

Editorial

The first issue of *set: Research Information for Teachers* heralds another year of stimulating professional reading. In this issue we examine some of the emerging developments in New Zealand education and discuss some of the key issues – the “breaking news” of education.

First among the developments is the government’s establishment of the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) with annual funding of \$1 million for three years. NZCER has been contracted to co-ordinate the management of this fund. The Initiative aims to enhance the partnership between practitioners and researchers in all sectors of the education system from early childhood to tertiary and work-place settings for the benefit of teaching and learning. *set* has provided a link between research and practice for many years so it is exciting to see funding allocated to strengthen the role of practitioners as participants in, and drivers of, educational research. NZCER’s Director, Robyn Baker sees the Initiative “as an opportunity for more classroom-based research and an opportunity for teachers to work in collaboration with researchers”. You will find information about calls for expression of interest for funding from the Initiative on p. 30.

The feature section Research, Practice, and School Improvement provides examples of positive results when teachers and researchers work together to achieve improved teaching and learning outcomes. In *He Whakaaro Anō* Viviane Robinson creates a talking point around the challenges of forming a teacher culture in which research-based discussion and debate become an integral part of teacher professionalism. She suggests that the enhancement of the research role of teachers is central to sustainable school improvement.

Further “breaking news” in 2003 has been the introduction of the government-funded assessment package for teachers: asTTle. The technology used to develop this package presents teachers with a

leading-edge approach to assessment. Charles Darr of NZCER offers comments about its strengths, weaknesses, and potential based on his research with intermediate school students. This early exploration of asTTle provides the beginning of what will undoubtedly be ongoing critical analysis of the package as it becomes more widely used.

We are increasingly aware of the importance of environmental education but as yet little research has been carried out into the effective implementation of the Ministry of Education’s *Guidelines for Environmental Education in New Zealand Schools*. Tania McLean looks at what is happening in this essential but often inadequately implemented and poorly understood area of the curriculum. She provides plenty of ideas for school-wide strategies from the classroom to the Board of Trustees.

The last item of “breaking news” concerns *set* itself. The value of *set* for professional development has long been recognised. Each year we receive many requests from subscribers requesting permission to use articles for school-wide use. We are always pleased to grant this. This year we’ve decided to make it even easier for you to gain access to *set* articles for professional development. We have now made a CD option available. If you are a subscriber you are entitled to purchase the CD which can be loaded onto an unlimited number of computers on a single site. There’s also a new pricing structure which enables you to buy multiple copies of the print version of *set* at a generously reduced rate. The details are on p. 21.

In the best tradition of *set*, we look forward to providing you with another year of relevant, thought-provoking research.

Happy reading!

Bev Webber
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NZCER