STATUS OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND COUNTRY REPORT

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Overview

The first OECD review of a member country's educational research and development (R&D) policy was carried out in New Zealand in 2001. The review team made positive comments about the quality of New Zealand's education system, but concluded that it invested far less in educational R&D than other developed countries, and "both needs to make something of a quantum jump in its educational research policy, and is capable of it" (OECD, 2001, p. 5). On the one hand, there were signs of a clear government intention to use research evidence for educational policy development. On the other hand, the political and economic changes to New Zealand since the mid-1980s, which were not evidence-based, created a strongly market-oriented system, and segmented educational administration. This made it more difficult to prioritise research effort (particularly necessary in a small country of close to 4 million people).

Government priorities do exist, and these are looked at next, followed by summaries of the links between educational research and policy, the relevance of research to teaching-learning, educational research capacity, and overseas links.

Government priorities

The OECD review found that most of the educational R&D funding was focused on the development of assessment instruments for use with primary level students, largely practical curriculum tools to support teachers' work with students, and to provide four-yearly national pictures of educational achievement levels and gaps. However, on a project by project basis, there is still more research related to evaluation of existing initiatives, increasingly of a formative kind, that collects both outcome and process data.

The four kinds of research that the Ministry of Education funds and their uses were identified in 2000 for the next three years. They are:

- *strategic policy research* – assists in the identification of key influences on educational outcomes and plays a critical role in setting policy priorities at the national level;

- *monitoring system performance* – allows the Ministry to identify and describe trends in New Zealand education outcomes (includes participation in international studies, e.g. PISA, TIMSS);

- *research in relation to design and evaluation* – informs the design or refinement of specific programmes, policies, and resources; and

- *participatory research* – fosters improvements in teaching practice especially through educator-researcher collaborations (Ministry of Education, 2000).

The Ministry of Education commissioned seven "state of the art" literature reviews in 1999 to provide it with a sound basis for developing strategic research priorities related to factors affecting educational outcomes. These reviews were on the effects of:

- family and community resources;
- early childhood education;

- curricula and assessment;
- school governance, organisation, and management;
- school resourcing;
- post-compulsory education; and
- enterprise-based education and training.

These reviews are available through the Ministry of Education website, www.minedu.govt.nz. Following internal and external consultation around a draft statement of educational priorities, the Ministry of Education is now focusing on three initial themes:

- teaching and the dynamics of learning, with an emphasis on responding to the needs of diverse students;
- immersion and bilingual education; and
- tertiary education (Whitney, 2002).

These are all broad themes, which can foster a number of different studies using different methodologies, including the encouragement of new studies, the inclusion of these themes in research which has other foci (for example, evaluations of ICT initiatives) and the deeper analysis of existing data-sets.

Within these themes, the focus is on the Ministry of Education's two key priorities for 2002–2005 which are:

- raising participation and achievement for underachieving students; and
- ensuring that the system is able to provide the skills and knowledge needed to bring success for all students in the 21st century (Ministry of Education, 2002a, p. 3).

Links between educational research and policy

These government priorities are ones with which few New Zealand educational researchers would disagree. Educational research has supplied evidence of differential educational opportunities and achievement since the late 1960s, and the social value of equality has threaded through most of the research which has had some impact on understanding and policy. Increasingly, as access to secondary and tertiary education grows for previously disadvantaged groups, concerns have arisen about whether it can meet their needs, and whether forms of organisation and qualifications that were suitable for a more stable economic and social environment are still appropriate.

Thus there are some common concerns among both researchers and policymakers. The links between researchers and policymakers have also developed over the last few years, as policymakers and politicians have taken more interest in having evidence-based policy, and understanding of how to bring about sustainable improvements in educational practice (or evidence-based implementation).

Relevance of research to teaching-learning

There has been some growth in New Zealand research focused on teaching and learning particularly that related to professional development, assessment, and pedagogy. There is an increasingly strong ethos of dissemination of research findings to educators, through short, readable summaries which are given to

participants in projects, posted on websites,[1] and through NZCER's triannual publication for schools, ***set***. Researchers want their work to be useful to practitioners, and use advisory groups and networking with education sector groups and educators to ensure that their research proposals cover questions which are important to these groups, and the research designs are realistic given early childhood education and school workloads. The Ministry of Education is chairing an advisory board, with representatives drawn from the education sector, that is currently establishing a Teaching and Learning Research Initiative. This initiative will support and co-ordinate practitioner research, which has the potential to not only improve and energise practice in the schools taking part, but also to deepen our knowledge base of the relations of teaching to learning.

Educational research capacity

The economic and structural changes which started in the mid-1980s have made it difficult to develop and sustain research capacity, since most research is funded through short-term contracts. Tertiary institutions, NZCER, and a few private firms and individuals compete against one another for limited opportunities, usually tendered and funded by the Ministry of Education. There is little private or philanthropic funding of research in New Zealand.

Among other recommendations, the OECD reviewers identified the need for more concentrated strategic or basic research, increased spending on research, including research capacity and infrastructure. In late 2001, in response to new funding for centres of research excellence, a consortium of educational researchers, spearheaded by the University of Auckland in association with NZCER, put forward a proposal for a centre which would meet these needs. This bid was unsuccessful. Five centres of research excellence were funded for the "hard" sciences and for a Māori[2] research centre, but not for the social sciences, including education. However, the Māori research centre should provide a strong platform for the much-needed building of Māori research capability. Thus, although the Ministry of Education increasingly endorses the usefulness of educational research, the funding of research continues to be largely on a contractual basis, linked to current policy initiatives, and is at much the same level as the mid-1990s. One new step is that there has been a slight increase in institutions preparing collaborative bids, based on complementary strengths.

NZCER is fortunate in that its ongoing funding through a purchase agreement with the Ministry of Education allows it to initiate some longitudinal and strategic projects, and through these to also develop and sustain research teams and capability. It now employs some 25 research and assessment development staff.[3]

NZCER and the universities are the main homes of educational researchers in New Zealand. At the end of 2001, the NZ Association of Researchers in Education (NZARE) had 430 individual and 65 institutional members. It holds annual conferences, and every fourth year has a joint conference with the Australian Association of Researchers in Education. NZARE members include educators, at tertiary, school, and early childhood education level, and policymakers. Most of the NZARE members are not full-time researchers, and NZARE conference papers often

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1 The Ministry of Education also makes full reports available through e-mail contact through its website, and increasingly uses Te Kete Ipurangi – TKI, which is designed to be a "one stop shop" for educators seeking professional information, advice, resources, and contacts (www.tki.org.nz).

2 Māori are the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

3 Information about NZCER's current projects and access to its publications can be found at www.nzcer.org.nz.

arise from thesis and tertiary course work, or small-scale research, particularly case-studies, which can be funded from institutional research funds.

A study of the educational research capacity and capability of the educational community in New Zealand (Auckland Uniservices Ltd, 2001) focused on the preparation of new researchers through postgraduate work in the 15 tertiary institutions which provided postgraduate education courses. These included four traditional universities, two newer universities, four colleges of education, three polytechnics, a whare wananga (offering courses in te reo Mäori, the Mäori language), and a university of technology. It found that most postgraduate students were employed professionals whose further degrees were related to their existing careers, rather than preparing them for a career as a researcher. While all 15 institutions wanted to have research cultures, they existed largely in the universities; elsewhere, "the situation is typically one of trying to build both staff and student capability simultaneously…the colleges of education and polytechnics have only a fledgling research culture which is being built up by encouraging staff to gain doctorates while at the same time these staff are maintaining an intensive teaching regime…there is a hard road ahead for the emerging members to consolidate their resources" (ibid, p. 7).

Overseas links

Most educational researchers' links with their peers and with policymakers in other countries are individually based. Involvement in cross-country projects is largely limited to the large international assessment studies. NZCER maintains links with other national educational research organisations such as ACER, NIER, and NFER, and is in the process of reactivating links with the Institute of Education at the University of the South Pacific through a memorandum of understanding. Because of its decentralisation of educational administration, and the Mäori-led development of new approaches to educating Mäori students, New Zealand is well visited by international policymakers and researchers.

CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The Ministry of Education's two overarching priorities point to the main challenges facing education, and thus educational research. While New Zealand does well on international comparisons, it continues to have a large "tail" of underachievement. Disadvantaged social groups are over-represented in this large tail: Mäori, particularly Mäori boys, Pasifika[4] students, students for whom English is a second language, and students whose parents did not gain school qualifications themselves. There is growing understanding that these ethnic differences are related to family income and education levels, which in turn reflect previous inequalities of educational access and expectations, and for Mäori, the generational effects of dispossession.

There is now high interest in ensuring that Mäori and Pasifika students experience educational success. Mäori currently form 20 percent of the school population, and Pasifika students, 8 percent. By 2020, demographic projections are that around 40 percent of all primary-aged children and 35 percent of secondary school-age children will be of Mäori and/or Pasifika descent, and more than 50 percent by 2051 (Ministry of Education, 2002b, p. 24). So the need to ensure that these students experience

[4] Students whose families have migrated from Pacific islands such as Samoa, Rarotonga, Tonga, Tokelau, Niue, and others. Many are now second or third generation New Zealanders.

good quality education and gain useful qualifications, skills, and understanding has three imperatives: commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi, a founding document for New Zealand which lays the ground for a bicultural nation; social justice (or national social health); and national economic health.

There is increased interest among Mäori in education in te reo Mäori, both to revitalise the language and culture, and also to ensure that Mäori students take pride in their identity. Around a third of the Mäori children who attend early childhood education attend kohanga reo, which provides this education. Around 18 percent of Mäori school students are in some form of Mäori-medium education, with 3.3 percent attending kura kaupapa Mäori (full immersion education). Mäori are also interested in taking more authority and responsibility for the schools that serve their children. There are now nine iwi (tribe)-Ministry of Education partnerships to improve education within iwi rohe (territory), with more in the wings.

There is now a Pasifika education strategy, with emphasis on building strong home-school relations, and involving parents more in their children's learning. There are a growing number of "language nests" offering early childhood education in individual Pasifika languages and cultures.

The growing diversity of New Zealand's population is also reflected in the increasing number of Asian students, now 6 percent of the student population. International fee-paying students have also joined the New Zealand school mix, increasing rapidly by 176 percent from 1997 to 2001, to form 1.4 percent of the student population, and more than this at secondary level. There has been an equally rapid growth in courses in secondary schools teaching English as a second language, or gearing the national curriculum for the needs of these students.

New Zealand has a high rate of student mobility: the highest of all countries in the TIMSS 1994 project. Recent analysis showed a national rate of between 25-29 percent for primary schools, with higher rates in schools serving low socio-economic status communities. Likely factors influencing this high transience rate include housing and employment, population mobility, and school choice.

Overall, there is an increased awareness of the need for education to better engage the attention and interest of students, from a wider range of backgrounds. This has led to questions about the kinds of changes which might be needed in New Zealand's school structure and organisation. There are a small number of alternative schools which receive Ministry of Education funding, and which seek to provide students with more individualised and inquiry-based learning. There has also been an increase in the number of students who are home-schooled by their parents.

Some schools, particularly at the secondary level, are also using the Internet and video conferencing to share lessons/teachers, and to create "virtual" classes. The main reason for doing this is that many New Zealand secondary schools cannot offer the full subject choice which all their students would like, since they do not have the staffing, or the staff qualified to teach a subject. Ninety-eight percent of secondary schools use The Correspondence School, which has moved into e-learning, for one or more subject in the senior secondary school. New Zealand is now beginning to develop experience in e-learning, as it is in the use of ICT in traditional classrooms, and by school managers and teachers. Evaluations of ICT initiatives have found that it is essential to include professional development and technical support in any ICT programme if it is to be used well.

As evidence of the value placed on early childhood education in New Zealand, it is one of only two countries with a national early childhood education curriculum, *Te Whariki*. New Zealand has had national curricula for individual school subjects for some decades. *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework: Te Anga Matauranga o Aotearoa* (1993) was the first integration of individual curricula. It sets out seven essential learning areas, developed from existing subjects. It also lays out a set of eight essential skills – skills deemed valuable to students coming into, and helping to create, a different work world. These essential skills are to be integrated into each curriculum area. A curriculum stocktake study is now underway, to address concerns that the national curriculum has become overloaded, and to take into account the growing knowledge of the skills and habits which help students become lifelong learners, and able to both keep their feet in, and contribute to, a "knowledge economy".

Some of this is grounded in the economic challenges New Zealand faces as a small, distant country, which must be nimble and innovative to maintain its standard of living through further growth. By world standards, however, we are a fortunate country: politically stable, with a high standard of living, and facing no major health issues such as AIDS. Inequality has increased since the 1980s, and some New Zealanders live in poverty, but it is not widespread.

There is increased interest in students having both academic knowledge and the ability to problem-solve, be creative, take the initiative, and communicate and work well with others who are different. Educators are working on ways to integrate curriculum and skill areas, and to build on existing student knowledge and interests, to bridge gaps between home and school, and to engage student attention and energy.

Similar principles underlie the reform of the senior school qualifications which started in the early 1990s, with a shift from norm-referenced external examinations to competency-based largely internal assessment using unit standards. These could be gained in schools, tertiary settings, and workplaces. However, the new qualifications framework did not replace the external examinations, creating a double assessment system and workload for teachers. A new system, the National Certificate of Educational Achievement was introduced in 2002 for Year 11 students, incorporating both internal and external assessment. Its introduction was troubled by additional workload and costs for schools, to some extent reflecting an over-swift implementation, with insufficient time to resolve some practical issues. These issues included the use of ICT to record student achievement. The introduction of the NCEA coincided with the renegotiation of the secondary teachers' collective contract, and led to industrial action. While that has been resolved, issues of workload and thus the ability to focus to make the kinds of changes needed to better meet *all* students' needs, remain for New Zealand practitioners and managers in all education sectors.

Decentralised administration does increase workloads. There is more administrative work, and greater individual school accountability and reporting. New Zealand's forms of accountability for school performance are more flexible than other countries', but nonetheless they raise questions of the right mix of reporting and relations between schools and government in order to improve learning (Wylie, 2002).

New Zealand has some issues also with teacher supply, with an ageing teacher workforce, and new shortages in secondary schools, though that is mainly due to a population "bulge" moving through the school system. However, if new approaches are taken to learning, and teacher roles change, there may be more need for teachers, taking different approaches, rather than less.

Implications for educational research
These contextual challenges and issues are having some impact on educational research in New Zealand. The main impacts are:

- *A more Mäori-centred approach to research*
  Mäori participation in research hinges on Mäori perception of its value for Mäori. Mäori want to be involved in setting the agenda for research, as well as in individual research studies. This has resulted in positive changes to research design, questions, process, and teams, and in the manner of reporting back to communities. There is still a dearth of experienced Mäori researchers. (More exist for health, where a national research council has used funding to develop capacity. Health research is better funded than educational research also.)
- Similar principles are now applying to research with Pasifika students, parents, and educators, and will apply to future research with Asian and other migrant groups.
- *Interweaving of research questions*
  Few studies are single-focus; most include analysis by social groups, including gender, and different levels of student performance, and most try to include contextual dimensions, for example, school and home characteristics, so that understanding grows of the factors affecting the diversity of student performance both within and between different groups and communities.
- *Better building on existing research*
  The Ministry of Education's strategic literature reviews, and a current set of "best-evidence" syntheses are providing a useful platform for research design, and analysis and interpretation of results. There is beginning to be more sharing of research instruments across studies, and use of existing questions in international studies where these are applicable to New Zealand so that we can have a greater body of consistent knowledge.
- *More formative evaluation*
  The NZ Treasury requires significant new government spending to be evaluated. There is a shift from process evaluation of the set-up period only, to longer evaluations of both process and outcomes, with researchers feeding findings and interpretations to the groups involved in change, to assist further positive change. Researchers need to think more strategically, have very good relationship management skills, be able to translate their results for a range of different audiences, and be prepared to modify their research design to suit new identified needs. The role is one of critical friend rather than advocate.

There is a growing focus on:

- *More longitudinal studies*
  In a system which is focused on change, there is increased emphasis on identifying the effects of change, both intended and unintended, and if possible, on which aspects of change make positive differences, and which create new dynamics. Longitudinal studies have made positive contributions to the development of educational and social policy.
- *More involvement of educators*
  Research becomes part of systemic improvement, and it becomes important to involve educators, policymakers, and sometimes students and parents, in the research design and analysis, not least so that the "take-up" of findings and understandings will spread and become an engine driving continued change across the board.

- *Better use of statistical analysis*
  On the one hand, advances in computing power have allowed the growth of more sophisticated statistical analysis, particularly in tracing indirect as well as direct contributing factors; on the other, they have also allowed many to blindly use statistical packages and produce seeming results or graphic presentation of data, but results which are spurious or not meaningful.
- *Better dissemination of results*
  Research needs to be used by all involved in education, including parents, if we are to harness the relationships and experiences of families and home to support children's learning. Where the demands on the public purse grow greater (including the cost of ICT), robust research is needed by policymakers who have to prioritise public expenditure, and it is also needed to underpin educators' decisions on their school expenditure, and the provision of professional development.
- *More intensive research on learning*
  The more we have learnt from research about the factors that affect learning and achievement, the more important becomes the nature of learning itself, the interactions between teachers and students, and between students and peers, and students and parents and family, and to understand how these dynamics change at different levels of education, from early childhood education to tertiary. As ICT is used more, we need to understand how it alters, or when it alters, the nature of learning and knowledge. Opening the "black box" of learning is the new educational research frontier. It is also more costly, involving as it does more observational and interview work, over longer periods of time.

The closer links between researchers and policymakers, and researchers and practitioners also raise some issues:

- *How to ensure that closeness does not preclude critique, where needed.*
- *How to ensure that a focus on evidence-based policy development does not preclude new exploratory and innovative approaches*.

PRIORITY AREAS AND RESEARCH TO DATE

Three high priority areas for New Zealand educational research in which major research has been conducted are:

- improving pedagogy and assessment;
- the role of institutions and systems in supporting learning; and
- student engagement in learning and the factors which affect it.

Improving pedagogy and assessment
This is the core work of teachers. New Zealand does not have a tightly prescribed pedagogy, and does not have mandatory national assessment in early childhood education or primary school. The emphasis has been more on diagnostic assessment within teaching, than on summative assessment comparing or ranking students. Changes in the national curriculum and teachers' and policymakers' interest in having assessment that reflected teachers' intentions for student learning, have led to the development of new assessment tools, particularly the Assessment Resource banks (ARBs), and the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP). The ARBs allow teachers to select and develop their own items from an online "bank" sorted by curriculum level. Their use has grown markedly in recent years, as more

schools have been able to access materials online (through www.nzcer.org.nz), though many teachers still access them from their own home computers.

NEMP provides a four-yearly snapshot of student achievement at a national level, using representative samples of schools, and thus allows policymakers to check progress against policies and interventions, and to identify particular gaps which can then be targeted in professional development. These are particularly innovative tasks, involving group tasks (videoed), and allowing students to show their knowledge and understanding in performance as well as the conventional written work. A selection of the NEMP tasks becomes available with the ARBs once a round of national assessment has been completed.[5] Both NEMP tasks and ARB items are also being used by teachers to develop modules or units of work, and the involvement of teachers in administering tasks for NEMP has provided a valuable form of professional development.

The increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy as the basic foundation for learning, and the desire to ensure that this foundation is set in the early years of education (remediation is both more expensive and more difficult) have been reflected in two important projects – both perhaps more "D&R" (development and research) than "R&D". Development of useful tools and understandings for teachers have been the main focus of this work, in order to improve teaching practice and student learning.

Picking Up the Pace developed intensive professional development for early childhood education and first year primary teachers in a low-income area, most of whose students were Mäori or Pasifika. This professional development was based on research, and emphasised a co-constructed view of learning and literacy as social practices (Phillips, McNaughton, and MacDonald, 2002). The early childhood education professional development focused on aspects identified by previous research as critical to student performance, particularly teaching in literacy and language activities, and on bridging home and early childhood education centre practices; the primary professional development focused on changing teachers' beliefs about language, learning, and literacy, and on providing them with the understanding to pick up and work on specific misapprehensions that can occur in children's early literacy learning. A key element in the intervention was to change and raise teachers' expectations for children from low-income homes.

The research accompanying these interventions used a quasi-experimental design and replication across three phases and most of the schools in the intervention. Children whose teachers had this professional development did manage to make significant gains in literacy, and to come close to or match the expected level for their age group, despite their social disadvantages. This project continues in the area, and is being widely heralded.

The Numeracy Development Project built on the progressions in how children develop number concepts identified by research in the 1990s, and the development of frameworks which enable teachers to place a student on the framework, and then identify the next step the student can take. A framework was developed in New Zealand, drawing on Australian and American work, and professional development designed around it. The professional development involved facilitators working with teachers, who worked co-operatively together within their school, or cluster of schools if they taught in a small school, practical principal support, and involved two assessments of student knowledge and concepts at least 15 weeks apart.

[5] Some tasks are retained to allow comparison with a later cohort of students.

A separately commissioned evaluation found that students made significant and greater progress than expected against the framework, though the gaps between advantaged (middle-income, often Päkeha or Asian) and disadvantaged students (low-income, often Mäori, Pasifika, English as a second language) remained. The effective teaching of early number involved teachers asking students to explain their thinking, and waiting for them to do so, and the use of questioning and explanations of other students (Thomas and Ward, 2002). This programme is now offered nationally.

The longitudinal *Competent Children* project, which is following some 500 children from early childhood education through their schooling, has also been able to provide some useful underpinning to both pedagogy and its priority in policy. It has shown that benefits for children's literacy and numeracy from good quality early childhood education continue at least five years afterwards, and that what makes good quality early childhood education is largely the interaction between teachers and children, respect for literacy, and the ability for children to complete work, with findings that are consistent with the findings and emphasis of *Picking up the Pace* and *The Numeracy Development Programme*. It has also underlined the importance of the first few years in learning, by its finding that it is much harder for low performing children to make progress after age 8 – that there is indeed a window of opportunity which becomes narrower over time (Wylie, Thompson, and Lythe, 2001). This research has contributed to the emphasis on quality in early childhood education policy development, and on ensuring that children from disadvantaged homes have access to good quality early childhood education. It has also contributed to media campaigns aimed at encouraging parents to use everyday activities to support their children's learning, ("feed the mind"), which appear to have had some impact, particularly for Mäori and Pasifika parents.

The role of institutions and systems in supporting learning

Because New Zealand decentralised educational administration in 1989, instituting self-managing schools responsible for their own budgets and hiring of staff, there has been much research interest in tracing the effects of this on what schools do, on family choice of school, and increasingly, on the New Zealand education system as a whole. What the New Zealand research shows is that simply shifting responsibility to the institutional level does not improve educational provision or access: that government does have a leadership role to play that goes beyond merely funding (e.g. Fiske and Ladd, 2000; Lauder and Hughes, 1999; Wylie, 2002; Wylie and Mitchell, 2003).

Evaluations of schooling improvement and support initiatives, and of the iwi-Crown (government) partnerships have also yielded valuable knowledge about the importance of ongoing relationships, based on mutual responsibility rather than contracts, and of keeping the focus on student achievement and support, rather than on governance and management. We have also learnt through these evaluations and evaluations of schools brought together in clusters that while there are gains for schools and teachers in working collaboratively, it is much harder to sustain these arrangements where schools are self-managing and have first and foremost to consider their own viability.

Student engagement in learning and the factors which affect it

This is the least researched of the three New Zealand priorities identified here. Significant work showing the importance of peers, student interest, and sense of being valued was carried out by Nuthall and Alton-Lee from the late 1980s (Alton-Lee, Nuthall, and Patrick, 1993; Nuthall, 1999). A number of subsequent studies have confirmed the importance of students experiencing success, seeing the

relevance of what they are learning, and feeling they are respected, treated fairly, and matter for adults (e.g. Hawk and Hill, 1996). NZCER is currently in the initial phases of several longitudinal studies looking at student experience in secondary schools. These are showing that while the diversification of the secondary curriculum can create new options for a wider range of students, the traditional pedagogy may not work for all, with some students responding more to active learning, in authentic contexts, in small groups, with adults who mentor and provide more pastoral support than the traditional segmentation through subjects.

IDEAS FOR STRATEGIC REGIONAL NETWORKING OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTES

NZCER is keen to develop networks which will enable the participants to:

- improve the quality of their research and development work to improve learning, by sharing instruments and findings, providing peer review, using the new APEID journal *Educational Research for Policy and Practice* as a vehicle for sharing and focusing on common themes, and passing on useful research and literature reviews;
- collaborate on parallel or joint studies where there are shared research questions; and
- support the development of educational research capacity and capability.

Given that most educational research is not well-funded, making it difficult to maintain face-to-face contact with fellow researchers and institutions, we think it is important to use ICT as much as possible, after initial contact and common interests have been established. This may mean that any outside organisation supporting the development of regional networking could provide funding for ICT use and Internet access in those countries where it is not part of everyday work practice in research.

We would hope that this meeting would help identify the key research issues that we have in common, and which we think would also be seen as priority areas by funders, so that we could pursue some parallel or joint studies.

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