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Kindergarten Teaching

When she completed her training at the end of 1964, Gloria Thompson of Auckland, the writer of this article, was the first Maori student to gain her diploma with merit. She received a special award, enabling her to visit kindergartens where there were large groups of Maori children, to find ways of encouraging Maori parents to take a more active interest in the work of kindergartens.

The Kindergarten Teacher today has a great responsibility. She must be mature enough to work easily and intelligently with parents and adults. Her professional duties are considerably more than child minding. The quality of the work that is carried out in her kindergarten will depend upon her suitability for the teaching profession, so she must have a warm personality, an eagerness to learn, clear speech and an interest in music and other creative arts, as well as fondness for children.

Soon after graduating in 1964, I began teaching at the Logan Campbell Free Kindergarten here in Freemans Bay, Auckland. The Kindergarten is unique because it is a multi-racial one.

From my short teaching experience I have found that understanding, sincerity and tolerance in my attitude towards these children and their parents have brought me pleasure and effective results.

Kindergarten Teaching is a lucrative career, but I feel that it far exceeds money. I advocate Kindergarten Teaching as an admirable and satisfying profession for Maori girls because I feel that they are natural with children and are able to anticipate their needs and because they have a pleasant manner which instinctively draws children to them.

At this time of the year, when girls are beginning to think seriously about their future careers, the Kindergarten Association makes every effort to bring pre-school work to the notice of likely candidates.


The local Free Kindergarten Association is responsible for all the Free Kindergartens in its area, the four largest Associations being Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. At these four centres, training is given covering a two year course.

Part of this time is spent at lectures and related activities at the Kindergarten Teachers' College and part of the time gaining practical experience in Kindergartens.

The Course

The Principal, College Staff and visiting Staff, lecture in the following subjects:—

1. Child Study
 - (a) Child Development
 - (b) Child Psychology
 - (c) Family Life
2. Principles and Practices of Pre-School Education and Kindergarten Administration.
3. Theory of Pre-School Education.
4. Health Education and Nutrition.
5. Children's Literature.
6. Speech Training.
7. Nature Study.
8. English Language and Literature, Speech and Drama.
9. Committee Organisation and the Conduct of Meetings.



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10. Music.
11. Art and Handcrafts.
12. Physical Recreation.

Some time is given to observations of children in Infant Schools and with other organisations that work for children.

Qualifications for Entry

1. Applicants who have passed the University Entrance or School Certificate Examinations are eligible for the course.
2. Although the Department of Education does not set a minimum age level, for applicants with School Certificate, those 17 years of age or over are considered more suitable. Those with University Entrance are encouraged to study Education at University as part-time students, with a view to completing a degree. The bursary scheme for teachers in training is extended to Kindergarten students.
3. An applicant must be in good health, and free from any physical defect that would affect her work with children.

A warm personality, poise, eagerness to learn and to accept responsibility, clear speech, and interest in the creative arts and a fondness for children, are all qualities essential to a member of the teaching profession.

Student Allowances

Successful applicants receive a Department of Education allowance at the rate of £305 per annum which is increased to £340 for those with University Entrance. In addition, there is an allowance of £66 per annum for those who board away from home.

This allowance paid to the successful applicants is not regarded as a salary, but as a grant towards general expenses such as books, overalls, fares and board.

It is compulsory for students to join the Government Superannuation scheme.

Entrants are required to sign a bond which requires them to give two years service in a free Kindergarten in New Zealand after completing the course.

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Gloria Thomson, 'Kindergarten Teaching' *Te Ao Hou The Maori Magazine*, 59, June – August 1967, 53-54