



The Graham Nuthall Classroom Research Trust

NEWSLETTER

Number Two • May 2009

Book and Symposium Project launched

The Trust has embarked on a major two year long project (2009-2010) aimed at building research capacity at/in Canterbury in classroom based research inspired and informed by Professor Graham Nuthall's theories, methodology and approach to pedagogy. It anticipates long term and comprehensive benefits from addressing both these goals in the design of the project.

The Trust has invited Dr Baljit Kaur of the University of Canterbury to lead this project. Dr Kaur worked closely with Professor Nuthall over several years, particularly while they co-edited *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies*. She was the Guest Editor of Teaching and Teacher Education's Special Issue *Graham Nuthall's Legacy: Understanding Teaching and Learning* in 2006.

As a part of the Project, experienced researchers undertaking classroom based research from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives will be invited to engage critically with some of Nuthall's unpublished writings in order to extend and build on that scholarship through their writing and through interacting with each other in strategically scheduled workshops and a symposium. In addition to capacity building in classroom based research, the project will result in an edited volume that includes Nuthall's unpublished writings as well as contributions from researchers participating in the project. ●

Trust advances classroom research

Much has happened in The Graham Nuthall Classroom Research Trust since you read our last newsletter edited by Dr Elody Rathgen, sponsored by Professor Bob Manthei and distributed a year ago when we held our last 'Bids for Kids' auction and raised over \$26,000. This was enough, with interest, to cover three annual Graham Nuthall Research Awards for research in classroom learning.

This newsletter, produced with the assistance of the University of Canterbury, tells you what the Trust has since achieved with your backing and how you may be part of it.

We are just beginning the most ambitious research project the Trust has undertaken, the Book and Symposium Project led by Dr Baljit Kaur. The Board is excited that this will provide selected classroom researchers, many of whom might be using Professor Nuthall's methodological innovations and theoretical lead, with an opportunity to extend their own research. Nuthall's unpublished works will form an integral part of the project and the resulting book aimed at furthering our understandings of classrooms. Although the Trust is covering the bulk of the costs of this project, we are seeking partner organisations to help make it an outstanding event. Assistance with costs such as travel for a leading academic to speak to the symposium would stretch our funds. Already we have the support of the University of Canterbury's College of Education. An instance of the partnership established last year by the College and the Trust in a Memorandum of Understanding

The 2008 Award was given to Mrs Lois Christmas whose study is described as well as information for those interested in applying this year. You will also read an account of our newly established Doctoral Scholarship. The Board believes that by

increasing the numbers of research projects and teachers who understand classroom research, we expect children's learning to improve. We are therefore keen to talk to anyone who is interested in funding other classroom research prizes. These need not be annual and could be for a fixed number of years so the costs may be less than you expect.

Further items describe our work disseminating results of classroom studies, the seminar for recipients of the Nuthall Research Award and Professor John Hattie's extraordinarily popular 2008 Lecture, *Visible Teaching - Visible Learning: The Ingredients of Successful Learning in our Classrooms*. We share its success with Lecture sponsors Canterbury Primary Principals Association, Lift Education and South Pacific Press.

You and your organisations have supported our biennial auctions to the hilt. You gave your time and your energy; you lent us your equipment and your expertise and the auctions were all successful and fun. However, following a series of strategic planning meetings, the Board of the Trust decided not to hold further auctions but rather to match fundraising with activities and scholarships. This decision recognises that we live in a new tax environment; companies' donations are now all tax deductible and individuals can claim deductions for donations up to their annual income so for every dollar you donate to a charity registered with the Charities Commission, you get up to 33 cents back from IRD.

We hope you are pleased that The Graham Nuthall Classroom Research Trust is so focused and share our excitement of the new phase we are entering.

Mary Chamberlain to give 2009 Lecture

Mary Chamberlain, Group Manager, Curriculum Teaching and Learning - Design for the New Zealand Ministry of Education, will give the 2009 Lecture on Thursday 27 August at the University of Canterbury. The former principal, classroom teacher, and regional advisor to schools will talk about why and how *Learning's the Thing!*

Ms Chamberlain's passion about learning is widely known. She has been closely involved with the development of new national curricula and related assessment policies in New Zealand at both primary and secondary school levels for the last ten years and her current responsibilities include effective teaching, literacy, numeracy, assessment and qualifications.

The 2009 Graham Nuthall Lecture, University of Canterbury, Thursday 27 August. The Lecture will commence at 5pm, refreshments from 4.30.

Venue to be confirmed.

RSVP to
nuthall-trust@canterbury.ac.nz ●



Hattie packs Annual Graham Nuthall Lecture

Providing individual feedback to students is a powerful tool that teachers often overlook, says John Hattie, Professor of Education at Auckland University.

Timaru-born Professor Hattie, who is one of New Zealand's most internationally acclaimed academics, presented the inaugural Annual Graham Nuthall Lecture at the University of Canterbury on 4 September, 2008. He told a packed lecture theatre that feedback rates highly in effective learning. *"Studies have shown that a student receives on average three to five seconds of feedback per day. Most teachers think when they give feedback to the class they are giving it to individuals. This is not how students see it."* He urged teachers to consider the world of learning from their students' perspective. *"Too often their point of view about learning is unknown to the teacher."*

As Director of the Visible Learning Laboratories at Auckland University, he has studied over 800 meta-analyses that have included over 50,000 education research papers and has concluded that too much emphasis in teaching is placed on the wrong factors. *"There have been hundreds of studies on reducing class size, for instance. It is the wrong point of comparison. The right point of comparison lies in other areas such as the curriculum, teachers and most importantly, what kids bring to the classroom. The power of peers is also a force – teachers avoid this factor at their peril."*

Professor Hattie is currently advising the Hong Kong government on a one billion dollar campaign that will cut class sizes from 60 to 30 students. *"It's a waste of money if the children are not going to be taught differently."* He says teachers should approach their role as moving children beyond their potential – *"giving them the sense that they can surpass what they think they can achieve"*.

He has studied outdoor adventure programmes, such as those offered by Outward Bound, and says the key to their success is providing challenging goals for

young people. *"This is what we must also provide for students in classrooms."*

From his extensive analyses Professor Hattie has identified that excellent teachers:

- Teach in active, calculated and meaningful ways.
- Provide multiple opportunities and alternatives for teaching a topic.
- Teach learning strategies for surface and deep learning, that leads to students constructing learning.

He summarised his philosophy of effective learning as: *"When teachers see learning through the eyes of their students – when students see themselves as teachers"*.

Professor Hattie has supervised more than \$30 million in research grants and published and presented over 450 papers. A copy of Professor Hattie's Power Point presentation is available on the Trust's website (<http://www.nuthalltrust.org.nz/Nuthall.ppt>). ●

Sourced from ConnectED, a publication of UC College of Education



"Hidden Lives of Learners" in teacher training

The book posthumously published by Graham Nuthall is proving a useful resource for universities and schools throughout New Zealand. Ms Bev Webber, Publishing Manager for the New Zealand Council for Educational Research says *"As well as being used a course text at the University of Otago it is also being used at Massey University and the Universities of Canterbury and Waikato."* For further information see www.nzcer.org.nz ■

Trust sets up new Doctoral Scholarship

The Trust has recently announced a postgraduate prize for recipients of a University of Canterbury Doctoral Scholarship in Education whose research contributes to or advances our understanding of how children learn in early childhood centres or school settings. Applicants also need to demonstrate that their research connects to the methodology used in classrooms by Professor Nuthall. Applications for

next year's scholarship will be called for by 31 March 2010.

The Trust developed the Graham Nuthall Doctoral Scholarship with the support of Professor Gail Gillon, the Pro Vice Chancellor of the College of Education. The Scholarship which will be awarded annually provides a doctoral student with \$5000 from the Trust; it is tenable for one year and is administered through the University of Canterbury Scholarship

Office. Trustee Dr Jane McChesney said *'that the Trust saw this as one more way of nurturing classroom-based research, through practical support of an emerging researcher during their doctoral study.'* ●

Award recipient explores student experiences



Lois Christmas, the recipient of the 2008 Graham Nuthall Research Award, has begun her project on the experience of learners in a class where the teacher is skilled at implementing many of the approaches that are considered current best practice. She will be researching in a class where the teacher involves students in formative assessment practices such as goal setting and other strategies that help them take responsibility for their own learning. She will also look at how the students in this class work in groups and support each other's learning. *What is the experience of learners?* will explore the relationship between the meaning a teacher makes (through their planning, implementation and assessment processes), and their intentions for students' learning and the meaning students make of the consequent classroom interactions and learning experiences that occur.

Mrs Christmas is particularly interested in the complex relationship that exists between teaching and learning and has just completed her Masters degree in

Education. Her dissertation was titled *'How Four Dynamic Teachers have Changed the Way they Assess: Put it this way- I don't sit with a pile of books until 5.30 each night anymore'* in which she explored curriculum and assessment theory and practices.

It was while she was working on this project that she started to read more widely about the Nuthall approach. Two of Professor Nuthall's ideas made particular sense to her. One was the shift he initiated towards studying the relationship between teaching and learning by researching how students experience classroom activities rather than concentrating only on what teachers think and do. Second, was that students' learning is primarily a socio-cultural process.

Mrs Lois Christmas has had a long career in primary education including senior management positions and time as a lecturer in mathematics and professional studies at the Christchurch College of Education. At present she is an Education Reviewer with The Education Review Office, a position which gives her time in many classrooms and the opportunity to talk with many teachers.

"I am delighted to be the recipient of the Graham Nuthall Research Award. It gives me the opportunity to view classroom interactions through the lens of a researcher. This is fertile ground for gaining authentic insights into the world of the learner." ■

Call for Applications for 2009 Annual Research Award

The Trust is calling for applications for 2009, by 16 June. The winner will be introduced at this year's annual lecture. This award is in honour of Professor Graham Nuthall's outstanding contributions to teaching and learning and is intended to further our understanding of learning and teaching in early childhood, primary and secondary education sectors. The research supported by the award is to reflect the approach to studying classroom contexts and interactions that Nuthall used in his *Project on Learning*.

The award carries a value of up to \$10,000 and is recognised by the Ministry of Education as a 'Prestigious Award'. Therefore, if a practising teacher wins the award, they are eligible to apply for leave with pay for up to one term. Applicants are required to prepare a specific research project proposal and are judged primarily in terms of the relevance and importance of the proposed project to the context of learning and teaching within the classroom.

Copies of reports from past recipients of the Award and details about the Award can be found on the Trust's website www.nuthalltrust.org.nz ●

The information in this publication was correct at the time of printing.

Award winners study children's multiple lives

Dr Fleur Harris and Ms Jae Major, the two recipients of the Research Award for 2006 presented their findings at the College of Education on the 18th of November 2008. Teachers, researchers and interested lay people attended the combined presentation in which they pulled out common links to Professor Nuthall's research as well as data and findings from their individual research.

Dr Harris explored how Māori children respond to literacy based language assessments for narratives and phonological awareness, in ways that consider their lived experiences and cultural practices. She used examples to illustrate how Māori children may be currently constructed as learners and contrasted this with alternative discourses about their responses.

Ms Major investigated the processes by which identities of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children in the primary mainstream classroom are constructed by themselves, other children and teachers. She also presented examples from her study illustrating how identities might influence the participation of children within classroom activity and how identities might change over time

In exploring the realities of classroom life for children from diverse cultures both Award recipients provided more evidence of the multiple lives of children along the lines described by Nuthall in his work. ●

Trust inherits funds from CIER

History came full circle recently when the Canterbury Institute of Educational Research bestowed its remaining funds, \$3051 on The Graham Nuthall Classroom Research Trust. Jill Nuthall, Chair of GNCRT Fundraising Committee said *'This gift is especially welcome because it comes from farsighted leaders of education in Canterbury. We will ensure it is spent fostering future leaders in learning.'*

The Institute which ceased some fifteen years ago, was established to provide leadership in Canterbury education. Dr Colin Knight the last president of CIER, said they had chosen The Graham Nuthall Classroom Research Trust to receive its

residual funds as both organisations had similar aims, to build on the results of classroom research to improve learning. He added that Professor Nuthall had been a member and that Trustee Dr Ian Leggat was once the president. Dr Knight and Professor Nuthall were contemporaries at the University of Canterbury under Professor Phillip Lawrence, the "father" of classroom interaction research in New Zealand.

Dr Knight said *"I am delighted the trust has been set up to encourage students of the future to investigate classroom teaching using this research design. It has played a significant role in improving the quality of teaching."* ●



The Board of Trustees. Back row: Melanie Mackenzie (Administrator), Nick Major (Acting Chair), Dr Ian Leggat, Jill Nuthall (Secretary), Keryn Davis. Front row: Dr Jane McChesney, Dr John Vargo (Treasurer), Associate Professor Alison Gilmore (Chair). Insert: Peggy Burrows.

Donations and sponsorships are the lifeblood of the Graham Nuthall Classroom Research Trust

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