

Back to the future.

**An investigation of the curriculum model
adopted by the Association of Classical and
Christian Schools.**

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum reforms in the western world have for decades led to concerns being raised over perceived lowering of academic standards. For one group in the USA this has led to the development of a curriculum model which is believed to offer appropriate academic rigour while simultaneously providing students with the life skills needed for a worthwhile contribution to society. This study investigates this model established by the Association of Classical and Christian Schools (ACCS) in the United States of America, in order to evaluate the impact its philosophical stance has on the implementation of policy and procedures throughout the school.

One New Zealand school is among those in several countries around the world which have espoused the ACCS curriculum model. Data was collected from this New Zealand classical school as well as from another New Zealand Christian school which has espoused the state-mandated curriculum model. A mixed-method approach to data collection was undertaken to obtain both a broad overview as well as more specific understandings of each school's aims and objectives.

It was anticipated that there would be significant commonalities between these two schools based on their respective commitments to provide education based on biblical presuppositions. It was also anticipated that if each school was faithful to its declared philosophy, there would be notable differences both in curriculum subject choices and pedagogy. This study sought to identify consistency in the implementation of each school's philosophy in all areas of school life, from governance through to classroom practice.

Results obtained have indicated a high level of consistency in subject choice as well as pedagogy, as might be expected from the respective school's choice of curriculum model. With respect to each school's interpretation of Christian education considerable disjunction has emerged contrasting a formal, traditional approach in one school with a relational expression of faith in the other.

CERTIFICATE

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled Back to the future. An investigation of the curriculum model adopted by the Association of Classical and Christian Schools has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, reference number: HE22Jun2007-DO5305 on June 22nd, 2007.

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