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Title: The Development of an Integrated
Humanities Programme at an Open
Space High School in the A.C.T.

by Kenneth Ward Cumming

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ABSTRACT

This field study attempts to analyse the development of an integrated humanities programme at a recently built open space high school in the A.C.T. during the first three years of its existence.

The school opened shortly after the beginning of the A.C.T. Educational System and the staff were imbued with the idealism and innovative climate that prevailed at this time. There was an absence of system constraint that co-incided with the political proclamation of school based curriculum development.

This field study is the story of what can happen when a staff is plunged into the deep end of innovation without the necessary support systems. Nevertheless some of the innovations have stabilised, with some promise of permanency, during these first three years.

Open View began with a radical curriculum from the beginning:

- i) a child centred curriculum
- ii) vertically integrated teaching groups
- iii) non-streaming of students
- iv) open access curriculum
- v) an individualised teaching programme
- vi) little traditional class group teaching
- vii) staff participation in decision making
- viii) a mini-school structure based on a strong pastoral system
- ix) non competitive continuous assessment
- x) a large degree of subject integration

All of these innovations can be viewed in the humanities programme. A controversial programme such as humanities has had a radical effect upon the rest of the school. Hence in tracing the development of the humanities programme, the field study indirectly traces the development of the total school.

The innovation that has particular relevance to educationalists is the development of the mini-school structure and the combination of the pastoral and the academic through the teaching teams of the mini-schools. The principal theme of this field study is the effect that the mini-school and subject integration has had on traditional roles such as that of the subject seniors and the assistant principals.

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