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**ADOLESCENT CHALLENGES AND THE PROCESS OF
CHANGE IN DEVELOPING PASTORAL CARE PROGRAMS
IN AN ANGLICAN R-12 CO-EDUCATIONAL DAY SCHOOL**

Volume I

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**Research Portfolio submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
School of Education, University of Adelaide**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this Portfolio was to investigate the provision of Pastoral Care in Woodcroft College, an Anglican R-12 Day School in the outer suburbs of Adelaide.

Part 1 (Volume I) of the Portfolio of research examines the literature related to Pastoral Care Programs in schools for adolescent students with all the challenges they face in the present world. Changes in the structure and demands of society over the last part of the twentieth century have meant schools have had to accept greater responsibility for the students under their care. The nature of family life has dramatically changed and technological, gender, cultural and economic revolutions have led to a vastly different society. These and other circumstances have led to many dysfunctional families and children from these families mostly attend schools. Today, there is a greater responsibility and additional pressures on the teaching profession to support students and their developmental needs. Growing rates of mental health issues, learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties, special needs, obesity and drug usage are not only impacting on schools, but on society in general. Fifty years ago, a teacher's basic responsibility was to teach students skills in literacy and numeracy and to impart knowledge. To cater for the needs of dysfunctional families and the changing styles of parenting, schools have had to modify their requirements and expectations. One adaptation reviewed related to structural changes, particularly the development of Middle Schooling, to provide better Pastoral Care for adolescent students. Another adaptation has been the development of Pastoral Care curriculum. A number of available curricular programs were evaluated as to their effectiveness in dealing with students' welfare in the school context.

Part 2 (Volume I) described and analysed the process of changing the Pastoral Care program in the school concerned over the period 2001-2002. The questions and statements were devised to examine the opinions of a sample of Woodcroft College parents, teachers and students about the existing Pastoral Care and allied programs. The procedure of reviewing Pastoral Care structures and curriculum was described and the process of change to implement the best possible Pastoral Care structures and programs for the school was outlined. An evaluation of the changes implemented was carried out at the end of 2002, using a comparable sample of school respondents. The results indicated that the structural changes implemented, moving from Pastoral Care House System to Horizontal Year Level Management, together with a redefinition of the Tutor teacher role, was seen to be effective in improving Pastoral Care for students. The responses indicated, however, that Pastoral Care curriculum required further development.

The final part of the Portfolio (Part 3, Volume II) reported the 2005 follow-up evaluation of the Pastoral Care changes made in the school structures and the curriculum for Pastoral

Care introduced over 2004-2005. Twelve key issues were identified and responses sought from a sample of Woodcroft College students and parents, as well as all the teaching staff. The data collected are presented in five separate booklets related to the three specific groups of respondents, students, parents and teachers, with another devoted specifically to the topics which should be included in a Pastoral Care curriculum. The fifth and final booklet presents an overall report designed to be read by any interested member of the general public. Overall the data showed that Woodcroft College was seen as a caring, safe and secure environment for its students, with effective Pastoral Care structures. The Pastoral Care curriculum was seen as important by parents, teachers and students, but a number of teachers (particularly in the Senior School) found the content unfamiliar and not always easy to deliver. The two most important topics to be included in a Pastoral Care curriculum, as rated by the student, parent and teacher respondents, were Sex Education and Driver Education. The overall responses on topics for inclusion in the Pastoral Care curriculum were used to produce a curriculum map for Pastoral Care curriculum across the Junior, Middle and Senior Schools.

In practice, difficulties in delivering the Pastoral Care curriculum within the College have persisted, most particularly in the Senior School. This situation leads to the recommendation for further research on the development of the Pastoral Care curriculum and for professional development for those who teach it. Other recommendations include a process of regular school reviews and the inclusion of a Pastoral Care unit in university teacher education courses.



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