

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

THE RESEARCH SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

EDUCATION RESEARCH UNIT

ANNUAL REPORT 1968

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 Research Fellow, Dr. C. S. Smith, B.A. (Melb.), Ph.D. (Oxon)
 to take up his appointment in September 1969
 Research Assistant, Mrs. M. Butterfield, B.A. (New Eng.)
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Text

Projects

Professional Socialisation

The study is being made to discover how recruits to professional faculties in Universities acquire the culture of their profession. This involves the study of how students learn, not only the knowledge and skills necessary for examinations and professional practice, but also the values and attitudes associated with their particular profession. The results will have implications for recruitment and teaching as well as for the sociological theory of adult socialisation.

The information for the study is being obtained from approximately 5000 students in engineering, medicine, law and teaching in six Australian universities. The students are being followed from the point of first enrolment until they leave their course by graduation or withdrawal without qualifying. The medical and teaching students commenced their courses in 1967 and are now completing 2nd year, the engineering and law students commenced in 1965 and those who have made maximum progress are about to graduate.

A great deal of analysis of the existing information is yet to be made and additional information is to be collected on all students. Some preliminary findings are:

- (a) that students in different faculties tend to be from different social and educational backgrounds,
- (b) that there are significant differences in attitudes of students according to the faculty they enter, for example students entering medicine in Perth and Queensland are more alike than students in the one university entering different faculties;

- (c) the majority of students entering professional faculties are oriented to professional practice far more than any other objective of university education: there is impatience with those parts of the courses not perceived as being professionally useful.

A special study is being made of those students who withdraw from their courses.

Colleges of Advanced Education

This two-year project commenced in October and is being assisted by a grant from the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education. Dr. H. Maddox was appointed to the unit to take charge of this work. It is intended that the study be a national one. Base-line information will be assembled on the background, abilities and ambitions of a large representative sample of students entering these new colleges. Attention will also be paid to teaching staff and policies. Comparisons will be made with similar information which is being obtained from the Unit's study of professional education in Universities.

Part-time Undergraduate Students

At the request of Council the Unit is making a special study of Part-time Students at A.N.U. The work is being carried out by Mr. L. Kane and Mrs. M. Butterfield. In addition to the information about the performance, background and conditions of learning of part-time students at the A.N.U., information is being collected about full-time students and about part-time education in other universities. A report will be ready early in 1969.

Decentralisation of Educational Administration

A Visiting Fellow, Dr. I.S. Turner is making a two-year study of the prospects of Decentralisation of Educational Administration in New South Wales.

Seminars and Papers

At the request of faculty the Unit arranged a special series of seminars on research in the area of education being made in the School. Speakers and topics were as follows:

K. Batt	The universities and cooperation in higher education.
G. Harman	The politics of education
W. D. Borrie	Demographic trends in Australian education
B. Mitchell	Teacher organizations and educational change
D. Vere-Jones	Introducing a new mathematics syllabus in the Soviet system
J. Keeves	Comments on the achievement of Australian students in mathematics at the pre-university level
I. S. Turner	The decentralisation of educational administration in New South Wales
M. Butterfield & L. Kane	Report on survey of part-time students at A.N.U.
D.S. Anderson	Developments in the Education Research Unit

Papers^{on} read by the head of the Unit outside University were: Research/Student Performance in Australian Universities (A.U.T., Wellington, N.Z.); Homo Medicus Embryonis (Faculty of Medicine, University of Melbourne); What Happens to Students (Canberra Association of University Women); Student Power (Queensland Sociological Group).

Students

The first PhD. student attached to the Unit will be Sr. M. Leavey, in 1969 she will commence a study of the structure of Catholic Education.

Three M.A. (Sociology) students are having their thesis supervised by the Unit. The topics are: Students who withdraw from courses of professional training; The development of apprentice trainees in a RAAF College, and Professional Ethics.

Future Developments

Although the present emphasis is on higher education it is intended that the Unit will undertake major work at the secondary level. In 1969 work will commence on the economics of education and is likely to be concerned with the allocation of resources among systems, institutions and courses. At this stage no firm decisions have been taken about the particular areas in which additional projects will be developed. The following general topics will be considered for possible inclusion in the Unit's programme.

Aims :	The values and educational aims of key groups - parents, teachers, policy makers - involved in different systems of education.
Resources :	The allocation of funds, recruitment and origin of teachers and pupils.
Processes :	Methods of teaching and learning, environmental effects on learning; teacher and pupil roles, innovations; the structure and functioning of institutions, pressure groups, teacher organizations.
Outcomes :	Achievement in relation to aims, the extent, causes and effects of pupil failure.
Special Areas :	Science education - the decision to study science, socialization, relation of training to employment, women - the values associated with the differential recruitment, performance and retention of men and women in various sections of education.
Comparative Studies :	Where appropriate comparisons with other countries may be built into research projects.

There is close association with other departments in the Research School of Social Sciences and it is envisaged that some joint projects will be undertaken.

Publications

Anderson, D.S. The Prospect for Student Power in Australia, The Australian University, Vol.6 No. 3 pp. 207-221.

Western, J.S. & Anderson D.S., Education and Professional Socialization, The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 91-106.