

The New Programme and Qualifications for RTLB and Others Working in Areas of Specialist Education

An interview with Professor Garry Hornby, Dr Alison Kearney and Dr Mandia Mantis



Paul Mitchell

RTLB, Insoll Avenue School, Fairfield Cluster, Hamilton

I recently had the pleasure of discussing the new qualification programme for RTLB with Professor Garry Hornby, Dr Alison Kearney and Dr Mandia Mantis and was immediately excited by their passion and determination to make the new programme package responsive to the needs of every single person undertaking this study, as well as being responsive and relevant to the needs of New Zealand students and their families and schools. This programme has been designed to align its content with the changing role of RTLB which was announced by Anne Tolley, Minister of Education, at the RTLB Conference 2010. I was delighted to hear from these three people who are drawing on the strengths of two of our universities, Massey and Canterbury, that not only is the new programme going to enhance the skills and knowledge of all new RTLB from 2011, but it will also provide opportunities for people who have already trained, to be involved in online aspects of the community site of the programme and be able to attend some of the on-campus presentations and workshops.

Where does the new qualification programme come from?

The original RTLB training, which started about ten years ago, was delivered alongside the development of the RTLB role and provided knowledge and skills relevant to the increased emphasis on the rights of all students to inclusion in mainstream settings if that was the preferred choice of their parents. Since then we have learnt a lot about the RTLB service and its role, and RTLB and schools/clusters have made sense of the service to meet their local needs. We have seen the service better defined by reflection on its practice, and have more of a handle on what works well and where the challenges lie. The new programme is in response to a national survey undertaken earlier this year as well as consultation with national and international advisory groups and also from the Education Review Offices reviews of the service. These informal and formal reviews of RTLB have provided a vision for future needs and have been used to help determine the content of the new programme.

What does the new qualification programme look like?

There is a determined move by the Ministry of Education to have professionals working more collaboratively and this will impact on both the work of RTLB and other professionals, and is also reflected in the type and content of the programme that will be provided for RTLB from 2011. The Blended Community of Inquiry and Interprofessional Practice (BCIP) model for Specialist Teaching Qualifications, is going to facilitate learning by participants from a variety of professions and/or disciplines, including RTLB. The programme will be for educators working in the specialist education areas of Vision, Deaf, Early Intervention, Learning and Behaviour, Autism Spectrum Disorders and Gifted. Each of the professions or disciplines will learn with, from and about each other.

How do RTLB who have already trained benefit from the new qualification programme?

There will be a very strong online community of practice in which all RTLB, present and new, trained or on the new programme, will be encouraged to participate. There will also be block courses for those starting their training from 2011 and these block courses will finish with opportunities for all RTLB to participate in on-campus courses held at either Massey University in Albany, Auckland, or at Canterbury University, Christchurch. Resources developed through course work will be available to all RTLB who choose to join the online community of practice.

Who can enrol in the programme?

Anyone who has a relevant professional qualification and experience, a New Zealand undergraduate degree or equivalent will be eligible for entry to the courses ie. a teacher can do this training prior to applying for an RTLB position. The Ministry of Education has made it clear that there will be no exemptions from training for any new RTLB and, in response to this, the new programme has been specifically designed to recognise prior training by ensuring that the programme will still be meaningful and useful to participants regardless of their backgrounds.

RTLB will be able to choose whether they wish to enrol in Canterbury University or Massey University.

To find out more detail about this qualification please check out either of the Universities' websites:

Massey website:

<http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/colleges/college-education/pg-dip-in-specialist-teaching.cfm>

Canterbury website:

<http://www.education.canterbury.ac.nz/study/pgdipspectch.shtml>

INTERVIEWER'S PROFILE

Paul Mitchell



Paul Mitchell works as an RTLB based at Insoll Avenue School in Hamilton's Fairfield Cluster. He has been an RTLB since 1998 and trained in the "Green Group". This has given him a particular interest in the new training that is being rolled out for future RTLB and led to his desire to interview the Massey and Canterbury Universities' personnel involved in the design and implementation of this programme. Paul has been on the editorial board of *Kairaranga* since its inception.

EMAIL
paulrtlb@insoll.schoolzone.net.nz

INTERVIEWEES' PROFILES

Professor Garry Hornby
RTLB Coordinator
Canterbury University



Professor Garry Hornby was born in England and emigrated to New Zealand in 1971.

He worked as a mainstream and special class teacher in Auckland. Garry then trained and worked as an educational psychologist until 1986, when he returned to England to work at the Universities of Manchester and Hull, with two years at the University of the West Indies in Barbados, before moving back to New Zealand to become a Professor of Education at the University of Canterbury in 2002. He is married to a Barbadian and has two secondary

school-age sons. His teaching and research is in the areas of educational psychology, special education, counselling, teacher education, and parental involvement in education. He has produced over 200 journal articles, chapters, books and conference presentations in the field of education

His published books include:

- *Improving Parental Involvement*
- *Meeting Special Needs in Mainstream Schools*
- *Mental Health Handbook for Schools*
- *Counselling Pupils in Schools*, and his latest book, due out in 2011, is entitled
- *Essential Parental Involvement in Education*.

EMAIL
garry.hornby@canterbury.ac.nz

Dr Alison Kearney

RTLB Coordinator
Massey University



Dr Alison Kearney is the Head of School of Curriculum and Pedagogy at Massey University College of Education. Along with Professor Garry Hornby, Alison will be coordinating the Learning and Behaviour endorsement in the Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching. Prior to her current position at Massey University, Alison was a classroom teacher for 15 years, and also spent some time as a Resource Teacher of Special Needs and a Guidance and Learning Teacher.

EMAIL
a.c.kearney@massey.ac.nz

Dr Mandia Mantis
Programme Coordinator
Massey University



Dr Mandia Mantis is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at Massey University. She coordinates the Postgraduate Special Education and Specialist Teaching programmes. She has taught at primary, secondary and tertiary levels and has worked as an educational psychologist in both special and inclusive education settings. Her teaching and research interests include dynamic assessment, differentiated teaching and e-learning. Her doctoral scholarship focused on developing a Community of Practice approach for online teaching and learning.

EMAIL
m.mentis@massey.ac.nz