



AARE NEWS

Newsletter of the Australian Association for Research in Education

Editor: Peter Jeffery

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Association ended 2001 well. For those attending, the Fremantle conference is remembered for its convivial and collegial atmosphere, excellent food and high quality presentations. The keynotes had great variety and impact. The conference was also significant for the large overseas attendance from South Africa, New Zealand, Canada, other countries and of course the significant contingent from Singapore including members of the Singapore Educational Research Association.

There were two major strategies initiated by the executive in 2001 that will be continued in 2002 because of the importance that AARE is seen to be a key stakeholder and voice in debates about education and educational research over the next three years. The first was the highly successful Research Leaders conference in Canberra linked to the second Executive meeting. This conference provided an opportunity for discussions with key policy and funding personnel in DETYA; in this instance, Dr Carol Nicholl, the Director of Higher Education Policy Division, and Dr Doug McEachern, the Executive Director of the Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences panel of the Australian Research Council that administers most education applications for Discovery and Linkage grants. Both Dr Nicholl and Dr McEachern inform the policies that shape our practice as educators and educational researchers.

The second initiative was the inclusion in the AARE Annual conference program of the AARE Symposium in which members of the Executive addressed some key issues in the area of educational research. The audience also raised issues around intellectual property and sponsored research, the need for a stronger media profile and voice for the Association and for educational researchers more generally, and the challenges of doing research with the intensification of academic work. Concern was expressed as to the effects of recent research training funding policies that have significant implications for education faculties and educational research. Under the current funding regime of research training, there has been a radical decline in funding to many universities. But many of these are those with the largest undergraduate education faculties. Some universities have lost 45% of their research training funding.

This has significant implications for educational research, as the *Impact of Educational Research* study (DETYA 2001) indicated that over 85% of all educational research is undertaken in universities whereas only 37% of research and development in other fields is done in universities. The nature of educational research and the capacity of us as researchers to inform policy and practice will change significantly if faculties of education around Australia do not do educational research, or educational research is limited to a few faculties, government, and the private sector. With the new federal Minister of Education, Dr Brendan Nelson, and new Ministers of Education in Victoria, NSW and possibly SA, it is likely that there will be further reforms in 2002. The need for educators to make a case for educational research and teacher education to government is critical.

At the same time, educational researchers are being encouraged to undertake partnerships with industry and community through Linkages and as a consequence of consultancies being included in the research input figures, raising new issues around ownership and independence for educational researchers. The Executive suggests that the Association will consider for the December 2002 AARE Symposium at the UQ conference, a panel discussing the Implications of Partnerships for Educational Research.

Dr Ann Edwards, British Educational Research Association president, has already accepted an invitation to join the AARE Symposium. Her attendance exemplifies AARE's increasing international connections. Our involvement in Asia Pacific Educational Research Association a founding member will provide a regional focus for members of AARE. I will also be attending the European Educational Research Association meeting in September to develop this relationship. And we are currently planning the joint NZARE and AARE conference in New Zealand for December 2003 in Auckland. Start planning to attend as these conferences have in the past been extremely successful!

Within the Association, there is mounting interest in the formation of Special Interest Groups, a trend the executive is encouraging. The SIG provides a time scheduled into the conference in which researchers working within particular fields have the opportunity to network, mentor post graduate researchers and explore new issues. We are interested in new applications for SIGs in areas that are currently under represented eg. History of Education, Vocational Education.

As an Executive we are constantly interested in getting feedback from our members. We will be building in formal evaluations into the conferences, and we also welcome any comments at any time.

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President
Associate Professor, Faculty of Education Deakin

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AARE NEWS NEWS

This is one of the ‘brief’ newsletters in which we publish on the web and in print but we also point to places on AARE Website where people can go to get further information on topics of interest.

AARE NEWS Schedule for 2002 publication and associated inserts.

<i>NEWS #</i>	<i>Size of NEWS</i>	<i>Copy Date for NEWS</i>	<i>Web Publication of NEWS</i>	<i>Printed version Distribution</i>
# 38 March	Brief	1 March	12 March	15 March
# 39 May	Substantial	1 May	10 May	17 May
# 40 July	Substantial	1 July	12 July	19 July
# 41 October	Brief	11 October	18 Oct	28 Oct

Peter Jeffery
Editor

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RECENT DOCTORAL THESES IN EDUCATION

This issue of AARE News marks the third year of the column’s reinstatement, following years of entries when John Knight was on the Executive (see *AARE News* Issue 30). For a variety of reasons, I thought it might be opportune to reflect on some aspects of these more recent entries.

Since the column’s reinstatement (excluding this issue) we have published the details of 49 theses in education: 26 in 2000 and 23 in 2001. About half (24) of these have recorded the successful candidate’s name, affiliation, degree and thesis title while a further 25 have also included an abbreviated (300 words or less) abstract. The breakdown of PhDs and EdDs is 34 and 15 respectively. The vast majority of theses mentioned are from Victoria (23) and New South Wales (16) with a few from South Australia (8) but virtually none from the other Australian states and territories. These distributions reflect what we have received, not any kind of deliberate policy except that the emphasis is on Australian awards and ‘recent’ theses, which is taken to mean conferring of the award within the last 6-12 months.

From the beginning (ie 2000) an open invitation has been extended for the submission of relevant theses information. We have largely relied on the generosity of ACER’s Cunningham Library (duly acknowledged) to supply relevant details, although some have also been forthcoming via members of the Executive. In addition, a few institutions (notably Monash but also the University of Sydney for a while) have instituted procedures within their education faculties to ensure completing doctoral candidates’ details are supplied to AARE News. Other aware supervisors have also encouraged their students to submit their details directly to me. In short, the flow of material for the column from these sources (other than ACER) has accelerated in recent times.

Following publication, the person concerned is sent a letter of congratulations on receiving their award, encouragement to seek places to publish their work, including presentation at AARE conferences and in AER. They also receive a copy of the relevant AARE News, information on AARE, including information on membership, and details of the forthcoming AARE conference.

It is clear that the column is being read. First, as mentioned above, because graduating doctoral students in education are beginning to send me their details. Secondly, I have on several occasions received letters of thanks from those whose details appear. And thirdly, I sometimes receive requests from readers of AARE News (some from overseas) for the contact details of authors of some doctoral theses, so they can follow up on the research published.

I am aware of a growing internet availability of such material via ACER's Cunningham Library and a similar system established by a number of Australian universities. Nevertheless, I think including such material in AARE News is useful for a number of reasons, not confined to: (1) it gives recognition to researchers who undertake a large portion of the education research work conducted in Australia (see the recent DEET Report, *The Impact of Educational Research*) and provides them with encouragement, and (2) it assists other researchers (who might not have cause to look up the relevant databases) to get a feel for what kind of education research is currently being conducted in Australia.

I am happy to receive any feedback on the above, including suggestions for improvements. I would also welcome members establishing systems within their Faculties to ensure the flow of relevant information. In this issue, I am pleased that the collection of entries demonstrates an expanding representation of doctoral students, outside Victoria and New South Wales. On a personal level, I am also pleased to acknowledge and celebrate with friends whose achievements appear below. Indeed, congratulations to all authors. As always, I encourage them to seek out public forums in which to make their research more publicly known. Details of other doctoral theses completed within the last six months can be passed on to me at Trevor.Gale@education.monash.edu.au

Some interesting titles and abbreviated abstracts:

Dr Patrick Danaher (PhD), Central Queensland University, *Learning on the run: Traveller education for itinerant show children in coastal and western Queensland.*

"Learning on the Run" refers to the educational experiences of the primary school children travelling along the agricultural show 'circuits' in coastal and western Queensland. This thesis examines those educational experiences by drawing on the voices of the show children, their parents, their home tutors and their teachers from the Brisbane School of Distance Education, which from 1989 to 1999 implemented a specialised program of Traveller education for these children (in 2000 a separate school was established for them). The thesis focusses on the interplay among marginalisation, resistance and transformation in the spaces of the show people's itinerancy. It deploys Michel de Certeau's (1984, 1986) concept of 'tactics of consumption' and Mikhail Bakhtin's (1986a) notions of 'outsidedness' and 'creative understanding' to interrogate the show people's engagement with their absence of place, the construction of their otherness and forms of seemingly unproblematic knowledge about their schooling. Data gathering techniques included semi-structured interviews with forty-two people between 1992 and 2000 in seven sites in Queensland – Mackay, Bundaberg (over two years), Emerald, Brisbane, Rockhampton and Yeppoon – and document collection. The thesis's major finding is that the show people's resistance and transformation of their marginalising experiences have enabled them to initiate and implement a significant counternarrative to the traditional narrative (and associated stereotypes) attending their itinerancy. This counternarrative has underpinned a fundamental change in their schooling provision, from a structure that worked to marginalise and disempower them to a specialised form of Traveller education. This change contributes crucially to understanding and theorising the spaces of itinerancy, and highlights the broader significance of the Queensland show people's "learning on the run".

Dr Lucy Jarzabkowski (PhD), University of Canberra, *The primary school as an emotional arena: A case study in collegial relationships*

The thesis is an exploratory and descriptive study focusing on the emotional dimensions of collegial relationships in a primary school. The research is timely given the current pressures to develop cultures of collaboration and shared leadership in schools today. The study concentrates on the non-classroom work of teachers and investigates three particular areas of school life: the collegial practices of staff, the emotional milieu of teachers' work and the contributions of members towards an emotionally healthy staff community. An interpretive tradition has been used in conducting the research, thus giving voice to the perceptions of research participants about their work. The research was conducted as an ethnographic case study. Data were gathered largely through participant observation and interviews.

The researcher visited the school on a regular basis through the course of one school year, averaging over one day per week working in the school. Eighteen staff members were formally interviewed, the principal and assistant principal on several occasions. Extensive fieldnotes and interview transcripts were created and, aided by NVivo, a computer package for the analysis of non-statistical data, data were broken down into categories and resynthesised to bring to life a picture of the lived reality of collegiality for staff members in a primary school. The study adds to new knowledge in several important ways. First, it allows for a reconceptualisation of teachers' work. It shows how many different practices contribute to a collegial culture within a primary school and demonstrates how the social and emotional dimensions of collegiality are significant in the development of professional relationships. Second, the study develops an understanding of emotional labour for school personnel and contributes importantly to a broader picture of how emotional labour can be practiced, particularly for the sake of collegiality. It is posited that different kinds of emotional labour exist within the school setting, and that emotional labour in schools may be different to that of some other service organisations. The study explores bounded emotionality as a cultural practice among staff, suggesting that it allows expression of emotions about classroom work while at the same time constraining negative emotional displays for the sake of building community. The study suggests that the principles of bounded emotionality, as they operate within the primary school, present both benefits and burdens for a collegial staff, but may encourage an emotionally healthy workplace.

Dr Peter McInerney (PhD), Flinders University, *Sustaining public schooling as an ethical endeavour: A critical ethnographic account of school reform for social justice at Wattle Plains*

What does it mean to educate in socially just ways? This is a question that assumes special significance in an age of globalisation where neo-liberal discourses of economic rationalism, individualism and utilitarianism threaten more enduring and egalitarian goals of public schooling. In a society increasingly fractured by material inequalities and cultural oppression there is a real danger that education will contribute to the reproduction of unjust relationships rather than the public good unless teachers and school communities rail against the most oppressive elements of market-driven education reforms. This dissertation explores the emancipatory possibilities of schooling through an ethnographic account of Wattle Plains School - a culturally diverse, working-class community that has sustained a culture of reform for social justice in spite of its evacuation from government policy. Methodologically, the study foregrounds teachers' accounts of their efforts to enact socially just curriculum whilst sustaining a socially critical orientation which situates local responses to educational inequalities within a broader discourse of global capitalism, new social movements and structural inequalities. The study addresses two factors that are particularly relevant in this regard; firstly, the educational policy context in which teachers' work and curriculum reform is being conceived; and secondly, the contemporary debates concerning responses to social justice developed around notions of redistribution and identity politics. Informed by the Wattle Plains experience I argue that there are spaces for teachers to subvert mandated policies, to contest inequitable schooling arrangements and to establish more democratic and socially just practices both at the whole school level and in the classroom. Although teachers engaged in such transformative work often have to endure a good deal of ambiguity and contradiction in their lives, they nonetheless demonstrate that it is possible to sustain public schooling as an ethical endeavour.

Dr John Truran (PhD), University of Adelaide, *The Teaching and Learning of Probability, with Special Reference to South Australian Schools from 1959–1994.*

Probabilistic thinking is quite different from the deterministic thinking traditionally found in mathematics classrooms, so its introduction into school curriculum can highlight significant forces underpinning educational practice. This thesis defines a "Broad-Spectrum Ecological Model" to examine these forces. The Model sees members of school systems as operating according to general ecological principles, and interprets actions as responses which minimise energy expenditure and maximise chances of survival. The Model posits three principal forces—Physical, Social and Intellectual—as providing an adequate structure. Its interpretative value is assessed by examining three separate aspects of the teaching of probability. The first surveys the history of the teaching of the topic from 1959 to 1994, paying particular attention to South Australia. The second examines various attempts to assess the understanding of probabilistic ideas. The third addresses the influence on classroom practice of research into the teaching and learning of probabilistic ideas. In all three situations the Model proves helpful, but in need of some refinements. These involve the uniting of the Social and Physical forces,

the division of the Intellectual force into Mathematics and Mathematics Education forces, and the addition of Pedagogical and Charismatic forces. A diagrammatic form of the Model is constructed to indicate the relative strengths of these forces. The revised form is then assessed, and shown to be effective in highlighting unbalanced forces and in predicting outcomes. It is also used to draw some comparisons with medical education. All Models have limitations, but this one seems to explain far more about Australian mathematics curriculum development than the models previously used which have tended to see our practice as an imitation of that in other countries.

Dr Mary Welsh (PhD), University of Canberra, *Promoting Quality Schooling in Australia: Commonwealth Government Policy-making for Schools (1987-1996)*.

Promoting the quality of school education has been an issue of international, national and local significance in Australia over the past three decades. This doctoral study focuses on the Commonwealth (federal) government's policy agenda to promote the quality of schooling between 1987 and 1996. During this period, successive Labor governments sought to promote quality through a range of policy initiatives and funding programs. Through extensive documentary research, fifty semi-structured interviews and one focus group with elite policy makers and stakeholders, the study examines how the Commonwealth government's 'quality agenda' was constructed and perceived. An analysis of relevant government reports and ministerial statements provides documentary evidence of this agenda, both in terms of stated policy intentions and the actual policy initiatives and funding programs set in place in the period 1987-1996. Set against this analysis are elite informants' perspectives on Commonwealth policy-making in this period – how quality was conceptualised as a policy construct and as a policy solution, the influences on Commonwealth policies for schools, whether there was a 'quality agenda' and how that agenda was constructed and implemented. Informants generally perceived quality to be a diffuse, but all-encompassing concept which had symbolic and substantive value as a policy construct. In the context of Commonwealth schools' policies, quality was closely associated with promoting equity, outcomes, accountability, national consistency in schooling and teacher quality. Promoting the quality of 'teaching and learning' in Australian schools took on particular significance in the 1990s through a number of national policy initiatives brokered by the Commonwealth government. An exploration of policy processes through interview data reveals the multi-layered nature of policy-making in this period, involving key individuals, intergovernmental and national forums. The research demonstrates the benefits of going beyond the study of written policy texts to a richer analysis of recent policy history based on elite interviewing. The wide range of views offered by elite policy makers and stakeholders in this study both confirms and challenges established views about policy-making in the period 1987-1996.

Trevor Gale

URL – www.aare.edu.au/news38/tg3801.htm	Contact: Trevor.Gale@education.monash.edu.au
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AARE 2001 CONFERENCE PAPERS AVAILABILITY

On-line and on disk publication:

Most of the papers submitted on disk at the Fremantle Conference have been converted to PDF and loaded on the AARE website [ISSN 1324-9339]. A few files had errors and re-submits of those are being processed now prior to the creation of the AARE 2001 Conference CD [ISSN 1324-9320] master and the publication of 1200 copies.

Although this work is still "in press" the publication date is December 2001 to make it possible for members to claim the work as part of their RAI for 2001.

Hardcopies availability:

AARE Office has taken the hardcopies to ACER Library for indexing into the *Australian Education Index*. This is available on-line or in most Australian and many overseas libraries. AEI is a reciprocal service with ERIC. ACER Library also makes the papers available by Inter-Library Loan.

Peter Jeffery
AARE Executive Member

See <http://www.aare.edu.au/issn.htm> for full information on ISSNs and ISBNs of AARE publications.

POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

Jan Edwards (University of South Australia) and John Cripps Clark (Deakin University) both attended the Executive meeting in Sydney in February to represent post-graduate student members of AARE. At this meeting we proposed a Post-graduate and Early Career Researcher Special Interest Group. Our aims in establishing a Special Interest Group include the following:

- To improve the interaction between and amongst post-graduate students and early career researcher members of AARE
- To improve the presence of post-graduate students and early career researchers within the AARE
- To improve the experience of the AARE Annual Meeting and Conference for post-graduate students and early career researchers
- To reform processes for post-graduate issues, such as election to Executive, travel grants etc.

We are in the process of finalising a Strategic Plan that forms the basis of the SIG that we will post shortly on the AARE web site. We will be using this Strategic Plan to focus our attentions during the year.

Any post-graduate students with concerns or issues for discussion and Post-graduate and early career researchers interested in joining the SIG should contact Jan Edwards (email: edwjk001@students.unisa.edu.au) or John Cripps Clark (email: jcc@deakin.edu.au). We propose that the SIG will be active in Brisbane this year and are hoping that there will be sufficient interest to hold a social event such as a dinner to celebrate the SIG and meet with other members.

URL – www.aare.edu.au/news38/je3801.htm	Contact: edwjk001@students.unisa.edu.au
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**AARE 2002 CONFERENCE – BRISBANE**

This document is available on the web to save space here. You also have full details in the conference brochure accompanying AARE NEWS 38.

URL: www.aare.edu.au/conf2002/dates.htm	Contact – aare@aare.edu.au
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AARE EXECUTIVE 2002

The full list of AARE Executive Members and their contact details has been removed from here to the AARE website to save space. If members read the NEWS on-line they will find each Executive member's email address links to a message blank pre-addressed. AARE extends an invitation to members to communicate with any Executive Member or the AARE Office.

URL: www.aare.edu.au/dc3801.htm	Contact debrac@btr.qld.edu.au
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SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

There has been a flurry of activity with SIGS in the past few months. The *Health and Human Movement*, *Teachers' Lives and Work*, and the *Early Childhood* SIGS held well-attended functions at the Fremantle Conference. Two new SIGS have been established: *Measurement and Assessment* (contact Patrick Griffin p.griffin@unimelb.edu.au) and *Postgraduate and Early Career Researchers* (contact Jan Edwards EDWJK001@students.unisa.edu.au).

Plans are underway to establish:

- a *Motivation SIG*
(contact Judith MacCallum jamac@murdoch.edu.au)
- a *Distributed Learning Environments and Multicultural Issues SIG*
(contact Madhumita Bhattacharya mitab@nie.edu.sg)
- a *Gender and Sexualities SIG*
(contact Vicki Crowley vicki.crowley@unisa.edu.au)
- an *Indigenous SIG*
(contact Barry Malezer b.malezer@mailbox.gu.edu.au)

We are hoping that a strong SIG presence and substantial input into the program will be a feature of the Brisbane Conference. If you would like to explore the possibility of establishing a new SIG please don't hesitate to contact me.

Jennifer Sumsion

URL: www.aare.edu.au/js3801.htm	Contact Jennifer.sumsion@mq.edu.au
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THE ETHICS CORNER

Despite some mutterings and mumbings, members have been decidedly reluctant to come forth with tales of their trials with Ethics Committees or accounts of ethical dilemmas in which their research has become embroiled. Perhaps this continuing reticence is due in part to an understandable reluctance to engage with the Ethics dragon for fear of being precluded from doing the study. Or perhaps members are by now so sure of their own righteousness regarding ethics that the erstwhile problems have been reduced into veritable molehills ...????

There are movements in your Association which are designed to look more closely at these issues. For one thing Martin Bibby the editor of AARE RARE 4, an annotated bibliography of ethics in research, and former and former contributor to the AARE Code of Ethics has offered to update the existing code and render it more pertinent to current issues and concerns. As I understand it this re-visioning is happening as I write.

It occurred to me that it would be useful to make a collection of FAQs about ethics in educational research and where better to begin than with members' own experience and reflection. It may be also that members would choose to offer their own responses to some of these FAQs, responses which may be by way of partial solutions, avoidances or even head on confrontation – all of which have ethical dimensions as you'll immediately recognise. In any case this columnist offers an invitation to all members to contribute either their own questions, dilemmas, answers or a mix of all three in the interest of getting a clearer picture of what's working in terms of ethics in educational research – and what's not. I'll start with a couple of my own:

- Under what circumstances is an Ethics Committee supposed to ask about the religious affiliation of the researcher in considering a research project which looks at religion education?
(While this reads like one of those multiple choice questions for which the answer is inevitably 'all of the above', it's actually not and I'd appreciate hearing your responses.)
- What are the guidelines about the composition of University Ethics Committees?
(I have some idea of the answer here – watch this space next Newsletter.)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Judy Gill
AARE President Elect.

URL: www.aare.edu.au/jg3801.htm	Contact judith.gill@unisa.edu.au
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NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

The AARE Executive committee met for a full day on 19 February 2002. The meeting was this time held at Macquarie University in Sydney, and was most hospitably hosted by the Institute for Early Childhood, with arrangements for this visit having been made by Executive member and Institute staff member Jennifer Sumsion.

Major matters discussed included the following:

- **Journal:** as flagged at the AGM in Fremantle, consideration is being given to publishing the AARE journal, *Australian Educational Researcher*, on-line. The Executive is researching the many complex issues involved. The next edition of the *AER* will include an editorial canvassing these, and information will also be available through the AARE website. It is anticipated that a set of proposals will be put to the AGM to be held in Brisbane in December 2002. In the meantime we are enhancing access to the journal by making available on-line through the website the full text of articles published more than a year ago, and abstracts of articles published up to one year ago.
- **Educational Research Leaders Forum:** Given the success of the Forum hosted by AARE in Canberra in June 2001, we are hoping to hold another such event in June this year. The aim is to discuss policy and strategic matters to do with education research. Last year's event was attended by some 50 directors of education research or of postgraduate studies (or other similar positions) from higher education institutions around the country. The main speakers were Professor Doug McEachern from ARC and Dr Carol Nicoll from DETYA. Speakers and a venue (in Canberra or Sydney) are currently being lined up for this year and it is expected that invitations will be sent to universities sometime in May.
- **Plans for this year's conference** in Brisbane: arrangements are progressing well. See brochure mailed with this newsletter.
- **Future conference venues:** 2003 is to be a joint conference with NZARE, held in Auckland; 2004 will most likely be in or near Melbourne; and for 2005 we are considering Adelaide, Canberra, Hobart or Sydney. Members in the relevant locations who are interested in convening either the 2004 or 2005 conference, or who just want to find out what's involved, are invited to contact the Hon Secretary. The job is not overly onerous as there is fantastic support from the AARE Office.
- **SIGs, Postgraduate student liaison, Code of Ethics:** see reports elsewhere in this newsletter
- **Membership:** membership of AARE has remained fairly constant in recent years at about 1000. This is good going considering the great reductions in the numbers of education academics at many Australian universities. But our membership is very fluid; people come and go, often depending on whether or not they attend conference in a particular year. We need to find ways of encouraging people to retain their membership over the longterm.

Debra Cunningham
Hon. Secretary

URL – www.aare.edu.au/dc3801a.htm

Contact: debrac@btr.qld.edu.au

FOUR BOOKS AVAILABLE TO READERS FREE

The following titles are available free to members on a first-come first-served basis [limit one per member]. To obtain send an email to aare@aare.edu.au with the subject BOOKS. You will be sent one title as stocks last!

- *Gender and the Restructured University*, Ann Brooks and Alison Mackinnon [eds], Allen & Unwin 2001 [RRP \$65.00]
- *Consuming Children: education-entertainment-advertising*, Jane Kenway and Elizabeth Bullen, Allen & Unwin 2001 [RRP \$49.95]
- *Boys, Literacies and Schooling*, Leonie Rowan, Michele Knobel, Chris Bigum and Colin Lankshear, Allen & Unwin 2001 [RRP \$55.00]
- *Academic Tribes and Territories*, Tony Becher and Paul A Trowler, Allen & Unwin 2001 [RRP \$ 59.95].