

Editorial

In my editorial for *set*, Issue No.3, 2001 I wrote, "In the very first bulletin published by NZCER, *Educational Research in New Zealand* (1935), Dr Beeby, our first director, stated that NZCER needed to feed the curiosity of teachers in a way that acknowledged the demanding environment of the classroom."

That teachers are curious to know more about what is involved in improving teaching practice, and that NZCER is continuing to stimulate that curiosity, has recently been evidenced in the huge interest and participation by practitioners, researchers, and policy makers in the Council's 2002 conference "Teachers Make a Difference: What is the research evidence?" The presenters challenged participants to think about the difference between "expert" and "experienced" teachers; to ponder about whether good teachers necessarily deliver good teaching; to consider the elements that make sustainable school improvement possible; and to reflect on the pedagogies and assessment practices which research shows make a difference to student learning outcomes: both social and academic.

Participants took up the challenge in the discussion time and debated future priorities that build on the current evidence of teachers making a difference. More time for classroom-based research; a reflective environment within schools; the opportunity for curiosity-driven research; the desirability of partnerships between practitioners and researchers; and support for innovation were all put forward as key ideas that might contribute to shedding further light on teaching for learning. A strong plea was put forward for research to become more accessible and readable; for teachers to have the opportunity to initiate research; and to be participants in it. There was recognition that ultimately the work of researchers, policy makers,

and practitioners forms an interactive whole, each informing the other and working for the one common goal – improving the learning opportunities for all students.

Opportunities for the high-level discussions of a conference day are all too infrequent but *set* provides an ongoing source for school-based reflection as it brings together research on many of the current educational ideas, initiatives, and innovations. Rising subscription numbers point to the increasing value teachers place on research and its relevance to their work.

This issue of *set* continues its role of stimulating thought and inquiry: it features articles on the critical importance of the relationship between teacher and learner; investigative processes in science; children's reasoning in mathematics; and an insight into the consultation process used in the national exemplar project.

Many people contribute to the publication of *set*. In this last issue for 2002 I would like to acknowledge the work of the authors, whose work demonstrates their expertise and ability to present research in a way that is clear and enables readers to draw their own conclusions. And also those who ensure that the quality and relevance of *set* are maintained: the editorial board, the reviewers, the editors, and the designer. And most of all you the subscribers who keep NZCER's enthusiasm for the journal alive with your encouragement and positive feedback.

We look forward to bringing you further issues of *set* in 2003 – more challenging, stimulating articles which are sure to keep professional curiosity alive.

Robyn Baker,
Director,
New Zealand Council for Educational Research