

PREFACE

The origin of this publication goes back to the Fifth Commonwealth Education Conference held in Canberra, Australia in 1971. When the Ten-year Review of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan was being discussed, the subject of unrest and violence on university campuses was very much in the minds of all participants, especially the academics. One of the recommendations which emanated from the Conference called for steps to improve the quality of teaching in universities as one positive way of reducing tensions on campuses. It was suggested that a survey of programmes in operation designed to improve university teaching would be a useful starting point.

At the time, however, there were too few such programmes in existence to enable the survey to be prepared. Nevertheless interest grew in the subject spontaneously - not only in the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, but also in universities in many developing countries. This led to the rapid emergence of a variety of programmes in many Commonwealth universities. Consequently, it became opportune to take up the survey recommended by the Canberra Conference. Such a survey, it was felt, would serve not only to disseminate information concerning work already in progress at national level, but also to bring together those working in this field throughout the Commonwealth.

Largely in response to the discussions at Canberra, we have confined ourselves to university teaching and have not included other institutions of higher learning where similar programmes exist. At the national level, however, consideration of these programmes is not confined to universities and often takes note of developments in polytechnics and colleges of education.

We would like here to express our thanks to those who have assisted us in the compilation of this survey. The survey of programmes in the United Kingdom was carried out by Mr. Alex Main, formerly Co-ordinating and Research Officer of the Committee for the training of University Teachers set up by the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals. A similar survey of programmes in Australia and New Zealand was the work of Dr. Terry Hore, Director of the Higher Education Advisory and Research Unit of Monash University who was assisted by Mr. Philip Bradbury, Senior Lecturer at the North East London Polytechnic.

We are also indebted to Professor Bruce M. Shore and Miss Janet G. Donald of McGill University, authors of "An Index of Pedagogical Services in Canadian Colleges and Universities" (revised in 1976), and to the Centre for Learning and Development at McGill University for permission to use material from this index. We are particularly grateful to all those, especially in the universities, who gave their time to completing the questionnaires we sent out and to responding so readily to our requests for collaboration.

We are confident that in addition to publicizing the work that is already being done in various parts of the Commonwealth, this survey will provide an added stimulus to the growing interest in the subject of the improvement of university teaching. We trust that it will also lead to an ever-increasing degree of co-operation in this field at both national and Commonwealth levels among university teachers as well as among university administrators, during an era in which student unrest seems to promise at least some respite.

Finally, we hope that despite its limitations in scope, the survey will in some measure encourage universities, particularly in developing Commonwealth countries, to give a greater recognition to the need, for the improvement of pedagogy in the universities and so to establish or develop similar programmes of their own. If it succeeds even in some degree in achieving these aspirations, it will have justified its publication.

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