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**The Intended and Interpreted  
Technology Curriculum in Four  
New Zealand Secondary Schools:  
Does this all mean the same?**

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## **Abstract**

In 1993 a new draft technology curriculum was introduced to New Zealand schools, followed by the publication of the final document in 1995. Its design and intentions required a shift in thinking within schools, in teaching and learning, and in the wider community. This had significant implications for the way schools managed curriculum implementation, for staffing in technology, and for resourcing. Professional development opportunities, funding support and support resource material were made available over a number of years as research in this area continued. Access to this support was not consistent for teachers and schools, and in some cases, not always sought. By the time the implementation of the technology curriculum became mandatory in 1999 for all students, Years 1 – 10, anecdotal evidence and some initial research showed that its interpretation and delivery in schools was varied, or no different from that of the previous workshop focussed syllabus.

This research sets out to discover how technology education has been implemented across a small selection of schools in the Wellington region and to consider the way school management and technology staff in each school have interpreted and implemented it. Student responses to this implementation are also examined.

The study draws from four secondary schools, and the focus is on senior technology as this was viewed by the researcher as a level where the interpretation and implementation of technology education could be most diverse. Changes in national assessment practices also highlighted this diversity. Each school was treated as a case study involving interviews with principals, teachers and senior students, in order to examine how technology is understood and practised. The ways in which teachers and students understood technology is examined within a framework of contemporary national and international research literature.

The findings need to be considered in view of the fact that only four sites were used, the research is interpretive in nature, and makes use of case study methodology. In other words, the results cannot be directly generalised; however, readers are able to identify from the descriptions the extent to which findings transfer to their own context.

The distinctive factors that emerged from this study highlight that the teachers concerned interpreted and implemented the technology curriculum with a strong consideration of their students' backgrounds, learning needs, abilities and aspirations. In addition, the teachers' own experience and qualifications, along with contextual factors associated with the school, such as its decile rating, appeared to be linked with the teachers' interpretation of the curriculum. Teachers identified a need for ongoing, robust professional development so that they could be confident in their practice, and have a common understanding of terminology presented in the curriculum and national assessment standards. Resourcing for schools in the form of facilities, materials and staffing was varied and also needed to be supported.

The study also identifies further research requirements to inform and support this curriculum area. These requirements ask for the extension of the present research to other schools, the evaluation of professional development programmes in technology, and the evaluation of the impact of school technology programmes on students' learning and students' future educational/work pathways.

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my parents. My father, Dr. Fritz Bondy, a learned man, whose consistently positive outlook on life enabled him to overcome hardship, prejudice and a physical disability. He was my inspiration. To my mother also, whose determination and drive, she gifted to me.

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