

Back to the future.

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

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This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Faculty of Human Sciences
Macquarie University
October 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the many authors and educators who have contributed to the field of curriculum development. I am especially indebted to those Christian educators who have challenged believers to include an intellectual aspect to their faith.

In particular, I wish to offer sincere thanks to my principal supervisor, Professor George Cooney for his patience and wise counsel. Thanks are also due to Associate Professor Pamela Coutts for her timely assistance. Both Dr Rod Thompson and Dr Alla Shymanska are due thanks for their encouraging support and friendship. The constructive feedback and encouragement from all these scholars has been invaluable.

Special thanks are also due to the staff of Robert Menzies College who housed and fed me during my many visits to the Macquarie University campus.

Acknowledgement is due to many family members, colleagues and friends who have advised and supported me in the preparation and execution of this study, which was made more manageable because of their encouragement.

Further to this, special thanks are also due to the members of governance bodies, management and teaching staff at the schools involved in this study. Without their generous support this study would never have been possible.

Finally, I acknowledge the true source of my life and work, the Lord Jesus Christ, without whom I can do nothing of value. He has led me, sustained me, guided and inspired me through this project.

Thank you.

Diane K. Sweller

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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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Date 7 October 2010