

Linehan, Anne, 2006, *Towards a Pastoral Response to the Perceived Needs of Senior Students*.

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation set out, in the context of one second level school, to formulate a pastoral response to the perceived pastoral needs of senior students. The main concern of the work was to listen to the voices of the senior students as they articulated those needs. The study was underlined by Prendergast's belief that 'we have talked over the heads of young people for far too long and such talk has never been conducive to their engagement' (Prendergast, 2003, 109).

Such a pastoral response could not be undertaken in isolation from both school and society. Therefore, the author began by describing the school under review, against a background of accelerating economic, social and technological change, growing cultural diversity and ideological uncertainty. A selective review of the literature in Pastoral Care in Education was undertaken to give coherence to this process. This in turn set out the questions which this study intended to investigate.

Research methods were then discussed with a view to establishing an appropriate research method to find answers to the above questions. Consequently, in order to formulate such a response, the views of fifty Leaving Certificate students were researched. Having constructed, piloted and administered a questionnaire and having completed two sets of interviews the results were analysed and presented.

Finally, conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made. The ultimate aim of this work, based on these findings, is to enhance the school's pastoral care system.