

## Editorial: Learning in the New Millennium

In these early years of the new millennium, educational needs are no less pressing than they were in the days when Beatrice Ensor and her colleagues were producing the first issues of *New Era*, over eighty years ago. This issue contains a number of articles which, from very different perspectives, have something to contribute to the educational debates now facing us.

In her article on transferable skills, Kathryn Gow focusses on the need to identify the competencies and capabilities required of graduates for working in the twenty first century. This is a helpful guide through the forest of ideas about the skills needed for lifelong learning, in which the author recognises developments in Australia, the UK and USA, and brings out the gap between theory and practice in the current state of thinking. Her proposals are both practical and set in the real world, encouraging teachers to build on the students' own experience, and to generalise from skills they too often fail to perceive as relevant to their education for a future working environment.

Later in the issue, Margaret Henry picks up on the notion of what constitutes educational developmental needs, in a stimulating paper which she presented to the Bridging the Gap Conference, organised by the Australian Council of WEF. In this paper, she tries to identify and elucidate some of the fundamental issues underlying the conference's theme of bridging the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots".

The seven principles which underpinned discussion at the conference - all designed to promote World Education Fellowship ideals at the time of the run-up to the Australian general election - are worthy of wider dissemination, and are reproduced in an abbreviated form in the News section of this journal, on page 94. At first sight, Margaret's paper would appear to relate particularly to the fifth principle, the furtherance of early childhood development, but her discussion goes beyond this to consider effective educational strategies across communities.

The involvement of the Australian Council of WEF in the political debates at the time of a general election should not be misinterpreted. This is very much in the tradition of the founders and in the spirit of UNESCO. We should not be afraid to propagate our ideals, which have been restated on the back

cover of every issue of *New Era in Education* for over twenty years, and which stem from the pioneering work of Beatrice Ensor and her colleagues in the 1920s. This non-party political agenda for reform is well articulated by Christine Wykes in her opening address to the Bridging the Gap conference, which is also reproduced in the News section.

The historical - and historic - mission of the Fellowship as a campaigning organisation was addressed by Professor Hiroshi Iwami in our August edition (*New Era in Education* vol. 82 no.2), which looked at the work of the journal's first editor, Beatrice Ensor, in founding the first African branch of the movement. In this issue, Margaret White adds further exploration of the history of WEF, in her article on the New Educational Fellowship as a "community of practice" in its early days. Margaret's article brings out the dynamic topicality of *New Era* and the Fellowship in those years, when the organisation was, in the parlance of the twenty-first century, at the cutting edge of educational progress.

Two other articles in this issue reflect the early traditions of *New Era*, which, as Margaret has shown, was always an adventurous and experimental journal. In an intriguingly titled article "The Cart Before the Horse Before the Cart", Don Glass presents an account of a development from peer assessment to collaborative assessment, as pioneered in a US school. In this activity, the claims of art educators to develop creative and intellectual skills through the arts are put to the test by inviting those from outside the arts world to participate in the examination of authentic student art.

In the second article, the well-known South African counselling psychologist Shani Grové explains how techniques, which may often be associated with New Age philosophies and experimental psychological procedures such as Neuro Linguistic Programming, can have practical value in transforming an individual's emotional intelligence. Perhaps, she proposes, these ideas might play an active role in the South African Renaissance.

So the unifying theme of this issue is that the traditions of the World Education Fellowship, founded so long ago, are constantly being renewed and helping to bring about improvement in the climate for learning in the new millennium.

**Dave Hinton**