



Kairaranga Survey Feedback

Responses to the 2007 readers' questionnaire

The Kairaranga Editorial Board

ABSTRACT

Kairaranga operates as a partnership between the Ministry of Education, Special Education, Resource Teachers: Learning and Behavior (RTLB) and the tertiary sector. The journal was published by and for RTLB from 2000 to 2003, but the partnership model has been in operation since Volume 5, Issue 2, 2004.

After three years of collaborative journal production, the *Kairaranga* Editorial Board surveyed readers. Survey responses were sought in order to inform editorial decision-making and constructively enhance the journal for the benefit of readers. As *Kairaranga* has always valued partnership, the survey provided an opportunity to include the voices of journal readers. This paper outlines a summary of the feedback for *Kairaranga* readers.

Feedback

Keywords

Publications, surveys, feedback, questionnaires, professional practice.

OVERVIEW

A questionnaire was developed following a 'brainstorm' of ideas on what information was sought from readers. The questionnaire was developed in Microsoft Word, and then transposed to an online format using SurveyNet tools (<http://www.survey.net.nz/>). Some of the questions were open-ended, enabling qualitative feedback and other questions used a five-point Likert scale. A summary of topics posed within the questionnaire is provided in the Appendix.

The survey was included in hardcopy as a handout within *Kairaranga* Volume 8, Issue 2, 2007, which was launched at the RTLB conference in Wellington in September 2007. A pre-paid addressed envelope was attached to the questionnaire handouts. The online version was made available at the same time, with a hyperlink provided on all hardcopies of the questionnaire, and within the *Kairaranga* 8(2) journal editorial. In October 2007 and January 2008 email reminders were sent to Ministry of Education, Special Education (GSE) staff, with a hyperlink to online and Microsoft Word versions of the survey. All submissions were received anonymously.

ANALYSIS

The survey.net programme provided raw data scores for the quantitative questions. The quantitative data were also displayed by survey.net in bar-graph format and as percentages of all responses. For example, the data from the 'overall presentation' question were displayed across the five points in the scale (excellent, very good, acceptable, poor, very poor):

- The standard of editing is excellent – 48%
- The standard of editing is very good – 45%
- The standard of editing is acceptable – 7%
- The standard of editing is poor – 0%
- The standard of editing is very poor – 0%

For the purposes of this article, the percentages have been accumulated to give feedback at each point or higher. As an example, using the data above, the following statements can be made about presentation:

- 100% of respondents stated that presentation is *acceptable or better*.
- 93% of respondents stated that presentation is *very good or better*.
- 48% of respondents stated that presentation is *excellent*.
- No respondents stated that presentation was either *poor or very poor*.

Qualitative responses from open-ended questions and comments were printed in full and recurring or powerful themes were identified. Within this article many of the themes have been illustrated with verbatim quotes from respondents.

RESPONSES

Seventy-three questionnaires were received in total; seven of these were completed online and sixty-six were manually completed and posted in. The fact that less than 10% of the returned surveys were completed electronically reinforces the idea that hardcopy is a medium that *Kairaranga* readers find more manageable in their daily work lives.

While we recognise that the views expressed by respondents do not represent those of the entire readership, the feedback does provide some qualitative insight into the relevance, usefulness and quality of the journal.

INFORMATION ABOUT SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Of those who responded, RTLB and GSE staff were the main readers of *Kairaranga*, and these readers were employed by schools and GSE.

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

Eighty occupational identifications were made; as only 73 questionnaires were completed this means that some people stated that they had more than one occupation. The highest category responses were

- RTLB (25), were one third of the respondents
- Special education advisors (23)
- Psychologists (9)
- Early intervention teachers (6)
- Speech-language therapists (5)

The remaining individuals were spread across 13 additional categories of occupational group. These occupational groups, with between one and five respondents for each group, included lecturers (4), occupational therapists (3), physiotherapists (3), researchers (2), parent/whānau members (2), subject teacher – secondary (1), early childhood education teacher (1), principal/tumuaki (1), district Māori advisor (1), music therapist (1), kaitakawaenga/GSE Māori liaison (1), administration staff (1), and other (1).

Employer

The largest employer cited was the Ministry of Education, employing over half the respondents to this survey (n=43). The next largest group was schools (n=24), either individual schools or on behalf of clusters. The only other employers cited were universities (n=5). One respondent did not have an employer.

Geographic region

Approximately one third of all the respondents who replied to this question were from the Central North Island (n=23), with the next largest groups being Auckland (n=13), Lower North Island/Wellington (n=11) and Canterbury (n=9). There were six or fewer replies from each of the remaining areas in New Zealand, and none from Southland.

QUALITY OF THE JOURNAL

Relevance

- 85 % of respondents stated that there is *at least something* in every journal relevant to their work
- 53% of respondents stated that *at least most* material in the journal is relevant to their work
- 24% of respondents stated that the journal content is *highly relevant* to their work.
- 14% of respondents stated that *only occasionally* are there articles of relevance to their work.
- Only one respondent stated that the journal has *no relevance* to their work.

This statistical feedback indicates that the journal is relevant for respondents, and as one respondent noted, “Very useful, informative, important.” However, there were also comments that some articles were too lengthy and academic, and this is important for the *Kairaranga* Editorial Board to consider.

- “It is all very, very academic. Some storied experiences from RTLBs for example in everyday language would be very acceptable. A good tool or method should be able to be written simply.”
- “Some articles are too lengthy. Would like this to be addressed as people I share articles with find them daunting.”

Article categories

All five categories of article were enjoyed by respondents, and many respondents ticked most or all categories. Position papers (n=36) and interviews (n=41) received the lowest scores, practice papers (n=52) and storied experiences (n=54) were strongly enjoyed, and research was the most enjoyed category (n=64).

- 100% of respondents stated that the mix of categories is *acceptable or better*.
- 75% of respondents stated that the mix of categories is *very good or better*.
- 21% of respondents stated that the mix of categories is *excellent*.

This feedback validates the importance of each of the categories, and reinforces the importance of continuing to ensure a mixture of categories within issues. The statistical responses indicate that research is endorsed as a valued category.

- “A good variety of topical and professional interest articles, please maintain the mix.”
- “Keeps pedagogical practice current backed by relevant research.”

However, although not a large number, it is of significance that there were some comments encouraging further practice articles, and more contributions from RTLB.

Editing and presentation

- 100% of respondents stated that the standard of editing is *acceptable or better*.
- 88% of respondents stated that the standard of editing is *very good or better*.
- 43% of respondents stated that the standard of editing is *excellent*.
- No respondents stated that the standard of editing was either *poor or very poor*.

Similarly,

- 100% of respondents stated that presentation is *acceptable or better*.
- 93% of respondents stated that presentation is *very good or better*.
- 48% of respondents stated that presentation is *excellent*.
- No respondents stated that presentation was either *poor or very poor*.

This feedback validates the standard of editing from *Kairaranga* editing teams and reinforces the expertise developed within the *Kairaranga* Editorial Board. The feedback also affirms the overall presentation style of the journal.

- “Very professional, I would be quick to pass on to colleagues in education.”
- “Rigorous even!”
- “I think the appeal and design are excellent.”

One comment provided a pertinent reminder that expectations should be high in order to positively reflect the professionalism of our work.

- “It needs to be really good because it is an educational journal.”

Peer review process

Kairaranga has a blind peer review process. Comments about this process validated that this is managed rigorously.

- “I found it sensitive, yet robust.”
- “*Kairaranga* has a reasonable turn-around period but there is a relatively elaborate process to go through to get published.”

Cover art

- 100% of respondents rated the cover art as *usually good* or better.
- 95% of respondents rated the cover art as *generally very good* or better.
- 47% of respondents rated the cover art as *excellent*.
- No respondents stated that the cover art *ought to be improved* or was of *poor quality*.

This feedback endorses that readers value the children’s and young people’s art displayed on the cover of *Kairaranga*, and this should be continued.

- “It’s great having work by children and adds to the uniqueness of the journal.”
- “I love the fact that you use art from a varied age group, and a wide range of abilities.”

Book reviews

- 92% of respondents rated book reviews as *usually useful* or better.
- 47% of respondents rated book reviews as *usually very useful* or better.
- 18% of respondents rated book reviews as *excellent*.
- 11% of respondents stated that book reviews were *only occasionally useful*.
- 1 respondent stated that book reviews were *not at all useful*.

This feedback implies that book reviews are worth including, but that not all reviews appeal to all readers, therefore these require thoughtful selection.

- “These generally keep you up to date with new trends and new ideas.”
- “This is a useful resource to have access to. The reviews need to be genuinely critical.”

One reader reminded the Editorial Board that reviews were intended to be broader than books, and could include resources and programmes.

Diversity of abilities and disabilities

- 93% of respondents stated that a *reasonable or better* range of abilities and disabilities are represented in the journal.
- 58% of respondents stated that a *broad or better* range of abilities and disabilities are represented in the journal.
- 13% of respondents stated that an *excellent* range of abilities and disabilities is represented in the journal.
- No respondents stated that an *extremely narrow* range of abilities and disabilities are represented in the journal.

Although this feedback suggests that the journal is doing a “reasonable” job in representing a range of abilities and disabilities, it also indicates that the journal can do more in this area. Philosophically, the journal aims to represent a diverse range of abilities and disabilities, so this is an area in which the journal should be more consistently recognised as having strength.

- “Cultural, educational diversity all covered. Excellent resource.”
- “[The journal needs] articles by ethnic community members about how [they] see educational provisions at schools and whether their student’s needs are being met.”

Māori as tangata whenua

- 96% of respondents stated that a *reasonable or better* acknowledgement of Māori values and practices are represented in the journal.
- 64% of respondents stated that a *broad or better* acknowledgement of Māori values and practices are represented in the journal.
- 15% of respondents stated that an *excellent* acknowledgement of Māori values and practices is represented in the journal.
- No respondents stated that an *extremely limited* acknowledgement of Māori values and practices is represented in the journal.

This feedback affirms that the journal’s intention of acknowledging Māori values and practices is evident within the journal. This is an area in which progress can and should continue.

- “Always room to do better in this area for all of us.”
- “If we are serious about this, then this is an area that we certainly can improve on.”

Multiculturalism

- 63% of respondents stated that a *reasonable or better* range of ethnicities and cultures is acknowledged in the journal.
- 29% of respondents stated that a *broad or better* range of ethnicities and cultures is acknowledged in the journal.
- 6% of respondents stated that an *excellent* range of ethnicities and cultures is acknowledged in the journal.

However,

- 35% of respondents stated that a *limited* range of ethnicities and cultures is acknowledged in the journal.
- One respondent stated that an *extremely narrow* range of ethnicities and cultures is acknowledged in the journal.

This feedback suggests that the journal is mostly doing a “reasonable” job of acknowledging a range of ethnicities and cultures within the journal. However, the feedback also suggests that this is the area the journal could most improve on.

- “There is a need for more information for professionals practicing with Asian families as well as Pasifika.”

A broader interpretation of multiculturalism was called for

- “Especially immigrant/problems e.g. South African, British, Russian, Middle East, Asian, ESOL/Learning disabled.”

FUTURE INITIATIVES

Order in which articles are read

Readers had a diverse approach to choosing the order of articles. If a particular pattern had emerged, this would have guided the editing team as they ordered material in future journals.

Hardcopy/online

- 77% of respondents indicated that they wished to continue receiving the journal in *hardcopy*, as at present.
- 12% of respondents indicated that they wished to receive the journal in *electronic only* format (PDF or Word).
- 5% of respondents indicated that they wished to receive the journal as a *printable CD Rom*.
- 6% wished to receive *combinations* of hardcopy, online and CR Rom.

This feedback strongly indicates that *Kairaranga* readers value receiving the journal in hardcopy format. Only a limited number of readers wished to receive the journal in alternative formats.

- “I can take it home and read it at leisure. A computer version would sit at work and not get read.”
- “I prefer hardcopy as it is ‘in your face’ and here, if it were electronically I would probably not download.”

From those who endorsed combinations of format, it was recognised that different formats served different purposes and that electronic formats were kinder to the environment.

Value for money

The journal’s subscription cost is currently \$25 for at least two issues per year.

- 97% of readers consider that value for money is *acceptable or better*.
- 69% of readers consider that value for money is *very good or better*.

- 31% of readers consider that value for money is *excellent*.
- No readers consider that value for money is *poor*.

However, two respondents stated that they considered value for money was *very poor*.

Suggested articles/topics for articles and reviews

Respondents suggested a number of ideas and topics for future articles. These will be forwarded to the Kairaranga Editorial Board, and while the journal content is reliant on receiving submissions from contributors, these suggestions can contribute to the priorities given to submissions.

FAVOURITE ARTICLES

The following articles were cited as “favourites” by *Kairaranga* readers. The range of articles nominated illustrates the diversity of content within the journal.

The number in brackets following the reference illustrates how often an article was nominated.

Stanley, P. (2007). Forty or fifty something: What we are like at mid-life. *Kairaranga*, 8(2), 21–24. (x4)

Salter, J., & Redman, J. (2007). Transition to school: A pilot project. *Kairaranga*, 7(1), 8–12. (x3)

Glynn, T., & Bevan-Brown, J. (2007). “We know what you need ...” and other misconceptions about Māori learners. *Kairaranga*, 8(2), 25–31. (x3)

Berryman, M., & Togo, T. (2007). Culturally responsive whānau relations for including Māori students in education. *Kairaranga*, 8(2), 46–52. (x2)

Birch, J. (2006). Insight into an autism spectrum disorder. *Kairaranga*, 6(2), 16–19. (x2)

Gilmore, B., Haslam, V., Hitaua, R., Kent, B., Tavui, E., Tu’ionetua, A., & Crosswell, M. (2007). Do you know me? E mohio ana koe ki ahau? *Kairaranga*, 8(2), 32–38. (x2)

Margrain, V. & Clements, S. (2007). Exemplar assessment for all learners in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Kairaranga*, 8(2), 39–45. (x2)

Bourne, L. (2007). A story of transition to school. *Kairaranga*, 8(1), 31–33.

Browne, J., & Carroll-Lind, J. (2006). Relational aggression between primary school girls. *Kairaranga*, 7(1), 20–29.

Burrow, D. (2005). Transition in action: Targeting students with difficulties transitioning from Year 8 to Year 9. *Kairaranga*, 6(2), 19–22.

Fisher, R. & Martin, B. (2000). Evaluation of the Discovery Time programme. *Kairaranga*, 7(2), 31–35.

Holley, W. (2006). Stranger and stranger in a strange land: Living overseas and how it has influenced my understanding of students with “special needs”. *Kairaranga*, 7(1), 51–52.

Stanley, P. (2004). Bringing up father. *Kairaranga*, 5(2), 10–11.

Sutherland, A. (2007). The comparative worlds of calves and school bullying. *Kairaranga*, 8(1), 22–24.

Wastney, B., Te Kooro-Baker, G., & McPeak, C. (2007). Parental suggestions for facilitating acceptance and understanding of autism. *Kairaranga*, 8(2), 15–20.

Reasons for nomination of above favourite articles included that articles were informative, amusing, useful, practical and/or relevant. This information tells us that it is important that the journal continues to include articles with these features as they are valued by readers. However, it is worth noting that most of the articles nominated were from recent issues; these may have been nominated because they were most recently read, rather than necessarily more valued than earlier articles.

Two people also specifically acknowledged the entire 2006 special issue, which focused on the Enhancing Effective Practice in Special Education (EEPiSE) project.

CONCLUSION

The *Kairaranga* survey affirms the direction of the journal and Editorial Board and should be encouraging to all those who contribute to the journal in many and varied capacities, including as editors, peer reviewers, contributors, readers and financial contributors.

- “I always look forward to new editions of *Kairaranga*.”
- “Keep up the great work. It is a very professional journal.”
- “It reflects the work I do well!”

Areas of particular acknowledgement for the journal are the relevance of the journal to readers’ work, the standard of editing and presentation, and the variety of valued articles.

The purpose of the survey was to gain information to further enhance the journal. The survey findings indicate that it is important to readers that the following features of the journal are maintained: professional editing, inclusion of material that is varied and relevant to key reader groups, availability in hardcopy, and the celebration of children and young people’s art work on the cover. This feedback from readers will inform any future journal decision-making.

Areas for development identified from the feedback include the need to ensure a balance of article categories and contributors, coverage of useful topics, and bicultural practices and values. An area that the journal can particularly improve on is with regard to multiculturalism within the journal. The *Kairaranga* Editorial Board will certainly consider potential ways of enhancing these aspects of the journal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the 73 *Kairaranga* readers who took the time to complete and return the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was developed by Valerie Margrain, with the assistance of Jill Bevan-Brown, Gail Connelly, Joanna Curzon, Bernie Holden, Sonja Macfarlane and Merrolee Penman. Responses were collated by Valerie Margrain.

RELEVANT WEBSITE

<http://www.survey.net.nz/>

AUTHOR PROFILE

The *Kairaranga* Editorial Board

The *Kairaranga* Editorial Board is a collaborative partnership between the Ministry of Education, RTLB, and the tertiary education sector. The board are united in their commitment to inclusion, effective practice and collaborative relationships.

The *Kairaranga* Editorial Board, November 2006



APPENDIX

The following notes summarise the content of the *Kairaranga* questionnaire:

- 1A Description of reader's role (24 options provided).
- 1B Who the reader works for (11 options provided).
- 1C Geographic region that the reader lives in (9 options provided).
- 2A Quality of the cover art (5-point Likert scale provided, comments invited).
- 2B Usefulness of the book reviews (5-point Likert scale provided, comments invited).
- 2C Categories of article that are enjoyed by readers of *Kairaranga* (any or all of the 5 provided categories could be ticked, comments invited).
- 2D Mix of categories in *Kairaranga* (5-point Likert scale provided, comments invited).
- 2E Relevance of the articles published in *Kairaranga* to readers' work (5-point Likert scale provided, comments invited).
- 2F Standard of editing within the journal (5-point Likert scale provided, comments invited).
- 2G Overall visual appeal and presentation of the journal (5-point Likert scale provided, comments invited).
- 2H Process readers usually adopt in deciding what to read initially, and thereafter (8 options provided, comments invited).
- 3A Reflection of diversity of abilities and disabilities in New Zealand (5-point Likert scale provided, comments invited).
- 3B Acknowledgement of Māori as tangata whenua (5-point Likert scale provided, comments invited).
- 3C Reflection of multiculturalism in New Zealand (5-point Likert scale provided, comments invited).
- 4A Hardcopy/online access options for the journal (6 options provided, comments invited).
- 4B Value for money (5-point Likert scale provided, comments invited).
- 4C Suggestions for articles/topics invited
- 4D Suggestions for book or programme reviews
- 5 Favourite/valued articles noted, with reasons why.
- 6 Comments on the peer review process
- 7 Thanks.