaking seminars to students of education (one just two months before his death) and graduation addresses. On May 11, 2006 John delivered an inspirational graduation address to Massey University College of Education students that we published in this journal, where he argued in relation to the urgent need for national and international social and political change, that:

Catastrophe can be averted only through the actions of governments and international bodies, but the political will for these actions, in democratic societies such as ours, depends upon the educational empowerment of citizens. The weight of responsibility for this process rests heavily on the shoulders of the education profession but they cannot bear this burden on their own.

(Codd, 2006: 63)

Both John and Roy shared many personal and academic attributes: they were widely published and internationally recognised academics; they were critical of existing social, political and educational conditions; they were not afraid to engage in debates important to the educational community, no matter how contentious; they were impressive educators (for those students prepared to put the effort in); and, they were in the best sense, both renaissance men – extremely widely read, highly knowledgeable, and with a personal and moral commitment to the betterment of humanity through rational argument and action.

Both died in their early 60s and their lives were cut short just as they were approaching the peak of their academic endeavours. They will be sorely missed. Nothing would make them happier as academics than for the readers of this journal to delve into their large body of work; and to engage with and pursue through our education and teaching the very issues that they held close to their hearts. This is their legacy to us and it epitomises the aims of our journal.

REFERENCES

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