



The New Zealand Psychological Society

Te Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa

2 August, 2013

National Office
Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
Wellington 6140

Cc Gaye Bloomfield
Chair- NZ Association of Psychology Teachers

Dear Sir/Madam

Teaching psychology in New Zealand high schools

The NZ Psychological Society (NZPsS) is the largest professional association for Psychologists in Aotearoa/New Zealand and it represents psychologists from a diverse range of sub-disciplines including academic, research, clinical, community, developmental, educational and industrial scopes of practice.

The NZPsS is proud to support the teaching of psychology in our high schools. The teaching of psychology has practical outcomes in developing citizens informed about psychological matters and therefore contributing to the wellbeing of our communities. We also believe that the subject of psychology encourages rigorous analysis and questioning of evidence and that this is also educationally beneficial for students.

The NZ Association of Psychology Teachers reports that classes in psychology are being offered in thirty schools in New Zealand. The diverse subject matter of psychology engages and motivates students whilst developing critical and analytical thinking using a scientific methodology. Levels 1-4 Teaching and Learning Guidelines for this subject are designed to be offered to mixed ability academic classes and introduces school students to evidence-based psychological

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perspectives and theories. Early introduction to evidence-based practice provides a diverse student population opportunities to study models of science and research. This increases students' vocational options and alternative pathways with minimal additional resources.

The study of psychological practice and theories offer numerous social, academic and personal benefits for young people. Psychological studies make a significant contribution to understanding human behaviour and support other important disciplines such as education and those underpinning the social services industries. Psychology is popular. The rate of enrolment at tertiary level and then subsequent graduation from university has increased.

The Ministry of Education has affirmed that the study of psychology in high schools is an academic subject and NZQA has provided registered unit standards. However, students who choose psychology are disadvantaged as the study is not considered an official subject for university entrance.

The NZ Psychological Society asks that the Ministry of Education:

- (1) Reaffirm the educational significance of the discipline of psychology
- (2) Recognise the growing popularity, practical relevance of psychology to the wellbeing of students and their communities
- (3) Places the study of psychology on an equal level with other secondary school subjects so it can be recognised as a subject to gain university entrance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Coleman', written in a cursive style.

Peter Coleman
President
New Zealand Psychological Society