
Editorial

This issue of *set* contains a major feature section – seven articles in all – on assessment. The amount of research being carried out in this area indicates that assessment is still one of the key issues for educators and policy makers.

These articles illustrate a growing awareness of the role of classroom-based assessment in promoting learning. There are two articles from a recent NZCER study which surveyed classroom assessment practices in English and mathematics at Years 5, 7, and 9. These describe the assessment tools and strategies that the teachers in the sample were using and indicate the ones that they found most useful for various purposes.

There are two articles that bring major assessment tools into the classroom. Alison Gilmore explains how some of the NEMP tasks can be used, while Sally Boyd reports on two case studies which show how the Assessment Resource Banks can form part of the classroom assessment programme.

Eleanor Hawe, with Helen Dixon, Ruth Williams, and Bryan Tuck, explores the School Entry Assessment tasks and makes some interesting findings about which of the SEA tasks are used, and which are not, and discusses the reasons behind the findings.

A current “hot topic” is formative assessment. Helen Dixon and Ruth Williams suggest that much professional development support is needed if teachers are to be able to gain the knowledge and skills that are needed to implement sound formative assessment practices.

NZCER’s work programme for the coming year reflects the focus of these articles. Director, Robyn Baker says that “the Ministry of Education has contracted NZCER to extend assessment support for classroom teachers. Research will expand into specific areas, beginning with self-regulated learning. This will lead to the development of publications to support teachers in their use of self-assessment. The assessment team will also be working to increase the services provided to teachers.”

There will be more detail on these activities in 2004.

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NZCER